

The CGPL Power Plant “Tata Mundra”

An Explorative Study of the Impact on Children



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B*i*C

BANK INFORMATION CENTER

List of Abbreviations

UMPP	Ultra Mega Power Plant
CGPL	Costal Gujarat Power Limited
CAO	Compliance Advisor Ombudsman
WB	World Bank
MASS	Machimar Adhikar Sangharsh Sanghathan
BIC	Bank Information Centre
KMVS	Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghathan
IFC	International Finance Cooperation

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I. THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The Tata Mundra project is India's first ultra-mega power project (UMPP), and one of many projects inspired by the Indian Government's "power to all by 2012" commitment. Coastal Gujarat Power Limited (CGPL), Tata Power's wholly-owned subsidiary, commissioned the 4000 MW plant in 2012 near the port city of Mundra, in the state of Gujarat, India. The cost of Tata Mundra was estimated to be over \$4.4 billion, including a \$450 million investment by the World Bank's private lending arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and was designed to be run on imported coal.¹

Although the IFC is legally and financially independent from the other entities that together comprise the World Bank Group, it shares the World Bank's goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. However, in contrast to this mission, the introduction of the UMPP has been associated with increased poverty across neighboring communities, as well as a host of negative impacts on children, including increasing rates of sexual violence.

II. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

People from the local communities voiced their concerns from the inception of the project, but little has been done to address the devastating consequences. The purpose of the study is to document the detrimental impacts on children of the Tata Mundra Power Plant, and to offer recommendations for how those harms could be prevented or mitigated in future World Bank projects.

Methodology

Interviews were used as the primary method to collect the information in this case study, along with analysis of information from Secondary sources. The interviews were conducted in two phases. The first phase lasted from 27 July 2014 through 5 August 2014. In this phase, six project affect villages were visited, including Navinal, Tunda, Wandh, Sanagarh, Tragadi and Wandhi. Interviewers met with members of five villages, including children, teachers, principals, parents, and workers. This interview method involved the use of one-on-one discussions and focus group discussions.

The second phase took place in late September 2014. During this phase, researches conducted interviews and exercises directly with children in six villages: Tunda, Wandh, Tragadi, Mota Kandagra, Tragadi Bunder, and Navinal. The researchers engaged with 104 children in various groups; of which 73 were girls. Their ages ranged from 5 to 16.

¹ Website of Tata Power, available at <http://www.tatapower.com/cgpl-mundra/home.aspx>.

Considering the sensitive nature of the issues discussed, including domestic violence and sexual violence against children, the following principles were followed during phase two:

- (i) There would be no pressure on the children to disclose anything. The methods and exercises used would be such that children would express only on their own volition.
- (ii) Methodologies like games, drawing, painting, singing, skits, storytelling, showing photographs, and cartoons would be used.
- (iii) The exercises were designed to elicit unobtrusively the factors (people, events) that make them happy, excited or sad or angry; their dreams for themselves; their fears.
- (iv) The identity of the children participating in these exercises would be kept confidential, and the facts emerging from the study would not be attributed to any particular child in a manner that can lead to tracing of identities.
- (v) In every village the researchers would meet children in approximately three different groups – children from 5-10 years of age (boys and girls together) and 11-16 years of age (boys and girls separately). In general the engagement was with two groups in each village.

III. FINDINGS:

A. General Impacts on Project Affected Communities

In-depth interviews with people in the affected villages revealed a high level of discontent and frustration with the way the project has been carried out, and the devastating impacts it has had on their lives. Land acquisition for the project has caused many to lose their livelihoods and pollution from the plant has led children to suffer from severe health conditions. Additionally, lack of access to education persists, and there is increasing violence against children associated with the project. These impacts fall disproportionately on children, making it increasingly likely that the project will further entrench the cycle of poverty in the communities surrounding the power plant rather than contribute to its reduction.

Loss of Livelihood

Many families are still struggling to cope with the serious impacts associated with land acquisition in their villages. Compensation for individuals whose lands were acquired for the power plant was inadequate, and the people who sold land to the company still have not received full payment. Many also felt that the compensation was inadequate when facing a permanent loss of livelihood and few future opportunities. The loss of the village commons and their productive agricultural lands has forced many away from practicing their traditional livelihoods, including fishing and animal husbandry, and into work as daily wage laborers—some at the Tata Mundra

power plant. Those that found work at the plant reported having to work up to 16 hours per day, six days per week, to earn enough money to survive.

