

# A Brief Introduction to the Narmada Issue

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The controversy over large dams on the River Narmada has come to symbolise the struggle for a just and equitable society in India. The story is long and complicated and will take a long time to tell. In brief, the Government's plan is to build 30 large, 135 medium and 3000 small dams to harness the waters of the Narmada and its tributaries. The proponents of the dam claim that this plan would provide large amounts of water and electricity which are desperately required for the purposes of development.

Opponents of the dam question the basic assumptions of the Narmada Valley Development Plan [see below] and believe that its planning is unjust and inequitous and the cost-benefit analysis is grossly inflated in favour of building the dams. It is well established that the plans rest on untrue and unfounded assumptions of hydrology and seismicity of the area and the construction is causing large scale abuse of human rights and displacement of many poor and underprivileged communities. They also believe that water and energy can be provided to the people of the Narmada Valley, Gujarat and other regions through alternative technologies and planning processes which can be socially just and economically and environmentally sustainable.

Through this web site we shall endeavour to present the view of the poor and underprivileged affected by the dams and the people's movements they have created (primarily the Narmada Bachao Andolan) which are leading the crusade for justice and the Right to Life of the many inhabitants of the Narmada valley.

We recognise the complexity of the issues involved. However, once one cuts through all the rhetoric, lies and subterfuge of the vested interests, the gross inequities are clear. Large numbers of poor and underprivileged communities (mostly tribals and dalits) are being dispossessed of their livelihood and even their ways of living to make way for dams being built on the basis of incredibly dubious claims of common benefit and "national interest". For us, this is simply immoral and therefore

unacceptable. No purported benefits can be used to justify the denial of the fundamental rights of individuals in a democratic society. And given the evidence of past megadam schemes in India and elsewhere and what has already happened in the Narmada Valley, we believe that the promised benefits will never be realised.

A quick look at the ground reality would disabuse anyone of the real nature of the dam-builder's enterprise. Large dams imply large budgets for related projects leading to large profits for a small group of people. A mass of research shows that even on purely technical grounds, large dams have been colossal failures. While they have delivered only a fraction of their purported benefits, they have had an extremely devastating effect on the riverine ecosystem and have rendered destitute large numbers of people (whose entire sustenance and modes of living are centered around the river). For no large dam in India has it been shown that the resettled people have been provided with just compensation and rehabilitation. At a more abstract level, the questions that arise in the Narmada Struggle challenge the dominant model of development (of which Sardar Sarovar dam is a prime example [see below]) that holds out the chimerical promise of material wealth through modernisation but perpetuates an inequitous distribution of resources and wreaks social and environmental havoc.

We would like to emphasise that the water problems of drought-prone areas of Gujarat, like Kutch, Saurashtra and North Gujarat (the Government's *raison d'être* for the dam) are admittedly real. However given the nature of the plans for Sardar Sarovar, it will never solve these problems. On the contrary, in the shadow of the costliest project ever undertaken in India, it is unlikely that alternative schemes that would genuinely address these problems would be implemented. Sardar Sarovar takes up over 80% of Gujarat's irrigation budget but has only 1.6% of cultivable land in Kutch, 9% of cultivable land in Saurashtra and 20% cultivable land in North Gujarat in its command area. Moreover, these areas are at the tail-end of the command and would get water only after all the area along the canal path get their share of the water, and that too after 2020 AD. In summary, all available indicators suggest that these needy areas are never going to benefit from the Sardar Sarovar Project.

In simple terms, the struggle over the river Narmada holds a mirror to our national face and challenges our commitment to professed ideals of justice, equality and democracy.

More information: Large dams on the Narmada River

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## **Large dams on the Narmada river**

Of the 30 big dams proposed along the Narmada, Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) and Narmada Sagar Project (NSP) are the megadams. The Maheshwar and Omkareshwar dams along with SSP and NSP, are to form a complex which would ultimately cater to the needs of SSP. The struggle of the people of the Narmada valley against large dams began when the people to be displaced by SSP began organizing in 1985-86. Since then the struggle has spread to encompass other major dams in various stages of planning and construction chiefly Maheshwar, Narmada Sagar, Maan, Goi and Jobat. Tawa and Bargi Dams were completed in 1973 and 1989 respectively have seen the affected people organize post-displacement to demand their rights.

