



ADB Road Projects and Concerns in Manipur

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Contextualizing India's Neoliberal Policy and IFIs

The Indian government adopted an aggressive neoliberal economic framework in the 1990s leading to significant changes in India's politico-economic framework. Since then, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) intensified their presence and reach in Manipur and across the region.¹

The post-1991 phase of economic liberalization saw an aggressive move to connect Northeast India with Southeast Asia, as evidenced by the construction of the Trans-Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway passing through Manipur as well as with other multitude of infrastructure and sectoral investments. Recently, in 2014, after signing the Free Trade Agreement with ASEAN countries in Laos, the Indian government has designated its northeast region, including Manipur, the gateway to Southeast Asia for trade and investment.²

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¹ Insidious Financial Institutions in India's North East, by R. Wangkheirakpam and J. Yumnam, published by Intercultural Resources and Form for Indigenous Perspectives and Action, April 2006

² India-ASEAN conclude free trade agreement in services, investments, Press Trust of India (PTI), December 20, 2012

http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2012-12-20/news/35933727_1_commemorative-summit-services-and-investments-asean-today

IFIs, primarily the Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank, and Japan International Cooperation Agency, are increasingly associated with Manipur's so-called 'development' with their financial and technical support on a range of projects, such as road development, tourism, power, and governance.³ As part of its effort to economically integrate India with larger economies in the Asia-Pacific region, IFIs also expanded its activities in trade, finance, transport, and information technology. The IFIs' focus in Northeast India is evident from the large number of projects in a range of sectors, particularly in infrastructure, energy, urban development, agriculture, water management and subsequent policy reforms, among others. Regional transportation and connectivity has also been considered by IFIs as extremely crucial to foster trade and commerce among the countries in the South and Southeast Asia. The World Bank, in particular, is investing heavily on the construction of high-voltage transmission and distribution lines, whereas the ADB is interested in developing a series of road projects in Manipur and across India's northeast region.

IFIs also targeted India's northeastern region in their sub-regionalization process and in the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) because of its massive energy potential and vast resource of minerals, oil, forest, livestock, fertile agricultural land, important ports as well as cheap skilled labour.⁴ As a matter of fact, in its Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for 2013-2017, the ADB included a special emphasis on India's northeastern region as a strategic location for cross-border regional cooperation with several neighboring countries and trade and investment, suggesting

the need to integrate South Asian economies with that of the Southeast Asia.⁵

Indeed, the goal of the ADB transport sector coincides with that of India's CPS, that is, to make the movement of people and goods more efficient, safe, sustainable manner. The proposed investment program also resonates with the regional cooperation operations business plan (2014–2016), which is focused on creating an enabling South Asia to integrate its cooperation initiatives with neighboring regions.⁶ However, while the governments of India and Manipur project such facilitation as necessary in reducing poverty and breaking barriers of underdevelopment, there is still silence on whether such programs and financing policies adhere to international development norms. Deep controversy still persists in projects financed by these IFIs across Asia and long-term implications of their financing are often overlooked.

IFIs and Road Projects in Manipur

Manipur is one of the States targeted for the US\$300 million loan agreement signed between the Government of India and the ADB in March 2015. This agreement aims to improve road connectivity and increasing domestic and regional trade along the North Bengal-North Eastern region international trade corridor. Two new roads in Manipur envisaged for construction under the project are the Imphal-Kanchup-Tamenglong Road and Imphal Ring Road. The loan is the first under a US\$425 million multi-tranche SASEC Road Connectivity Investment Programme approved by the ADB in 2014, to be completed in December 2021. The ADB is providing US\$300 million, which is nearly 71% of the total project cost with the Central

³ Study on Water and Natural Resources Management in India's North East India, World Bank, 2006

⁴ "South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC): Building Block Between South & East Asia", Sekhar Bonu, Director, SARC/ SARD, ADB, 7 September 2012
https://aric.adb.org/pdf/SASEC_RCI%20Seminar%20Presentation.pdf

⁵ "ADB-India Partnership Strategy", Asian Development Bank
<http://www.adb.org/countries/india/strategy>

⁶ This Framework Financing Agreement, dated 26 February 2014, between India acting by its President ("India") and Asian Development Bank ("ADB")

Government of India and State Government of Manipur providing counterpart finance of about US\$125 million.⁷

India is also preparing to implement the SASEC Road Connectivity Investment Program, which is an integral part of India's investment program for regional connectivity. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and the States of Manipur and West Bengal will be the implementing agencies. The investment program was endorsed by the SASEC trade facilitation and transport working group meeting held in Singapore in October 2013. The total cost from Fiscal Years 2014-2015 to 2021-2022 is expected to be US\$761.6 million.