The fisherfolk were unanimous in saying that they are facing an alarming depletion of marine stock due to the damage to marine ecology and breeding grounds caused by the discharge of water at high temperatures through the plant's outfall channel. This depletion has resulted in a drastic reduction of fish catch. These claims are supported by the CAO Audit Report which states that:

Projections that the thermal plume from CGPL's outfall channel will extend a distance of kilometers into the shallow waters of the gulf and surrounding estuaries suggest inadequate mixing/cooling, with significant risks of social and ecological impact. These risks are heightened by claims that the plume will intersect with components of the ecosystem which the Complainants (MASS) assert are important to their livelihoods.²

All of the respondents also complained about the damage to their catch caused by the coal dust and fly-ash from the plant. According to one respondent from Navinal, "every day we see a thick coat of coal/fly-ash dust that settles everywhere in their homes and on all vegetation around." This is consistent with the CAO audit that criticized the IFC for failing to define the project air shed as "degraded." A fisherman from Tragadi Bunder said that they had to discard large portions of the fish that they dried on the shore due to contamination by fly-ash.



Loss of Access to Clean Water

Access to safe drinking water is essential for children to ensure the highest attainable standards of health.³ Nevertheless, residents of all the villages studied have complained that after the establishment of the power plant the water became saline and polluted. According to one of the residents of Navinal village, "Earlier, water used to be sweet and potable. Once the power plants (Adani and Tata) came in and the outfall channel constructed, our ground water has been completely ruined. Therefore, now we have to get drinking water supply from Bhujpur." According to another resident of Tragadi Bunder:

² CAO Audit Report, 4 (2013), available at <http://www.cao-ombudsman.org/cases/document-links/documents/CAOAuditReportC-I-R6-Y12-F160.pdf>.

³ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 24(c).

“We used to have sources of sweet water right on the sea shore and also other places inland which was sufficient to meet our needs. Now all those sources have turned saline. This is due to the excessive intake of ground water by the power plants, the effluents from de-salination and also the outfall channel that carries hot sea water back into the sea. We also feel that our water sources have been polluted with chemicals.”

Similar complaints have been reported by KMVS, a respected local NGO that works with women in the area. According to KMVS, “since majority of industries established do not follow safety norms effluent is disposed in the air inducing salinity in the lands and making the drinking water unpotable.”⁴

The CGPL claims that the region “suffers from a scarcity of potable water” and “an abundance of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)” in the water which leads to health problems. In keeping with their Corporate Social Responsibility commitments, CGPL has set up reverse osmosis (RO) plants in some villages where villagers can obtain clean drinking water. However, the company charges the villagers a fee—Rs. 5 for each 1 litre pitcher of water. Moreover, the fishing community of Tragadi Bunder has complained that the water in the RO tank is not sufficient for the entire population of the village. In a memorandum of demands sent to CGPL they asked for a 15,000 litre water tank to provide RO purified water. To date, however, Tata groups have set up only a 5000 litre tank for 300 households.

B. Specific Impacts on Children in Project Affected Communities

The loss of adults’ livelihoods as well as the environmental pollution caused by the plant has significantly impacted the lives of children in local communities. Many of the families who were already struggling to make ends meet as fishermen and farmers are now even less financially secure. The health impacts of the coal plant have contributed additional strain to families that are increasingly pulling their children—particularly the girls—out of school to perform physical and domestic labor that exposes them to sexual harassment and violence. These consequences are devastating to the overall development of the children in these communities and will likely prevent them from reaching their full potential.



⁴ 2011-2012 Annual Report of Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan

Negative Health Impacts

The most perceptible health impact on children has been the reduction in the quality of their nutrition. Interviewers reported seeing a prevalence of light colored hair in the villages of Navinal and Tragadi among an abnormally large number of small children (aged less than 10), which can be a symptom of malnutrition. Prior to the construction of the power plant, the diet of most children included milk products obtained from the cows owned by their families. Almost all the families interviewed reported that milk and milk products were an integral part of their diet until recently, when they had to sell off their cattle. Most of them reported that it was no longer viable to maintain milk cattle due to the reduction in agricultural production and acquisition of pasture lands. An 18 year old boy from the Navinal village told us that “some of

the people in the village still own cows but it is increasingly unviable to maintain them with grazing land having been acquired for the Tata and Adani plants. After the land has been taken away, people from this village were forced to sell off over 40-50 cows.”