### **A brief history**

The Narmada river originates from the Maikal ranges at Amarkantak, 1057 m above the sea-level, now in Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh. In its 1312 km long journey before joining the Arabian Sea, the Narmada flows through the three states of Madhya Pradesh (MP), Maharashtra and Gujarat. Nearly 90% of the flow is in MP, and most of the remaining is in Gujarat. It flows for a very brief stretch through Maharashtra.

The valley of the river Narmada (which means one who endows with bliss) has been the seat of an uninterrupted flow of human civilization dating from pre-historic times. The Narmada finds mention as one of the seven most sacred rivers in ancient Indian texts. A number of written accounts and ballads refer to this river. Its banks are dotted with temples, myths and folklore, the living symbols of a timeless Indian tradition. The river Narmada has supported a bewildering variety of people and diverse socio-cultural practices ranging from the relatively autonomous adivasi (tribal) settlements in the forests to non-tribal rural population.

The idea of damming the Narmada was discussed as far back as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century during the days of the British Raj. The first Irrigation Commission of India, in its 1901 report, mentions a barrage near Bharuch. However the black alluvial soil of the region was not considered suitable for flow irrigation from the point of view of investment.

The issue of damming the river was raised again after independence under the thrust of the Nehruvian Development policy which referred to dams as the “temples of modern India.” It is said that the first Home Minister of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who hailed from the strong agrarian background of central Gujarat dreamt of harnessing the river for the benefit of his own people. This “dream” syndrome became very strong and was subsequently used by every politician in Gujarat to leverage political support for the Narmada project.

The Narmada valley project was mired in controversy and dispute right from its inception. In 1965, the Khosla committee planned a 530 feet high dam in Navagam (the site of the Sardar Sarovar dam today) while allocating 13.9 MAF (million acre feet) of water to MP and 10.6 MAF to Gujarat. This proposal was immediately locked in a dispute between the so-called riparian states i.e. Gujarat, Maharashtra and MP over the sharing of the costs and benefits of the project. The chief minister of MP, Mr. Govind Narayan Singh, objected to the unprecedented submergence as a result of the dam and contested the claims of Gujarat on the Narmada waters. Gujarat on the other hand claimed a higher share of water on the basis of the projected needs of the “drought prone area” in the far-off Kutch region. In this effort, Gujarat also made Rajasthan a party to give itself more bargaining power, although Rajasthan - a non-riparian state - had nothing to do with the project.

In 1969, the Government of India under Mrs. Indira Gandhi constituted the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDT) to resolve this inter-state water dispute. The Tribunal itself was subjected to a series of wranglings between Gujarat and MP. While MP proposed a dam height 210 feet, Gujarat demanded that the height of the dam be 530 feet. While Gujarat put its water requirement at 22 MAF, MP would concede only 4 MAF. Finally in 1979, after 10 years of deliberations, the Tribunal gave its award which consisted of clear compromises between the claims of Gujarat and MP. Accordingly they allocated 9 MAF of water to Gujarat. and arrived at the 453 feet for the height of the dam. Subsequently, 2 extra feet were added to the dam height for completely unknown reasons to bring the height to round figure of 455 feet. After a token show of resistance, the main political formations in MP accepted the award.

The full contours of the Narmada Valley Development Plan (NVDP) appeared only towards the late 1980s. It is an ambitious plan which envisages the building of 30 big dams, 135 medium dams and 3000 small dams on the Narmada & its tributaries. If all of these dams ever get built then the river as we know it will disappear and all that will be left are a series of lakes.

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## **The Sardar Sarovar Dam : a Brief Introduction**

Introduction

Status of rehabilitation

Actions carried out outside and inside India

Some Resources on the Sardar Sarovar Project

UPDATE: Illegal raise of SSP to 121m

**– (Last updated: May 10, 2006)**

The recent decision of the Supreme Court to allow the construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam, even as thousands of families are yet to be rehabilitated and 35000 more face displacement, is a violation of its own judgement of Oct 2000 and March 2005, that unambiguously state that further construction cannot happen until rehabilitation of temporarily and permanently affected families is completed as per the Narmada Tribunal Award. Despite overwhelming evidence, the recent protests in Delhi and a 20 day hunger strike, the Supreme Court and Government of India have turned a blind eye to this grave injustice.