Loan agreements between the Indian Government and the ADB were also signed for the Northeastern States Road Investment Program (NESRIP) in July 2012 (Tranche I) and for the tranche II in February 2014 at a total cost of US\$200 million.⁸ The implementation of the Tranche II is progressing in the northeastern states, where the roads projects from Tupul (NH 53) to Bishnupur, Thoubal to Kasom Khullen in Manipur has been taken up.⁹

All these road projects in Manipur financed by ADB and pursued under the NESRIP through the SASEC Regional Road Connectivity project already landed in controversies. For instance, several communities affected by the ADB's Imphal Ring Road plan already expressed wide objections and concerns. Three joint action committees (JAC) of affected communities, constituted against the Manipur Government's plan, have appealed to the ADB in January 2015 to desist from financing the proposed Imphal

Ring Road Project. In a memorandum submitted to ADB President Takehiko Nakao, the JAC Against Proposed Imphal Ring Road (Tharon-Lanthungching), JAC Kongba Makha Nandeibam Leikai Development Committee and JAC Langthabal Nambul Mapal on Imphal Ring Road Project maintained that ADB should not invest in the Imphal Ring Road Project until and unless free, prior, and informed consent of the affected peoples are properly obtained. So far, there have been minimal efforts on the part of the Government and ADB to reach out to affected people and inform details of the project and possible implications for their rights and survival.¹⁰

Similarly, communities affected by ADB-financed road project in Kasom Khullen in Ukhrul District, Manipur challenged ADB's violations and impacts in Manipur High court seeking appropriate redress and justice for violations but to no avail.¹¹ Some of the selected ADB road projects and implications on indigenous communities in Manipur are discussed below.

ADB-financed Imphal Ring Road Project in Manipur

The Imphal Ring Road Project, part of ADB's SASEC Road Connectivity Investment Programme, ignited wide controversy with its massive land acquisition moves, lack of holistic impact appraisals, lack of consultations with affected communities, and alternatives to participatory processes. The proposed Imphal Ring Road, which will be 46 km long and with a width of 30 metres, is planned to be constructed within a period of five years at an estimated cost

⁷ "Manipur to benefit from ADB loan, - Ring road part of project" the Telegraph, 27 March 2015
http://www.telegraphindia.com/1150327/jsp/northeast/story_11074.jsp#.VxjhRHonI2w

⁸ Loan 3073-IND: North Eastern State Roads Investment Program
⁹ Loan agreement, LOAN NUMBER 3073-IND, PROJECT AGREEMENT (North Eastern State Roads Investment Program -Project 2) between ADB and Government of Manipur with MDONER, 17 February 2014

¹⁰ Spare residential areas, agricultural land: JACs to ADB
The Sangai Express, 17 Jan 2015
<http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/page/items/47489/spare-residential-areas-agricultural-land-jacs-to-adb>

¹¹ Construction of Thoubal-Kasom Khullen road : Asian Development Bank served notice, The Sangai Express, 18 August 2014
<http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/construction-of-thoubal-kasom-khullen-road-asian-development-bank-served-notice/>

of around 346 Crores Indian Rupees and expenditures envisaged at 8.17 Crores Indian Rupees for each kilometre.¹² The project proponents reasoned that India's Look East Policy and trade expansion with Southeast Asian countries will enormously increase traffic volume, thus the need for the Imphal Ring Road.