Shaheen, Tunda village

Shaheen is 8 years old. For her age she looks tiny, and could pass as a 5 year old. During the interactions with other children, Shaheen would shy away and run back to her mother. Some children mentioned: “She had a surgery” and others that “she has cancer”. The most shocking comment was that, “she got cancer because she chews tobacco”.

It turns out Shaheen does have cancer. About a year ago she developed a malignant tumour in her neck. It was detected quite early, and surgically removed by the doctors in the company (Adani) hospital. During the course of her treatment the doctors blamed the girl’s condition on an addiction to chewing tobacco. This word spread quickly all over the village.

Suhana Abrar, Shaheen’s mother feels helpless and angry with the doctors. “My daughter was just like all the other children in this village, playing around and going to school. No child in our village uses tobacco. Why then do they say that my little girl was addicted?”

The contaminated air shed also has serious health implications. Everyone involved in the study said they believed that the increase of particulate matter in the air was directly responsible for the alarming increases in rates of respiratory diseases, cardiac problems and skin ailments. Burning coal causes sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), particulate matter (PM), carbon monoxide (CO), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and various trace metals like mercury, to be released into the air through stacks that disperse these emissions over large areas. Chronic and acute exposure to such pollutants has health impacts that include respiratory illnesses, compromised immune systems, cardiovascular conditions, and

premature death.⁵ During our field investigations we found cases of skin, respiratory and bone diseases. These findings are consistent with claims in the report, *The Increasing Human Cost of Coal Power*, that there has been a “20% increase in children’s respiratory diseases in the past two years.”⁶

Such health impacts are particularly harmful for children, whose developing bodies and immune systems are much more susceptible to illness. Villagers of Tunda, Navinal, Vandh, Tagardi, Sangarh and Vandi complained that on average in every village there are six or seven children suffering from respiratory and skin diseases. Almost all of the families interviewed complained about the increased incidence of illness among children since the power plant was commissioned. A resident of Sangarh village reported that:

The hot water released by the power plant through the outfall channel finds its way out of the channel causing skin conditions among children. We feel that the power plants release effluents that consist of not just hot water, but seem to have harmful chemicals in it. This is evident from the frothing that is observed at the outfall. Children and adults who come into contact with these effluents have experienced irritation and skin ailments.

Across all of the villages, researchers observed the prevalence of ‘gumdas’ (abscesses, boils) on the bodies of most children, which were not observed among adults. The mothers said that these gumdas come and go regularly, and sometimes get infected. Asked why this was happening and whether the doctors had any explanation for the gumdas, they said that nobody knew. They felt it may be because of air and water that has been polluted by the companies.

Respiratory diseases, including respiratory tract infections causing cough, asthma and breathing difficulties have been reported to be very common among children as well as adults. Approximately 40% of the children complained about respiratory problems. Thirteen children mentioned that their fathers had severe respiratory difficulties and have given up work. In all villages, when researches asked for the medical case paperwork, the mothers of the children reported that the hospital never gives the papers to the patients. These complaints are consistent with the report, *The Increasing Human Cost of Coal Power*, which stated that:

⁵ Greenpeace, COAL KILLS: An Assessment of Death and Diseases caused by India’s Dirtiest Energy Source, pg. 12, available at http://www.greenpeace.org/india/Global/india/report/Coal_Kills.pdf.

⁶ The Increasing Human Cost of Coal Power: Supplementary Report to Real Cost of Power, 9 (July 2013), available at http://www.banktrack.org/manage/ems_files/download/the_increasing_human_cost_of_coal_power/suplimentary_report_final.pdf.

Villagers from Tunda-Vandh also reported breathing difficulties, whenever the coal conveyor runs at speed. There are also wide-spread complaints about foul smells spreading whenever this happens. Devjibhai and Vankabhai— independently of each other—also reported several incidents of fires in the dumped coal stock of CGPL, and this aggravates the breathing problem, along with increasing bad smell. As a token gesture, the CGPL management had erected (just around the time of the visit by CAO auditors) a hard-cloth barricade around the area it stores its coal, but that has not helped much, except hiding it from sight.⁷