Immediately Call/FAX the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Water Resources Minister Saifuddin Soz and other officials and urge them to immediately stop any increase in SSP dam height which will endanger the lives of over 35000 families until the entire area is surveyed and all affected people adequately rehabilitated according to the NWDT guidelines with land. Ask the PM to intervene and stop construction in accordance with the mandate from the SC.

Amongst the 30 large dams planned for the Narmada, the Sardar Sarovar dam is the largest. With a proposed height of 136.5 m (455 feet), it is the focal point of both the dam-builders plans and the Narmada Bachao Andolan's opposition. The Govt claims that the multi-purpose Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) would irrigate more than 1.8 million hectares (mostly in Gujarat, some in Rajasthan) and quench the thirst of the drought prone areas of Kutch and Saurashtra in Gujarat. The opponents of the dam counter that these benefits are grossly exaggerated and would never accrue to the extent suggested by the Govt. Instead the project would displace more than 320,000 people and affect the livelihood of thousands of others. Overall, due to related displacements by the canal system and other allied projects, at least 1 million people are expected to be affected if the project is completed.

Map #1: Command area of the SSP Map #2: Command area of the SSP Map #3: Project area of the SSP

With no information forthcoming from the Govt. regarding the details of the project, the plans for the people to be affected etc. the NBA declared its opposition to the entire project taking into consideration the scale of adverse impacts. Throughout 1990-91, with a series of dharnas (sit-in's), non-violent protests (satyagraha) the NBA highlighted the plight of the oustees and the fundamentally flawed nature of the project. Under intense pressure, the World Bank (which was funding the dam to the tune of \$450 million) was forced to constitute an independent review committee, the Morse Commission. The first independent review of any of the Bank funded projects,

the Morse Report indicted the Bank on many counts and tacitly endorsed all the main concerns raised by the Andolan. The resultant international furore forced the Bank to finally withdraw from the project (with mutually face-saving measures for the Banks and the Govt. of India which asked the Bank to leave one day before the deadline for some stipulations was to expire).

Following a writ petition by the NBA calling for a comprehensive review of the project to take into consideration all the concerns raised, the Supreme Court of India halted construction of the dam in 1995 at a height of 80.3m. However, in an interim order in February 1999, the Supreme Court gave the go ahead for the dam's height to be raised to a height of 88m (85m + 3m of "humps"). The resultant increased flooding in the monsoon season of 1999 can potentially drown the homes and lands of as many as 2000 tribal families in about 50 villages.

On October 18, 2000, the Supreme Court of India delivered its judgement on the Sardar Sarovar Project. In a 2 to 1 majority judgement, it allowed immediate construction on the dam upto a height of 90m. Further, the judgement authorized construction upto the originally planned height of 138m. in 5-meter increments subject to receiving approval from the Relief and Rehabilitation Subgroup of the Narmada Control Authority. It should be noted that the Court has said nothing new on the matter. The Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award states that land should be made available to the oustees at least an year in advance before submergence (Clause IX, Subclause IV(2)(iv) and Subclause IV(6)(i)). The essentially unfettered clearance from the Supreme Court has come from the Court despite major unresolved issues on resettlement, the environment, and the project's costs and benefits.

On a separate page devoted to the Supreme Court ruling, we have made information available about the supreme court judgements, the critiques of the judgement, media coverage, and ongoing actions to press ahead with the struggle.

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## **The Maheshwar Dam : a Brief Introduction**

The Maheshwar Dam is part of the Narmada Valley Development Project that entails the construction of 30 large and 135 medium-sized dams in the Narmada Valley. Maheshwar is one of the planned large dams and is slated to provide 400 Megawatts in energy. The project has been planned since 1978 and was originally under the auspices of the Narmada Valley Development Authority. In 1989 the responsibility for Maheshwar was conferred on the Madhya Pradesh Electricity Board (MPEB). Subsequently in 1993, the concession for the Maheshwar Project was awarded to the S. Kumars, a textile magnate. In 1994, the project received a conditional environmental clearance from the Central Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). Maheshwar is the first privately financed hydroelectric dam in India and is expected to displace around 35,000 people. As with Sardar Sarovar, the details of resettlement and compensation are nowhere near a satisfactory state of affairs. The NBA has been leading the movement against the Maheshwar dam.

