

Environmental Impact Assessment of *Gotvand* Hydro-Electric Dam on the *Karoon* River Using ICOLD Technique

A. Sayadi, A. Khodadadi D., and S. Partani

Abstract—Today Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is known as one of the most important tools for decision makers in the construction of civil and industrial projects towards sustainable development. In the past, projects were evaluated based on cost and benefit analysis regardless of the physical and biological environmental effects and its socio-economical impacts. According to the Department of Environment (DOE) of Iran's regulations, the construction of hydroelectric dams is an activity that requires an EIA report. In this paper the environmental impact assessment of the *Gotvand* hydro-electrical dam has been evaluated in the three environment elements, biological, Physical-chemical and cultural units. This dam is one of the largest dams in Iran with a volume of 4500 MCM and is going to be the last dam on the *Karoon* River in the south of Iran. In this paper the ICOLD (International Commission on Large Dams) technique was employed for the environmental impact assessment of the dam. The research includes all socio economical and environmental effects of the dam during the construction and operation of the hydro electric dam and Environmental management, monitoring and mitigation of negative impacts were analyzed. In this project the results led to using some techniques to protect the destructive impacts on biological aspects beside the effective long time period impacts on the biological aspects. The impacts on physical aspects are temporary and negative commonly that could be restored and rehabilitated in natural process in the long time in operation period.

Keywords—"Gotvand Hydro Electric Dam", "EIA", "ICOLD and Leopold matrices".

I. INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), since 1971 mandatory in a growing number of ICOLD1 member countries, ought to become standard procedure everywhere as part of project conceptualization, that is well before final design and the start of construction [1].

Economic, Social, Physical and Environmental change is

Ahmad Sayadi is with Faculty of Engineering, Tarbiat Modares University, Iran (corresponding author, phone: +98(21)82883546, fax: +98(21)82884324; e-mail: Sayadi@modares.ac.ir).

Ahmad Khodadadi Darban is with Faculty of Engineering, Tarbiat Modares University, Iran (phone: +98(21)82883399, fax: +98(21)82884324; e-mail: AKDarban@modares.ac.ir).

Sadegh Partani is with Modares Environmental Research Center-MERC, Tarbai Modares University, Iran (phone: +98(21)82883995, fax: +98(21)82884324, e-mail: Sadegh_Partani@yahoo.com)

inherent to development. Whilst development aims to bring about positive change it can lead to conflicts. In the past, the promotion of economic growth as the motor for increased well-being was the main development thrust with little sensitivity to adverse social or environmental impacts. The need to avoid adverse impacts and to ensure long term benefits led to the concept of sustainability. This has become accepted as an essential feature of development if the aim of increased well-being and greater equity in fulfilling basic needs is to be met for this and future generations. The imperative for development to remedy these defects may be so great that consequent environmental degradation may be tolerated. With Iran as a water scarce country, with a mean annual rainfall of below 250 mm, the use of water has been critical to the development of the country's industrial base and wider economy and will remain so in future. However, due to past exploitation, and the increasing demand for water, the regulation of our water resources is essential [2]. Literatures indicate that the most negative impacts of large dam construction are loss in the ecological/biodiversity [3]:

- a) Impact on the ecology of the freshwater system,
- b) Loss in water bird habitat.

World Bank's estimate that roughly ten million people are displaced each year due to dam construction, urban development, and transportation and infrastructure programs [4]: This number is shockingly high, but it still fails to account for large numbers of the displaced. Displacement tallies almost always refer only to persons physically ousted from legally acquired land in order to make way for the planned project, ignoring those living in the vicinity of, or downstream from, projects, whose livelihoods and socio-cultural milieu might be adversely affected by the project [5].

It is during the dam operation phase - which can typically span 50 to 100 years - that the most severe impacts on fisheries and aquatic environments take place [3]. Produced comprehensive reviews of dam impacts on fisheries and aquatic ecology at global level, while carried out detailed analysis of the impacts of dams on aquatic environment and fisheries in Africa and South-east Asia. Impacts can be grouped into two categories: 1) impacts which affect fish directly, and 2) impacts which affect the fisheries environments (upstream river, reservoir, downstream river,

estuary, delta, sea) in some manner that leads to a deterioration in fish biodiversity, fish stocks and/or fisheries production. Thus a proper EIA report can predict the all environmental effects and propose the possible techniques for mitigation or reduction of negative effects [3].

