Ecofeminism:

Readiness of gender evolution in the case of Mong Ton dam project

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Introduction

• framed by the concept of eco-feminism
• analyses the gender roles in water management
• examines gender power relationship in the campaign activities
• accesses the motivation and discouragement of women to be engaged in campaign
Ecofeminism

• “The diverse connections between the bond of women and nature, and the aspiration to replace the injustice of a dominating structure with a more just non-dominating approach to address the environmental problems.” (Mies & Shiva, 1993)
Ecofeminism

• Eco-feminism believes that women could bring an ecological revolution and environmental justice with grassroots mobilization, participation, political openness, and involvement (Mies & Shiva, 1993).
Gender Evolution

• Gender evolution in this particular context is the development of gender knowledge and the progress of women taking action in social movement.
Argument

• She states that “Many women in developing countries have seen links between the oppression of women and the devastation of natural resources and have been taking action to resist these negative forces” (Mies & Shiva, 1993).

• The readiness are depending on political openness, social value on gender role, policy implication and existing of institution.
Research Sites

• Wan Sala Village, Mong Ton Township
• Kun Heng Township
• Mong Pan Township
Methodology

• The methodology are a non-traditional research project, because
  1) it employs previously inexperienced local youth as principal
  2) it employs video as a tool
  3) capacity building and awareness rising are considered equally as important as research as research findings
  4) it cooperates a hybrid of academic research and fact findings).
Gender Roles in the research sites

• There are reproductive work for household use, productive work for economic purpose and social work within community.
• the household chore is seen, as the duty of women and getting water for family use.
• Generating income which getting water for economic purpose is the responsibility of men.
• Gender role in social activities can be distinguished based on their physical strength and management ability.
Analysis on Gender Role in the research sites

• men and women roles are equally important within the capability and skills they attain
• In common, the research found that while men make money, on the other hand women manage financial resources. However, it is not always the case that women always manage money in the family. It is also rely on the ability of men and women, as a consequence the power relationship within the family also different.
• The gender role will be changed depending on location, knowledge level, ability and age
• In general women take a leadership role in informal meeting, as well as in their household. In contrast, men are more significant and have higher position to lead in the formal meeting.
Result: Part II

• Overview of Mong Ton dam project and impacts of the dam
• SMEC and its role in Mong Ton dam
• Analysis
Overview of Mong Ton dam

- will be the biggest in Southeast
- the installed capacity is 7000 MW
- 241 meters height
- reservoir 641 square meter
- the resettlement size would be 12,000 people
- 45% will be exported to China and 45% will be sold to Thailand and the rest 10% will be for the domestic used

The dam developers:
- China Three Gorges Project Corporation
- Sinohydrocorporation
- China Southern Power Grid
- Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT)
- International Group of Entrepreneurs Co (SMEC fact sheet, 2015)
SMEC and its role in Mong Ton dam

- Snowy Mountain Engineering Corporation (SMEC) has been hired to conduct Social and Environmental Impacts Assessment studies
- On March 10, 2015, Public meeting in Taunggyi
- On April 6, 2015, SMEC organized a public meeting in Mong Ton Township
- On April 30, 2015, SMEC planned to organize a public meeting in Kun Heng Township
• “Though Wan Sala village is the closest village only 19 miles away from dam site, the consultative meetings have not been conducted and the people have not been targeted to participate in the meeting.” (Sam Pao Hom, MP, 2015)
Women participation in the movement

• “In 2015, the SMEC, EIA team came to Kun Heng township and organized the meeting. I heard from the meeting participants that the company promised to provide water and electricity then collected their signatures about their agreement. Since Nang Wa Nu (the formal parliamentary member) heard about this, she then mobilized us and youth to oppose the project because the project will cause flood of the city, the beauty of one thousand islands, and the invaluable heritage of Shan. Since then I become active in the movement.” (Nang Kham Kong, KH, 2016)
Analysis

• Political openness and external factors (Kun Heng vs Wansala village)
• Traditional value on gender role can be a barrier for gender evolution
• Policy implication
• The existence of institution
Traditional value on gender

• women are largely regarded as bearer of culture
• social norms can be seen as structural violence
• women are vulnerable
Policy implication

• Some public policies limit the potential of women
• little recognition in the society. For eg: in the household registration and identity card
The existence of institution

• pave a way for women to take part in the social issue, campaign

• many changes since women are fully informed about the issue, as well as get to involve with divert groups working on the same issue, their determination to protect the river is stronger.

• The empowered women and youth continue involving in social movement campaign the hydropower project.
Women participation in the movement

• “Before I do not realize the important of water, since I came to engage with social network, I realize the importance of water, forest and nature. After attending training and discussion in the group work, I determine to do research the impact of the dams and the livelihood of local people in the potential affected communities.” (Nang Hom Kham, MP, 2015)
Conclusion

• Based on our research findings, many women leader do not have knowledge on gender equality. Therefore, women need to empower themselves to have a deep understanding on gender equality and to be able to participate in social movement and involving in decision making processes.
Recommendation

• As education is a powerful tool to end the perpetuation of gender norms and to breakdown stereotypes, gender education policy should be undertaken in formal and informal schools.

• Gender power relation analysis should be conducted in all types of development activities.

• Environmental Impact Assessment processes should include gendered impact assessment for all development projects in Myanmar.

• Alternative Plans for Energy Demand in Myanmar