In September 2014, the Public Works Department of the Government of Manipur issued a notice inviting consultants to conduct feasibility studies and issue a detailed project report. A team of experts from the EGIS International France led by Transport specialist Eyan Jennings inspected the condition of roads and crossings in Imphal town to support the project.¹³ Representatives of Mr. MK Mohanty, Resettlement Specialist and ADB consultant for the project, also commenced surveys for rehabilitation in Kongba, Langthabal, Langjing, Langol, and other areas.¹⁴ Affected communities objected to the survey due to its unilateral process, lack of consultation, limited impact assessment, as well as the prospect of undervaluing their assets as what happened in the ADB-loaned road project in Kasom Khullen in Eastern Manipur.¹⁵

Despite objections, officials of the Revenue and Settlement Department of the Government of Manipur still commenced surveys and collection of land records in villages along the Langol foothills and other areas affected by the plan in outskirts of Imphal Town. Earlier, the project

director, NESRIP, Public Works Department of the Government of Manipur already instructed the Deputy Commissioner of Imphal West and Imphal East Districts to commence with land acquisition.¹⁶

The Imphal Town Ring Road project will heavily affect residential areas in Kongba Nandeibam Leikai, Langthabal, Langol, and Kairang Villages in Imphal West and East Districts. While the total number of families and agricultural land areas to be affected by the project is yet to be ascertained, it is expected that hundreds of households will be uprooted completely.¹⁷ An initial assessment indicates that the project will affect more than 1000 acres of prime agricultural land in Kongba, Bashikhong, Langthabal, Langol, and Lamphel in Imphal West and East Districts. Around 500 families will also be affected in the villages of Tharon, Thangmeiband, Tarung, Laimanai, Neikanglong, Grace Colony, and Vaiphei Enclave that are inhabited by various communities such as Vaiphei, Paite, Meitei, and Rongmei.¹⁸ The project will destroy part of sacred Langthabal, Langjing, Chingmeirong Cheiraoching, Langol Hills as well as adjoining forests which are all associated with the history and folklores of Meitei and other indigenous peoples. Many families depending on Lamphelpat wetlands for agriculture and fishing will also be affected. Community grounds, water bodies, forest areas, rich vegetation and other religious structures will also be affected.

One of the serious concerns is the feasibility of the Imphal Ring Road plan with its route concentration in Imphal Town areas itself: strange route demarcations criss-crossing in zigzag pattern and oddly circumventing narrow

¹² Govt plans to come up with ring road with ADB aid, The Sangai Express, 4 February 2014.

<http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/page/items/35418/govt-plans-to-come-up-with-ring-road-with-adb-aid>

¹³ EGIS Intl Experts undertake feasibility study on city roads and junctions

The Hueiyen Lanpao, 7 November 2014, <http://www.e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=3.071114.nov14>

¹⁴ Survey underway for Imphal Ring road, The Sangai Express, 11 November 2014

<http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/page/items/45106/survey-underway-for-imphal-ring-road>

¹⁵ Sites for the proposed ADB-funded ring road inspected, The Hueiyen Lanpao, 12 December 2014

<http://www.hueiyenlanpao.com/headlines/item/15745-sites-for-the-proposed-adb-funded-ring-road-inspected>

¹⁶ Letter to the Deputy Commissioner, Imphal West, Government of Manipur by Mr. Y. Joykumar, Project Director, NESRIP, dated 5 May 2014 and Reference No: 3/PD/NESRIP/Cor/2013/13

¹⁷ Memorandum to the President, Asian Development Bank by Affected Peoples Coordinating Committee on ADB Financed Imphal Ring Road Project, dated 15 January 2015

¹⁸ Objection rings loud against ring road, Source: The Sangai Express, 26 November 2014, <http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=7..261114.nov14>

conspicuous strip of land in Mantripukhri area left many bewildered. There are also concerns whether the routes of the Imphal Ring Road are just meant to accommodate the rich and privileged rather than ensuring the rights and properties of the local communities.¹⁹

Several other affected communities publicly expressed their objections believing that the road widening plan will only extinguish their habitation space and undermine their identity. In September 2014, the Kongba Makha Nandeibam Leikai development committee strongly opposed the eviction plan as the road project implementation and subsequent land acquisition processes failed to obtain their consent. Affected communities of Langthabal submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister of Manipur to reconsider the Ring Road alignments and consider alternative routes.²⁰ Similarly, residents of the Langjing Achouba and Langol foothills areas from Tharon to Lanthungching also expressed objections. Despite community objections and submissions, project authorities and the ADB still proceeded with the surveys and construction without discussing alternatives with affected communities.