There are three principal methods for identifying environmental effects and impacts: Checklists are comprehensive lists of environmental effects and impact indicators designed to stimulate the analyst to think broadly about possible consequences of contemplated actions. This strength can also be a weakness, however, because it may lead the analyst to ignore factors that are not on the lists. Checklists are found in one form or another in nearly all EIA methods. One of the most comprehensive is published in the United States [6]. Matrices typically employ a list of human actions in addition to a list of impact indicators. The two are related in a matrix which can be used to identify (to a limited extent) cause-and-effect relationships and flow diagrams are sometimes used to identify action-effect-impact relationships. The flow diagram permits the analyst to visualize the connection between action and impact. In this research the above three methods were used and the results were compared [2].

The fourth and fifth National Development Program (NDP) of Iran call for the uniform protection of all significant water resources, and places emphasis on resource sustainability and integrated water resource management. Department of Environment (DOE) of Iran also required the necessity of EIA report for all hydro-electric projects to assist in their decision-making process. In this paper socio-economical and the environmental impact assessment of the *Gotvand* hydro-electrical dam has been evaluated. This dam is one of the largest dams in Iran with a volume of 4.5 billion m³ and is going to be the last dam on the *Karoon* River in the south of Iran. In this paper all socio economical and environmental effects of the dam during the construction and operation of the hydro electric dam have been discussed.

Of the types of development projects that bring about physical displacement, dams and their related infrastructure, including power stations and irrigation canals, stand out as the largest contributor to displace. All dams and reservoirs as many other human activities, become a part of their environment which they influence and transform to a degree and within a range that vary from project to project. Frequently seeming to be in opposition, but not necessarily irreconcilable, dams and their environment interrelate with a degree of complexity that makes the task of the dam engineer particularly difficult. The solution must be to find the golden mean by striking a balance between divergent and sometimes contradictory goals. We need dams and the many benefits which their reservoirs offer all over the world, by storing water in times of surplus and dispensing it in times of scarcity. Dams prevent or mitigate devastating floods and catastrophic droughts. They adjust natural runoff with its seasonal variations and climatic irregularities to meet the pattern of demand for irrigated agriculture, power generation, domestic

and industrial supply and navigation.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The *Gotvand* Dam which is going to be constructed in the next few years as the last dam on *Karoon* River is located within the *Khozestan* Province South of Iran. This dam will have a surface of 96.5 km² with an approximate water volume of 4445 million m³ for the purposes of hydroelectric energy with the capacity of 4250 million KW, agricultural and recreational uses.

III. METHODOLOGY

Data Gathering

The research method involved formal and informal interviews with key informants within formal and indigenous institutions. These included key government officials, university professors, environmental consultants, nongovernmental organizations, and traditional leaders. Open-ended questions designed to identify constraints to EIA practice in the country were posed. These were supplemented with content analysis of secondary data and information from official publications and other related literature. Transcripts of interviews, field notes, and relevant literature were analyzed on the basis of themes and patterns of interrelationships among responses that addressed the research goal [7].

EIA Analyzing Method

The environmental assessment of *Gotvand* dam and its related installations began by analyzing the available environmental resources. In analyzing the environmental resources of watershed basins of region, the available maps together with land works were used. Furthermore, in the environmental impact analysis of the dam and its related installations, the method of ICOLD matrix was used. The aims of the prediction and evaluation stages of the EIA procedure are to identify those activities most likely to occur, and to determine the likely importance of these impacts, be they positive or negative. All the implementing activities in connection with the dam construction was predicted in the method, and after the land visit to the studying areas, a list of impacted environmental factors was made ready [2, 8].