Insufficient Access to Health Services

The increase in health problems in the communities has far outpaced the available medical facilities, which were already inadequate. According to claims by both Adanis and the CGPL, health care facilities were to increase after the power plant was commissioned. Since then, minimal improvements have been made—medical camps have been set up, children receive health check-ups in schools, and some have received eye exams and spectacles—but the children are still not receiving proper medical care. There is no specialized pediatric care available in the vicinity. Furthermore, although health centers have been set up in some of the villages, doctors are not always available. According to a resident from Navinal village, “Only one doctor is available for 300 households and the doctor is available for one hour and once a week... there is no lady doctor who visits or practices in all these villages around. The doctors who visit only give medicine for minor ailments such as fever, headache, cold and cough.” Another resident from Tunda village reported that, “the services of doctors available are not satisfactory. There is no reliable schedule for doctors’ visits. They are not available on a regular basis. Most clinics have just one doctor and the attendant.”

Lack of Health Facilities in Tragadi

In Tragadi we came across a case of a two year old boy afflicted by multiple ailments. Born premature, he continues to suffer from severe respiratory problems and has now been diagnosed with bone tuberculosis. His mother reported that, “when we asked the reason for this, the doctors gave no clear medical reasons; instead they associated the disease with astrological reasons! Also, when the disease was detected, there was no prescription given. For almost 140 days he was very ill and was kept in incubation at private hospital in Mandvi. Since there is no access to proper medical care and assistance in the village we have to repeatedly take him for the check-up to Mandvi [approximately 30km away]”.

⁷ The Increasing Human Cost of Coal Power: pg. 8, *supra* note 6.

CGPL Mundra claims they have organized several community health camps, school health programs, HIV/AIDS workshops and capacity building programs, among its community development initiatives.⁸ According to local residents, however, these accomplishments are overstated. The interventions have not reached large sections of the population, and the medical interventions appear superficial in nature, aiming to suppress information rather than transparently dealing with the possibility that the villagers' health problems are caused by pollution. With regard to the health camps, one villager interviewed said that doctors in such health camps often refer them to private hospitals for follow-up checkups, which means the patients have to pay for such check-ups. In schools, Tata organised dental and eye exams and also provided spectacles to students, but none of these medical interventions have identified, diagnosed or treated the respiratory diseases and skin ailments from which many children suffer.

Suppressing Medical Diagnoses in Kotadi Bandar

In Kotadi Bandar a four year old girl was seen suffering from respiratory diseases. Although many respiratory diseases are treated as “mysterious” by doctors in the area, the doctors in this case told her parents that the cause of her respiratory problem was due to emissions of chemicals and coal dust from the power plant. Although this was an unusual admission for a doctor in this area, he would not give the diagnosis in writing or prescribe any medication.

The competence of the doctors in some of the organised camps is also questionable. According to one resident, of Sangarh village, “in one of the camps organised by Tata this year they have given wrong medicines which has further complicated their health.” Most people were unaware of any capacity building, training or HIV/AIDS related workshops organized by CGPL.

Access to health services for maternal health is also lacking. Many of those interviewed believe that the maternal and infant mortality rate is increasing. According to one resident, “there is no maternal care centre in the area. Hence to treat any illness, or for regular health checkups for pregnant women, and for delivery, they have to go either to the government hospital or the private hospital in Mandvi.” Relatedly, a local social worker reported that, “many pregnant women have had miscarriages and many women have died due to lack of immediate medical attention, which is impossible to access due to long distances.”

Two of the villages researched for this report, Sangarh and Vandi villages are closer to Mandvi, and residents are more easily able to access services there, but they are facing increasing transportation costs since the commissioning of the plant. According to one of the residents of Sangarh village:

⁸ Tata website, available at <http://www.tatapower.com/cgpl-mundra/csr.aspx>.

The cost of transportation has also increased after the establishment of power plant. Before establishment of the power plant the road which lead to Mandvi hospital was 3km and the auto fare was Rs. 150. But that road is now closed due to the power plant boundaries. So instead of 3km we have to travel 7 km and have to pay Rs. 500...We were not consulted before putting up the boundaries and closing the road that we always used.

Because no medical centres were set up by CGPL in Sangarh village, villagers were initially allowed to go the power plant campus, which has medical facilities, for their health checkups. However, according to one resident of Sangarh village, “Initially for regular health check-ups we used to go to Tata power plant campus. But over the past two years for medical assistance we are consulting doctors of Mandvi government hospital. The entry to the power plant campus is closed for us and further the Tata authorities said that no fisherman can enter into the campus.”