In January 2015, the ADB, through the Public Works Department, convened a meeting for communities affected by its Imphal Ring Road Project. The ADB visit in Manipur is related to monitoring the project implementation but also attempted to meet affected communities. However, the due process of taking free, prior, and informed consent has not been followed and affected communities were not officially informed prior to the meeting. As the affected villagers were not officially invited, they resorted to making an open submission to the media establishments of Manipur instead, urging the

ADB to desist from financing the Imphal Ring Road Project.²¹ After the media reportage, affected communities were able to meet with ADB representatives and apprise them of their concerns on the Ring Road Plan.

ADB-financed Kasom Khullen Road Project in Manipur

The 47-kilometre Kasom Khullen road project financed by ADB is included in Tranche II of the NESRIP that was implemented by the Public Works Department of the Government of Manipur. The villages of Somrei, Irong Ngoupikhong, N Mollen of Saikul Division Village of Senapait District, Yeasom Village, Kasom Khullen Village, and T Natyang Village of Kasom Khullen Sub-division of Ukhrul District in Manipur are just some of the areas that have been severely affected by the project.

In August 2014, affected villagers filed legal petition against the ADB with regard to land acquisition without providing sufficient information on related rehabilitation and compensation measures. Contending that applicable land rehabilitation legislations were ignored, the affected villagers pleaded that the Right to Fair Compensation and Rehabilitation Act of 2013 be implemented before the commencement of the road project. The ADB has failed to respond to the legal notice served to them by affected villagers as of yet, as also shared by the counsel representing the affected communities.

ADB-financed Asian Highway 1

The Asian Highway is one of the key focus of in facilitating trade and investment between South and Southeast Asian countries. Providing a crucial link between India and Myanmar, the Asian Highway road section in Manipur from

¹⁹ "ADB Ring Road Controversies", by Jiten Yumnam, The Sangai Express, 19 November 2014 <http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/adbs-imphal-ring-road-controversies/>

²⁰ "Proposed Ring road", The Sangai Express, 19 November 2014 <http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/proposed-ring-road/>

²¹ Spare residential areas, agricultural land: JACs to ADB, Source: The Sangai Express, 17 January 2015 <http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=8..170115.jan15>

Imphal Town to Moreh will be financed by the ADB and is included among the road projects outlined in agreement between the Government of India and the ADB in February 2014.

There are clear concerns that the appraisal of social and environment impacts has not been carried out adequately and with adherence to indigenous peoples rights.²² At least 100 acres of prime agricultural land will be affected by the proposed 100-foot four lane road Asian Highway 1 in Manipur. The proposed Asian Highway 1 will affect farming communities residing along the Yaithibi Loukon, an agricultural land in the Thoubal District, and several indigenous communities of Manipur. Aside from the ADB's Ring Road Project, the communities are also beset by other proposed construction projects, such as the National Sports University at Yaithibi Loukon. The resulting heavy traffic and congestion along the Trans-Asian Highway route will never provide conducive environment for the healthy growth of sports in Manipur. Moreover, the combined effect of all these projects also seriously undermines the survival of small-scale farmers. In particular, the ADB's Asian Highway project requires homestead lands in Sora and Langthabal Villages in Thoubal River to be acquired. Seventy (70) households and small scale business establishments face the risk of becoming homeless and landless.²³

ADB's Involvement in Road Projects and Violations

The Imphal Ring Road project is marked by an absence of detailed social, economic, health, and environmental needs and impact assessments to define clear alternatives for affected

communities.²⁴ These communities are worried that surveyors from ADB's consultants and government revenue departments will only intrude into their villages without consulting them. There have been no efforts on the part of the Government, the ADB, and their consultants to reach out to affected communities and inform them of the details of the project and other implications on their rights.²⁵

The involvement of private consultant firms, private developers, and IFIs does not necessarily translate to development and efficient services. The Public Works Department of Manipur and other units implementing the road project, including AECOM Asia Company Limited, Rodic Consultants Private Ltd, Dineshchandra R. Agarwal Infracon Pvt. Ltd, and ABCL, have begun constructing the Bishenput–Tupul Road and the Thoubal–Kasom Khullen road without conducting a detailed impact assessments and causing social and environmental damages. The extensive sand and stone mining by ABCI company from Ejei River for construction of Bishenpur to Tupul road had led to massive soil erosion, receding of water level, loss of fish habitat, and scarcity of water in Noney and Tupul areas in Tamenglong District, also rendering agriculture lands unfit for cultivation.