The EIA evaluation was made for the important phases during the construction and after operation. The negative impacts of each activity on the environmental resources was then evaluated, and the results were examined. In this method, the environmental resources, which will be affected by "much" and "very much" negative impacts, have been identified. The activities, resulting in resources destruction, have been then specified (table I). Magnitude is a quantifiable measure of the size of an impact, and it can be defined as the degree of movement away from the baseline state of the specific environmental ICOLD has prepared a large and comprehensive matrix for use in EIA studies for dams. The system of symbols for each box shows: whether the impact is beneficial or detrimental; the scale of the impact; the

probability of occurrence; the time-scale of occurrence; and, whether the design has taken the impact into account, [1]. This comprehensive approach, however, makes the final output rather difficult to use and a maximum of three criteria is recommended per impact to maintain clarity. Ahmad and Sammy suggest that the most important criteria are: magnitude, or degree of change; geographical extent; significance; and, special sensitivity [9]. "Significance" could be further sub-divided to indicate why an impact is significant. For example, it may be because of irreversibility, economic vulnerability; a threat to rare species etc. "Special sensitivity" refers to locally important issues component under consideration. Here the magnitude is expressed on a scale of 1 to 3. Significance is defined as a measure of how important the assessor feels any movement away from the baseline conditions to be. Significance is expressed on a scale ranging from highly detrimental (-5), through negligible (0), to highly beneficial (+5). On the basis of these scores all activities can be ordinal ranked [12].

In order to aid completion of the matrix, domain specific

information is presented to the user simultaneous to completing the matrix. This information is of three types: textual information specific to each environmental component (i.e. the vertical axis of the matrix), rule-based information relating to the primary and higher order impacts of specific activities (the horizontal component of the matrix), and baseline biophysical and socio-economic data relating to the project's location (further details are given below). This information is held within a relational database comprised of tables relating to environmental components, project types, activities, impacts, mitigation measures and their inter-relationships. In addition the database contains textual information on each key item, i.e. activities and impacts. In the end, simple and implementable management mechanisms and strategies have been suggested to mitigate the negative impacts resulted from the project implementation. Thus, proper environmental management in the watershed of the region depends on the careful and complete implementation of these proposed mechanisms [10].

TABLE I
 THE ACTIVITIES, RESULTING IN RESOURCES DESTRUCTION

Surface water hydrology	Aquatic habitats	Water supply	Socio-economics
Surface water quality	Aquatic wildlife	Food supply	Infrastructure
Groundwater hydrology	Terrestrial habitats	Fuel supply	Resettlement
Soil erosion	Terrestrial wildlife	Navigation	Indigenous cultures
Soil fertility	Coastal habitats	Recreation	Aesthetics
Geology	Marine life	Flood control	Noise
Sedimentation	Forests	Irrigation/drainage	Public health
Air quality	Protected areas	Agriculture	Nutrition
	Endangered species	Aquaculture	Archaeology
		Agro-industry	

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An assessment of the potential and existing impacts of the extraction of water from the *Gotvand* Dam on the surrounding environment was based on existing information and specialist studies, the existing and potential impacts have been assessed as shown in Table II.

As indicated in Table II, the positive environmental effect received 12 crosses while the negative impact possible get 16 crosses; then it may be concluded that the *Gotvand* dam construction will have negative impact for the environment especially on biological element. however the number of positive impact especially in term of socio-economical impact significantly affect its negative ones.

The environmental effects of the *Gotvand* Dam construction on biological, physical and socioeconomic aspects using ICOLD technique is shown in Table III, IV and V, respectively.

The description of each sign, item and abbreviation of the ICOLD technique in Table III, IV and V is as the following [2].

I, II, III determine the priority of the waster consumption, the sign + and - show the negative or positive impact, no. 1, 2, and 3 indicate low, medium and high impacts respectively, C indicates the Certain impact, P indicates the Probable impact, I

indicates the Improbable impact N shows the Non probable impact, P shows the permanent and T indicates the Temperate impact, L, M and I define Long term, Middle term and Instantaneous effect and finally Y shows the yield impact and N not defined impacts.

Based on above description the ICOLD matrices shown in Tables III, IV and V indicate the impacts of each activity of the *Gotvand* dam on physical, biological and socio-economical environment.

The table III biological impacts demonstrates that (E501) vegetal destruction has the maximum effect while fun (E 506) and flora ranked less negative impacts.