The findings generally indicate that child health is at risk in these communities, and that residents associate the health impacts they are experiencing with the continuous exposure to coal dust, fly-ash and emissions from the power plant. Nevertheless, CGPL has made no appreciable efforts to transparently monitor or control the emissions in accordance with acceptable levels. There has been no recognition by CGPL of the respiratory conditions, skin ailments and cardiovascular diseases that are known to affect the population due to emissions and effluents from coal based power stations.⁹

Lack of Access to Education

The World Bank itself acknowledges the importance of educating children to ending poverty. Unfortunately, in the communities surrounding Tata Mundra the poor education system has only become worse since the power plant was commissioned.

Access to and delivery of education in the area around Tata Mundra has generally been low and education has not been the highest priority for the pastoral and fishing communities that live there. As livelihoods are endangered by land acquisition and pollution, and people suffer from the effects of worsening poverty, education is even less prioritized for children—particularly girls—in these communities.



Boys from a nearby village taking a break from their studies.

⁹ See, e.g., Greenpeace, COAL KILLS, *supra* note 5.

Many people reported that, in addition to health centers and clean drinking water, they were promised schools. However, to date, CGPL has not made any effort to build schools in the area. Indeed, the study found no evidence of an increase in access to quality education in the project affected areas. Instead, researchers found that though every child is enrolled in school during the Praveshotsav (school enrolment campaign), most of them attend school irregularly and after completing their primary years, do not continue their education.

Many schools also have insufficient classrooms or teachers. On average there are two or three teachers per school. According to the principal of one of the schools which caters to the majority of school going children in the region, there are only three teachers for 121 children enrolled in the school. This teacher to pupil ratio makes the classroom environment difficult both for the teacher and the students, and many students are not motivated to continue their studies. In one of the villages only one teacher has been appointed for the entire primary school.

Many parents cannot afford to send their children to school, and there is no outside financial support provided to poor families. In one interview, a worker from Tunda village described an instance where a child complained to her teacher that since her parents could not afford to buy a notebook she was not able to do her homework. Though there are no school fees, and the school provides books for the students, parents are expected to pay for uniforms and stationary, which they cannot afford without a source of income. Tata officials claimed to provide notebooks and other stationary to students, but the amount provided is not sufficient for every student. Similarly, CGPL describes its provision of computer education to school children as one of its CSR activities in the area, but according to the Principal of Tunda village, the

Lack of Education in Tragadi Bunder

In the group exercise that the researchers conducted regarding the children's dreams, Javed amused everyone by saying he wanted to become a policeman. All laughed thinking it was a joke because they knew that he was a school drop out and illiterate. When probed, he said that he wanted to be a policeman only because he needed the 'gun power' to destroy the company that is destroying the marine ecology and decimating his fishing community and its livelihood.

In a private conversation Javed mentioned how he feels very bad that the marine life is being dangerously affected as a result of the power plant discharging hot water and other effluents in to the sea. He has seen for himself how the fish catch has depleted continuously over the last 3-4 years; how far they have to go to catch even the lesser quantity of fish they are getting now. He has seen delegation after delegation coming and going; but "the situation is still deteriorating; and no one seems to be taking any action. What will happen in the coming years? How will small fishermen like us survive if the fish catch is going to be completely depleted like this?"

Forced Labor in Mota Kandagra

Minal, 11 and Sonal, 13 remember the joyful lives they led just 2 years ago. They never knew what hunger was; they went to the local school, played with their friends and were loved and treated well. Their father had a small farm and was a successful farmer.

Today Sonal, Minal and their mother have to work hard to ensure that the family has enough to eat, and that their 2 younger brothers go to school so that one day they could deliver the family from the current poverty and misfortune.

When asked if they wished to go to school their eyes overflowed. Sonal had wanted to be a teacher, while Minal wanted to be an engineer. But their father had sold off the family's land for what he thought was a "good price" four years ago, having been misled by "agents" of the companies.

For the first time in their lives they had to leave their homes and engage in manual labour in the fields. Their mother felt it was better to die rather than having to work like this, but felt they had no choice. "See their hands", she said, grabbing Minal's and Sonal's hands and showing them to the researchers; "how tender they were just a year back! See their condition now. See what they have to endure at this young age".

When asked about their treatment at the plantation sites, the girls said that, "They won't dare to touch us, as we are Darbar girls, but they harass girls and women from Dalit communities. Some of them are taken away to work in the houses of their officers."

number of computers provided is inadequate. For 121 students, CGPL provided two or three desktops, and the computer teachers appointed come only once per week to the schools.