Neither does the involvement of foreign governments ensure the proper implementation of projects. The French Government-supported Imphal Sewerage Project in Manipur has been widely condemned for its extensive delays, environmental impacts, and human casualties.²⁶ The project still remains incomplete but has already claimed several lives in accidents due to

²² "ADB team surveys Imphal-Moreh route", 6 August 2013, Sangai Express. <http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/29070-adb-team-surveys-imphalmoreh-route/>

²³ Letter to Mr. Takehiko Nakao, President, Asian Development Bank by Affected Land Owners Association Against Forced Land Acquisition for Sports University, Manipur on 15 June 2015

²⁴ "Objection rings loud against ring road", Source: The Sangai Express, 26 November 2014. <http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=7..261114>. November 2014

²⁵ "Adverse impact of Imphal Ring Road plan spelled out", Hueiyen News Service, 16 January 2015 . <http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=28..160115.jan15>

²⁶ Leivon, D. (2012, Aug 23). Manipur: Imphal Sewage Project: A Boon or Bane. Retrieved from <http://kanglaonline.com/2012/08/manipur-imphal-sewage-project-a-boon-or-a-bane/>

multiple holes that were left uncovered.²⁷ The Manipur Sericulture Project financed by the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation is also laden with failure and wide corruption, in addition to other controversies.²⁸

Conclusions

In all these development projects, ADB and the Government of Manipur seem to have failed in: (a) applying safeguard policies; (b) conducting environment and social impact assessments; (c) preparing rehabilitation and resettlement plans; and (d) securing indigenous peoples' action plan based on their rightful participation, among others.

The fundamental recognition of peoples' livelihood and survival dependence on their land and resources is lacking in the pursuance of these projects. On the contrary, these projects were pursued to advance the economic interests of corporate bodies and the Government of India.

The Government of Manipur has failed to consult with affected communities and obtain their free, prior and informed consent. The ADB cannot, under any circumstances, exempt these projects from compliance with their own safeguard policy statement for the protection of indigenous peoples' rights and environment in Manipur. The failure to consult and obtain the free, prior, and informed consent of affected communities is a significant violation of indigenous peoples' rights as outlined in the 2007 UN Declaration on the Indigenous Peoples Rights.

The ADB road projects not only facilitated the plunder of indigenous peoples' land, water, forest, and natural resources but also led to severe social and environmental impacts. ADB's Kangchup-Tamenglong Road already resulted in

social conflict among the Zeliangrong people on rehabilitation matters. The Zeliangrong Youth Front has raised concerns over the lack of impact appraisals and clear rehabilitation and resettlement plans for the areas affected.²⁹ Moreover, concerns persist that the ADB road from Bishenpur to Tupul will directly facilitate the construction of 66 MW Loktak and 70 MW Nungleiband hydroelectric projects besides oil exploration plans by Jubilant Energy in the region. These mega dams and oil exploration will lead to massive scale of submergence and destruction of both agricultural land and forest areas as well as negative impacts on the livelihood of indigenous communities in the district.

The ADB, in all its financed and supported projects, is obliged to advance safeguard policies that cover rehabilitation and resettlement, social and environment impact assessment, and indigenous peoples rights. Unfortunately, these safeguard policies, widely condemned for its limitations, were inadequately applied in Manipur.

Many communities who eke out their livelihood through farming, fishing, and small scale economic activity in areas affected by the road project, continue to be threatened with the loss of their livelihood. These projects constitute a clear violation of their right to life, as guaranteed by Article 21 of Constitution of India and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Failure to complete the rehabilitation and resettlement for the land acquired for the road project also constitute a clear disregard to the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples Rights.

²⁷ "Sloppy sewerage project gets final thrust", The Sangai Express, 28 May 2015. <http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/page/items/39181/sloppy-sewerage-project-gets-final-thrust>

²⁸ 700 Seri FoUs as good as dead. (2013, July 06). The Sangai Express.