The table IV physical impacts shows that (A207) vegetal destruction, (A208) raw material supply and (A301) discharging water vegetal area have the high negative impacts.

Water use in agriculture (A 101), tourism (A 403), industrial development (A415), fish industry (A 401) and infrastructure construction for the region (A 405) have the greatest positive impacts.

Vegetal destruction (A 207) has very negative impacts on the physical, biological and socio economical environment.

A change in the type, distribution and coverage of vegetation may occur given a change in the climate; this much is obvious. However, to what extent particular plant life

changes, dies or thrives, depends largely on the model of prediction used. In any given scenario, a mild change in climate may result in increased precipitation and warmth, resulting in improved plant growth and the subsequent sequestration of airborne CO₂. Larger, faster or more radical changes, however, may well result in vegetation stress, rapid plant loss and desertification in certain circumstances [11].

The biological impacts of the *Govand* reservoir are felt in the areas of weeds, and environmental health including bilharzia, malaria and onchocerciasis. Weeds different plant

species usually proliferate with the execution of water projects. These aquatic weeds have very serious impacts on water supply and other reservoir based economic activities. This has greatly contributed to the decline of fishing as an occupation in most settlements. Perhaps the most serious aspect of aquatic weed growth is its direct impact on the incidence and spread of water borne diseases such as schistosomiasis, encephalitis and filariasis.

TABLE II
 THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF DAM ON PHYSICAL, BIOLOGICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMICAL ENVIRONMENT

For each environmental effect place a cross (X) in one of the columns		Positive impact very likely	Positive impact possible	No impact	Negative impact possible	Negative impact very likely	No judgment possible at present	Comments
		A	B	C	D	E	F	
Hydrology	1-1 Low flow regime							
	1-2 Flood regime							
	1-3 Operation of dams	×						
	1-4 Fall of water table							
	1-5 Rise of water table				×			
Pollution	2-1 Solute dispersion				×			
	2-2 Toxic substances				×			
	2-3 Organic pollution				×			
	2-4 Anaerobic effects							
	2-5 Gas emissions							
Soils	3-1 Soil salinity							
	3-2 Soil properties							
	3-3 Saline groundwater							
	3-4 Saline drainage				×			
	3-5 Saline intrusion				×			
Sediments	4-1 Local erosion				×			
	4-2 Hinterland effect							
	4-3 River morphology							
	4-4 Channel regime							
	4-5 Sedimentation							
	4-6 Estuary erosion							
Ecology	5-1 Project lands							
	5-2 Water bodies							
	5-3 Surrounding area							
	5-4 Valleys & shores							
	5-5 Wetlands & plains							
	5-6 Rare species				×			
	5-7 Animal migration							
	5-8 Natural industry	×						
Socio-economic	6-1 Population change	×						
	6-2 Income amenity	×						
	6-3 Human migration					×		
	6-4 Resettlement				×			
	6-5 Women's role							
	6-6 Minority groups	×					×	
	6-7 Sites of value	×						
	6-8 Regional effects	×						
	6-9 User involvement	×						
	6-10 Recreation		×					
Health	7-1 Water & sanitation	×						
	7-2 Habitation	×						
	7-3 Health services	×						
	7-4 Nutrition	×						
	7-5 Relocation effect							
	7-6 Disease ecology				×			
	7-7 Disease hosts				×			
	7-8 Disease control		×					
	7-9 Other hazards							
Imbalances	8-1 Pests & weeds				×			
	8-2 Animal diseases				×			
	8-3 Aquatic weeds				×			
	8-4 Structural damage				×			
	8-5 Animal imbalances				×			
Number of crosses		12	2		16	1	1	(Total = 32)