Many children also drop out of schools because of poor and inadequate infrastructure. Some villages have primary schools, but to attend grades 9-12 children have to travel approximately two to three kilometres. Most parents do not want to send their daughters outside the village because they do not feel safe. Incidentally, the drop-out rate is also much higher among girls. Villagers from Tunda and others requested that CGPL provide school buses, but to date no such service has been provided. CGPL has not acknowledged the high drop out rates in the affected communities.

In all of the villages, except Tragadi Bandar, children were seen loitering around with no parental supervision for long hours, which is uncommon in this area under normal circumstances. Our interviews with both women and children indicated that the parents were always busy with their struggle to make ends meet, and children were left to take care of themselves. Many were enrolled in school, but did not attend regularly. These interviews indicated children were also suffering from neglect; they did not seem to be getting the care and attention they need for healthy development.

The CGPL website provides an impressive list of education related activities¹⁰ in collaboration with the schools in the area, but the activities are mostly one-off events that only benefit children already in school. For those communities whose livelihoods are affected by the project, these activities do not make a perceptible impact.

Increasing prevalence of child labour:

Interviews with residents of the fishing communities indicated that rates of child labour had increased. Because of the depleted fish catch, most of the fisherfolk are unable to make ends meet forcing children to go fishing along with their parents to help them catch extra fish instead of going to school. One of the villagers of Sangarh told us that “earlier we used to catch 100,000 rupees worth of fish and now that has fallen to Rs 40,000. There has been a 60% decline in the catch. This has forced families to engage even young boys early in life so that they have more productive members at work.” This has also contributed to young boys dropping out of school.

In the pastoral communities (as in Tunda and Wandh), children are also increasingly forced to graze cattle. With the depleted grazing lands and decreasing agricultural productivity in the vicinity, the cattle have to be taken farther from the area for grazing, and the extra burden falls on the children.

CGPL claims to have provided vocational training to adolescents and youth,¹¹ which would help increase access to employment opportunities for older children who may be working and have no chance of resuming school education. However, most residents from the villages studied reported that no such training programmes have been organised in their villages. Only in Navinal village they reported that “50 girls were given mehendi [henna] training.”

Pervasive Violence Against Children

Experience from across the world shows that “development” projects that involve forced re-settlement, destruction of livelihoods and health hazards invariably lead to an increase in domestic violence and violence against children. Because of the inherent difficulties in gathering this information, much of the evidence is anecdotal. In this case, the children were generally unwilling to discuss their own experiences with domestic



¹⁰ See Annexure 1 “CSR Activities undertaken by CGPL” (section F)

¹¹ See Annexure 1 “CSR Activities undertaken by CGPL” (section F)

violence directly, but they were often willing to discuss situations experienced by neighbors, friends, and others. These interactions with children indicated that violence, including sexual violence against children, is indeed prevalent in the communities, and likely on the rise.

In the communities surrounding Tata Mundra, common forms of violence that affect children includes violence associated with “discipline,” witnessing domestic violence episodes between parents, and sexual violence experienced mostly by girls. Corporal punishment was practiced in the villages before the arrival of the coal plant, and is deemed culturally acceptable. While there were no indications that corporal punishment had increased in direct response to the establishment of the plant, it was clear to researchers that reactive violence of parents in response to mischief or lack of compliance to instructions was prevalent throughout local communities.

Sexual Violence in Navinal village

Something about the group of Dalit girls that the researchers met in Navinal greatly concerned the researchers. Very quiet and restrained, not forthcoming, lacking the normal curiosity to know more about the outsiders (researchers), their gaze mostly fixed to the ground, and speaking in subdued voices. The girls were adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18. All of them worked in agricultural fields, as farm labour during the season, but most of the time went to the plantation sites in the vicinity, where the company planted saplings as part of their afforestation (green cover) programme.

There was reluctance to talk about the plantation work. There were fearful furtive glances at each other and reluctance to open up to the researchers. Their mothers later narrated how several women and girls in the village had experienced harassment at the plantation sites. The supervisor and some of the staff made advances and lewd, suggestive comments at the girls. They also took extraordinary interest in the ‘fairer and more beautiful’ women and girls, who would then be engaged as domestic workers in the apartments of the higher officers of the company. According to the women, “The girls and women who go for work in the apartments are paid much higher, are given gifts; all in return for [sexual] favours”. They also indicated several poor families in the village had ‘made it good’ through this domestic work arrangement; with some of them now “able to afford educating their children in English”. Medium schools with high tuition fees since these officers paid for the fees”.