²⁹ "ZU warn against disturbances in construction of Imphal-Kangchup-Tamenglong road", the Imphal Free Press, 21 March 2016 <http://ifp.co.in/page/items/31298/znu-warn-against-disturbances-in-construction-of-imphal-kangchup-tamenglong-road>

Moreover, the direct implication of increased loans, thus increasing debt of Manipur and its people, to IFIs has never been discussed. In early 2015, the Government of India had already withdrawn the Special Category State Status from Manipur which costs the State Government at least 50% of development financial expenses from its own coffers. With limited resource avenues, Manipur will be compelled to borrow from the IFIs. The increased involvement of IFIs is not only coincident but also a clear indication of the pattern of development financings in Manipur, more of seeking conditional loans. With Manipur listed as one of the most corrupt states, the increasing investment from IFIs will only lead to imposition of more tax and debt servicing from its people. With a range of loans and financing by IFIs, Manipur is simply destined to be trapped in a vicious cycle of debt, conflict and an uncertain future. In addition to seeking increased loan from IFIs, Manipur will also be compelled to mortgage its own water, oil and gas, forest, minerals, and other resources to unscrupulous exploitation and destruction by corporate bodies for mere loyalties and minimal taxes.

The larger implications of ADB-financed road projects on local economy, on the intrinsic role of indigenous women in sustainable and traditional economic system and other impacts on the environment and natural resources in Manipur have also not been considered. This consideration is crucial given the primacy to a liberalized economy and trading among countries with powerful economy in South and Southeast Asia under WTO guidelines. The overwhelming thrust to privatization and role of corporations in India's Look East Policy and also by IFI's in their project financings and realization of their objective would definitely usher in an economy defined and controlled by corporate interests, which will only lead to uncontrolled plunder of natural resources in the region.

Indeed, there is minimal focus to promote the interest and rights of indigenous communities, or to recognize their intrinsic survival rights and relationship with their land and resources. The new economic agenda and allied infrastructure push with IFI's facilitation will additionally have political ramifications, with increased militarization and subsequent human rights violations in Manipur.

Recommendations

An introspection of the road development projects in Manipur would indicate development priorities of the government and IFIs in fostering trade and commerce with neighboring countries which are pursued not only in an exclusive process, but also promoted at the interest of private corporate bodies and political elites. There's hardly any consideration of promoting interest and rights of indigenous communities with their rightful participation. The land and resources, all intrinsic to their survival, are misinterpreted as sources of economic development without considering the larger implications of expropriation of such resources on indigenous peoples' survival.

The marked rise in inequality and concentration of wealth is an alarming reality in Manipur. It's high time to ponder if Manipur will ever leap to meaningful progress with credit financing of 'development' projects by IFIs such as the ADB. With ADB's thrust for private sector involvement, corporatization of development, and utter disregard of fundamental livelihood source of communities, poverty and inequality will not be significantly reduced.

A clear accountability framework is thus crucial for ADB projects in Manipur so that affected communities can seek redress and justice. The ADB financed Imphal Town Ring Road, Kasom Khullen Road, and Asian Highway 1 projects, among other rural roads and large-scale infrastructure projects should not be

constructed without the free, prior, and informed consent of all affected communities in Manipur. The Government of Manipur and the ADB should not only provide all necessary related information to stakeholders but also hold accountability on the effects and impacts, both intended and unintended, of their projects.

There should be no forceful acquisition of agricultural lands, residential areas, wetlands, forests, and hills of Manipur for the project without informed consultation process with all stakeholders. Any forced displacement by the ADB's road and other projects in Manipur will only lead to further violations of Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Given the ADB's road financing pattern, there are tell-tale evidence that IFI-financed projects will only lead to widespread impoverishment, inequality, and social conflicts that undermine self-determined development for indigenous peoples of Manipur. Any development process that benefits the few elites and corporate bodies, while victimizing communities at large, is simply anti-people and should not be construed as real development. Such development process that victimizes communities and destroys livelihood sources will only foster inequality³⁰. A development rooted in rightful participation of indigenous communities and based on promotion of sustainability of natural heritage of Manipur should be accorded high primacy.

³⁰ Memorandum submitted to President, ADB by Affected Peoples Coordinating Committee on ADB Financed Imphal Ring Road Project on 30 November 2014