TABLE IV- ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE GOTVAND DAM CONSTRUCTION ON PHYSICAL ASPECTS

Task	Geophysical Impacts										Effects on Water					Climate									
	E201	E202	E203	E204	E205	E206	E207	E208	E209	E210	E211	E212	E213	E301	E302		E303	E304	E305	E306	E307	E308	E309	E401	
irrigation																									
energy																									
regulating water																									
balancing river flow																									
industrial usages																									
marine transport																									
fire station																									
fishing																									
water sports																									
other consumptions																									
being of reservoir dam																									
dam reservoir																									
diversion system during construction																									
dam site construction																									
coffer dam																									
temporary and permanent buildings at the dam site																									
deforesting and bush cutting at the dam site																									
borrow area extraction																									
way for boyance solids																									
water conveyance channels to bournes																									
water releaser																									
inact system and permanent diversion system																									
power lines																									
inversion dam and channel and water conveyal																									
other factors																									
emerged Lands																									
adjacent areas at reservoir																									
water level variations of reservoir																									
reservoir-upstream river																									
reservoir-downstream river																									
irrigation channels																									
groundwater																									
sea coasts																									
other lands																									
fish production management																									
guaranteee for safe-environmental overflow																									
Tourism development																									
controlling of water level variations																									
Infrastructures																									
Forestrsing aroun the reservoir																									
erosion control with terrace making, planting																									
dragging																									
dam's spillway																									
Check dam																									
compensative reservoirs for controlling the river																									
5m to serve the dam equilibrium against floatin																									
controlling and conservation of the basin																									
water detoxification																									
Improve the industries and preventing their dam																									
rehabilitation																									
other damage refining																									
taxes																									
reassessment to the land value																									
planning for civilian and rural measures																									

TABLE V- ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE GOTVAND DAM CONSTRUCTION ON SOCIOECONOMIC ASPECTS

task	Social, Economical and Cultural Effects											E116 Society Effects on Local People and Jobs				
	E101 water useage priorities	E102 employment	E103 tourism	E104 agriculture and	E105 road access	E106 Local Income	E107 increase in land value	E108 improvements and acceptance of local people	E109 recreation	E110 Heritages and Cultural Indexes	E111 Aesthetics		E112 water supply	E113 Land Purchase and Investment	E114 reduction and growth	E115 Natural Disaster Protek
Water Consumes	A101 Irrigation	+2CPMY	+2CPMY	+1PPLY	+3CPMY	+2CPMY	+1CPMY	+2CPMY	+1CPMY	+1CPMY		+1CPMY	+2CPLY			
	A102 energy	+2CPMY	+3CPMY	+2CPMY	+1PPMY	+2CPMY	+1CPMY	+1CPMY	+1CPMY				+3CPLY			
	A103 regulating water	+1PPLY	+2CPMY	+2CPMY	+1PPMY	+2CPMY	+1CPMY	+1CPMY	+1CPMY				+1CPMY	+2CPLY		
	A104 balancing river flow	+1PPLY	+2CPMY	+2CPMY	+1PPMY	+2CPMY	+1CPMY	+1CPMY	+1CPMY				+1CPMY	+2CPLY	+3CPMY	
	A105 Industrial usages	+2CPMY	+1CPMY													
	A106 marine transport															
	A107 fire station															
	A108 fishing	+1CPMY	+2CPMY													
	A109 water sports	+1CPMY	+1CPMY													
	A110 other consumptions	+1PPLY	+1CPMY													
physical Factors	A201 being of reservoir dam	+3CPLY	+2CPLY	+1PPLY	+3CPMY	+1CTY	+2CPMY	+2CPMY	+1PPIM				+1CPMY	+3CPLY		
	A202 dam reservoir	+2CPLY	+2CPLY	+1PPLY	+3CPMY	+1CTY	+2CPMY	+2CPMY	+1PPIM				+1CPMY	+3CPLY		
	A203 diversion system during construction	+2CPLY	+2CPLY	+1PPLY	+3CPMY	+1CTY	+2CPMY	+2CPMY	+1PPIM				+1CPMY	+3CPLY		
	A204 dam site construction	+1CTY	+1CTY	+1CTY	+1CTY	+1CTY	+1CTY	+1CTY	+1CTY				+1CPMY	+1CTY	+1CTY	
	A205 colfer dam	+1PTIN	+2PTIN													
	A206 temporary and permanent buildings at the dam site	+1PTIN	+2PTIN													
	A207 deforesting and bush cutting at the dam site	+1PTIN	+2PTIN													
	A208 borrow area extraction	+2CTMY	+2CTMY													
	A209 way for boyance solids															
	A210 water conveyance channels to turbines															
Affected Areas	A211 water releaser	+1PPLY	+1PPLY													
	A212 intact system and permanent diversion system	+1PPLY	+1PPLY													
	A213 power lines	+1CTY	+1CTY													
	A214 diversion dam and channel and water conveyance	+1CTY	+1CTY													
	A301 other factors															
	A302 Imerged Surfaces	+1CTY	+1CTY													
	A303 adjacent areas at reservoir	+1CTY	+1CTY													
	A304 water level variations of reservoir	+1CTY	+1CTY													
	A305 reservoir-upstream river	+1PPLY	+1PPLY													
	A306 reservoir-downstream river	+1PPLY	+1PPLY													
physical Restoration	A307 irrigation channels	+1PPLY	+1PPLY													
	A308 groundwater	+1PPLY	+1PPLY													
	A309 sea coasts	+1PPLY	+1PPLY													
	A401 other lands	+1PPLY	+1PPLY													
	A402 fish production management	+2CPLY	+2CPLY													
	A403 guarantee for safe environmental overflow	+1CPMY	+1CPMY													
	A404 Tourism development	+2CPLY	+2CPLY													
	A405 controlling of water level variations	+1PPLY	+1PPLY													
	A406 Infrastructure	+2CPLY	+2CPLY													
	A407 Forestry around the reservoir	+1CPLY	+1CPLY													
Legal Acts	A408 erosion control with terrace making, planting	+1PPMY	+1PPMY													
	A409 dragging	+1PPMY	+1PPMY													
	A410 dam's spillway	+1CPMY	+1CPMY													
	A411 Check dam	+1PPMY	+1PPMY													
	A412 compensative reservoirs for controlling the river	+1PPMY	+1PPMY													
	A413 pin to serve the dam equilibrium against float	+1PPMY	+1PPMY													
	A414 controlling and conservation of the basin															
	A415 water detoxification															
	A416 improve the industries, and preventing their dam	+1CPLY	+2CPLY													
	A417 rehabilitation	+2CTY	+2CTY													
501 other damage refining																
502 reassessment to the land value																
503 planning for civilian and rural measures	+1CPLY	+1CPLY														