In all villages, researchers learned that many adolescent girls are being employed as wage labour on sapling plantation sites that belong to the companies and as domestic labour in the apartments of the staff of the company, where they are vulnerable to sexual abuse. Some of the girls came from families who had been relatively well off before the coal plant arrived. However, now that their parents had lost their livelihoods and were unable to pay for their schooling (or unwilling to pay for a girl’s schooling over her brother’s), many girls were pulled from school and sent to the

plantation sites to contribute to their families' incomes. While information on specific cases of sexual abuse was difficult to ascertain from the affected communities, it was apparent that girls from certain marginalized communities—already vulnerable to poverty and discrimination—were targeted by the staff of the plantation sites.

Before the establishment of the power plant, Muslim girls in all the villages used to attend school through high school and college. Now, however, most of them are no longer allowed to go beyond the primary level. They were as free as the girls of any other community until 2-3 years back, with no restriction on their mobility or dress. Since the companies arrived, all of them are now compelled to wear a burqa (veil) by the community leaders. Researchers noted that even little girls of four to five years also wear the burqa. In Tragadi, when asked by researchers why little girls were forced to wear the burqa, villagers informed them that there were been many cases of eve teasing, harassment, and sexual assaults on girls by certain criminal elements in the area (indicating they had been committed by staff of the company, their henchmen and other “outsiders”). The restricted mobility of girls has led to the discontinuation of their education, and the denial of other opportunities for their growth and development.

With regard to domestic violence generally, it appears to be on the rise since the establishment of the plant. Reported instances of mothers, fathers, teachers and elder siblings beating up children have become abnormally high. This was consistent with interviews by women in all of the villages who reported that alcoholism and domestic violence had increased considerably. Among the skits or mono-acts done by children, those that included the character of the drunken man beating up his wife and children was quite prevalent, being enacted by about 12 children.

Many children also exhibited behavioral characteristics that are consistent with having experienced violence. At least 50% of the children were highly subdued, which is consistent with an extreme fear induced by violence. Many children who participated in the group exercises were unable to look the researchers in the eye, unable to speak, with their eyes prying around when they are asked questions, and had difficulty joining with the other children in games.

Children also expressed anger and a tendency toward violence over the actions of the companies in their communities. In one instance in Tunda-Wandh, researchers reported that boys talked about some of the community leaders who “sold out” to the company. They discussed how their Sarpanch,¹² received lots of money from the company, how his three-story building was built for him by the company, and how he would not allow their parents to complain about their situation or the company when outsiders came to their village. During exercises in which children were asked to describe their dreams, several boys in different villages expressed the wish to become truck drivers. Further inquiry revealed that with the onset of the construction works of the company huge trucks have been frequenting the area. These men were also henchmen of the

¹² Elected president of the Local Self Government (Pachayat) in the village.

company, musclemen who were capable of intimidating the locals when there were conflicts. The vehicles they drove and the violent power these drivers had appealed to the boys so much so that they became ‘role models’ for some of them. The boys felt that if they became truck drivers they could be very powerful. As one of the boys, just 12 years old, expressed: “I would like to become like one of those Bihari truck drivers; hit their cars with my truck; shoot them all.”

Inadequate Consultation

In the five villages surveyed, all 25 households (five from each village) reported that there was no consultation with them before implementing the project, either from the Government or from the Companies. Researches also learned that for establishment and later for expansion of the power plant, the government has given away, from time to time, the communities’ grazing lands without any consultation. A resident from the Sangarh village reported that:

For the expansion of power plant the Tatas have acquired and put up their boundaries on our land without consulting us.....with these boundary walls blocking our way the transportation cost to Mandvi increased from Rs 150 to Rs 500 over the past two years as we have to now travel 7kms instead of 3 kms.

The people of the affected area were categorical in stating that they had not been consulted regarding the planning and implementation of the project and the consequences of land acquisition. They were just informed and were only able to participate in the discussion of their agreements and for compensations. There seemed to be no choice.



These are villages where CGPL has claimed to have done everything as per the Performance Standards laid down by the IFC. The CAO’s audit report concludes unequivocally that IFC was not in a position to ensure the proper application of Performance Standard 5 (Land Acquisition)— despite indications that households living on the *bunders* had been displaced by the project (both physically and economically). While the report deals specifically with the issues raised by the fisherfolk of Tragadi and Kotadi Bunders, our findings raise questions as to the veracity of the claims of CGPL regarding other villages where IFC is apparently satisfied with the E&S assessments, and other requirements set out by the Performance Standards. Many of the respondents quoted in this study are from villages where no formal complaints were filed with the CAO.

In general, the people feel helpless, and as though they have no one to turn to. They said they were not aware of such serious consequences that would ensue the commissioning of the power plants in their regions.

IV. HOW CAN WORLD BANK SAFEGUARDS ADDRESS SIMILAR IMPACTS?

Among other issues, the members of the fishing communities that filed the CAO complaint they alleged their specific needs were not adequately considered along with other E&S risks associated with the project and that there was a lack of effective consultation with their communities. While this project was financed by the IFC, and therefore not subject to World Bank safeguards, the World Bank can incorporate several key lessons learned into the current review of its social and environmental safeguard policies.¹³ Most importantly, a project's impacts on children must be evaluated and addressed through the updated safeguard policies.



Social and environmental assessments must be required to take into account impacts on children, including, but not limited to potential impacts to their health, education and security. Under the World Bank's proposed ESS1, the borrower is required to look at particular impacts on vulnerable groups, including those vulnerable because of their age, as part of the social assessment. It is important that the Bank make clear that these impacts should not be conflated

with a generalized assessment of impacts on "vulnerable groups," as children, with their developing minds and bodies, are uniquely impacted by even short term deprivations. Different vulnerable or marginalized groups in affected communities do not experience negative impacts in the same way, and their unique needs must be considered in social and environmental impact assessments. In addition, ESS1 should recognize the need for social assessments to incorporate an analysis of the indirect impacts on children—in particular, violence against children—that are associated with Bank projects. The direct and indirect impacts in this case on the health, environment, education, and social context of local children, will likely yield irreversible effects that could perpetuate the cycle of poverty in their communities for generations rather than alleviate it.

¹³ The World Bank is currently in the process of reviewing its social and environmental safeguard policies. In July 2014, the Bank published a draft Social and Environmental Framework, including 10 Environmental and Social Standards, referred to here as "ESSs".

In order to ensure that the needs of all vulnerable and marginalized groups are properly considered, the World Bank must also require that vulnerable and marginalized groups, including children, are consulted from the beginning of the project cycle, provided with adequate information about the project, and given opportunities to raise concerns and complaints about the project. Although the World Bank's new social and environmental Framework includes a commitment to consult with all vulnerable groups regardless of age in ESS10, the Bank provides little guidance for borrowers on how to carry out effective consultations with children. It is therefore essential that the World Bank expand upon ESS10 in order that the voices and opinions of children are included throughout the project cycle. The requirements for consultation with children must be made specific, and must include guidance for the borrower so that consultations with children are carried out in an age appropriate manner. Consultations with NGOs that work with children and focus on issues related to the rights and welfare of children would also be an effective tool in understanding the problems likely to face children as a result of a given project, but should not be allowed to replace consultations with children.

The World Bank should also ensure its updated policy on resettlement, ESS5, includes specific provisions that address the needs of children. In particular, those who are almost of majority age should be considered in the relocation plan. This policy must also require efforts to improve education conditions, medical facilities, and transportation infrastructure. Issues related to the parents' ability to earn sufficient income to provide for the nutrition, health care, and education needs of their children in a new area should be analyzed when creating a relocation plan. Simply compensating families for the assets and crops lost is not enough, as this case study shows. People should also be relocated to a location that allows them the same or better standard of living as they previously experienced. Anything less can greatly hinder the development of children in the community.

In the updated safeguard policies, the World Bank must also be accountable for regularly monitoring the implementation of their guidelines. This monitoring role should be coupled with practical enforcement mechanisms to ensure that these guidelines are followed throughout the project cycle.

CONCLUSION

Failure to assess impacts of development on children can have dire consequences on their health and wellbeing. In order to ensure its projects are committing to the development of those who need it most, the World Bank must ensure its safeguard policies require impact assessments that look at the unique risks children face when their communities are affected by projects. Without doing so, the Bank will ensure that development continues to benefit only a few, at the expense of many.

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Photo credits to Joe Athialy.