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are three main groups that require the water resource from the *Gotvand* Dam: Hydro-electric power generation, Agriculture, Industry and Tourism. In analyzing the environmental impact of *Gotvand* dam, the available maps together with land works were used. Furthermore, in the environmental impact analysis of the dam and its related installations, the combining method of Leopold and ICOLD matrix was used. All the implementing activities in connection with the dam construction, was predicted in the method, and after the land visit to the studying areas, a list of impacted environmental factors was made ready.

The discussions highlight specific avenues to improving the EIA procedure in Iran and much of the developing world. A contentious issue is the need to include local people and their experiential knowledge in the EIA process. Indigenous experiential knowledge not only has the potential to complement Western scientific knowledge in ways that would improve assessment studies; it could also encourage local participation and bottom-up approaches to environmental and planning decisions. The involvement of local people may also help the assessment team to understand local resource-use and nuances, and use local value sets to interpret, evaluate, and monitor project impacts on local communities. If indigenous knowledge is to be preserved and passed from generation to generation, it will have to be recognized by institutions of power and influence. Policy makers would have to learn that indigenous knowledge is not just a relic of the past, but is something that is important now and will be worth having in the future. To achieve this, education must be geared toward the transmission from one generation to the next of the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of society, and the preparation of the young for effective participation in society's maintenance and development. In this sense, EIA could become part of the solution to the continued loss of indigenous knowledge by enhancing the participation of indigenous people in assessment studies.

The negative impacts of each activity on the environmental resources were then evaluated, and the results were examined. In this method, the environmental resources, which will be affected by "much" and "very much" negative impacts, have been identified. The activities, resulting in resources destruction, have been then specified.

In the end, simple and implement able management mechanisms and strategies have been suggested to mitigate the negative impacts resulted from the project implementation. Thus, proper environmental management depends on the careful and complete implementation of these proposed mechanisms.

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