On December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2000, Ogden Corporation joined the procession of companies that were forced to withdraw from the Maheshwar project. In 1998 and then 1999, first, the US power utility Pacgen and then the German power utilities Bayernwerk and VEW Energie withdrew from the Maheshwar Project. Subsequently, in June, 2000, a team of international experts commissioned by the Development Ministry of the German government visited the valley and came out with a report that sharply indicted the Project. In the wake of the report, Siemens was compelled to withdraw its

application for an export guarantee from the German government, and a proposed loan of Rs.5700 million from a German bank fell through.

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## **Maan Dam**

Introduction

Documents

Press Releases

Contact Info

Current situation (Last updated: July 17, 2002)

All 17 villages affected by the Maan dam, are slated for submergence this monsoon and flooding of Khedi village already began. Despite the fact that the rehabilitation policy of the state government for the oustees of the Narmada Projects deems that the oustees must be rehabilitated with irrigated land in lieu of the land that will be going under submergence, the 5000-6000 adivasi people who will be affected by this Project this year have not yet been rehabilitated.

These affected people have been on a dharna in Bhopal since May 15<sup>th</sup> with all their demands and issues pertaining to rehabilitation and their livelihoods. The State administration has instead responded quite characteristically by cutting electricity supply, removing handpumps, cutting down trees and bulldozing schools to forcibly evict these adivasis from their villages. The adivasis and activists of the NBA responded by intensifying their struggle. Four of them began an indefinite fast. The government responded by arresting those on dharna but the fasters continued, determined to fast until the government responded favourably. Their 29 day fast ended on Jun 18, when the MP government agreed to set up an independent Grievance Redressal Authority to look into the issue of proper and just rehabilitation.

Here are the pics of a school that has been razed to the ground and a handpump that has been removed.

The Maan dam is one of the 30 large dams that has been planned as part of the Narmada Valley Development Project (NVDP). It is being constructed on the river Maan (that drains into the Narmada River) as an irrigation project in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh.

The Maan Project received the legally binding environmental clearance from the Central Environment Ministry in 1994. The condition of the clearance was that the affected tribals must be resettled with non-forest agricultural land. The state government policy for the oustees of the Narmada Projects that was made in 1987 and firmed in 1992 also required that the affected people must be resettled with land for land. Despite this from 1991 to 1994, the state government completely violated the conditions of the environmental clearance and the provisions of its own policy and finished the rights of the people with paltry amounts of cash compensation.

As a result, in 1994, the Appraisal Committee of the Central Environment Ministry blacklisted the

Maan Project for complete violation of the conditions of the environmental clearance. In 1997, when the oustees were given eviction notices, they organized themselves under the aegis of the Narmada Bachao Andolan and raised their voices. After a long struggle, in April May 1999, the Madhya Pradesh government agreed to constitute a committee for the rehabilitation of the affected people. This committee which was constituted under the chairmanship of the Narmada Minister of Madhya Pradesh comprised of the affected people, elected representatives, government officials and two members of the Narmada Bachao Andolan. The government order of 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1999 that constituted this committee clearly stated that no construction work on the dam would be allowed to be carried out that would endanger any affected person whose rehabilitation had not been completed. But despite this clear order, from October 2000 onwards, the state government began work on the spillway section of the dam, thus creating a situation of imminent submergence of hundreds of tribal families who are yet to be rehabilitated.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of January this year, the Maan-affected tribals then took out a protest rally in Dhar demanding immediate stoppage of work and rehabilitation of the affected people. Subsequently after representations to the NVDA, a government order of 30<sup>th</sup> January stopped the work on the spillway section of the dam. The actual physical work had to be stopped by demonstrating people at the dam site demanding that the order be carried out.

The situation as of today is that the government has decided to carry on the construction and drown out the people. The people of the Maan project area have resolved to stop the Project through non-violent but militant struggle. But the reality is that the spillway section of the dam is being plugged in at the rate of a foot a day. It is crucial that all work on the dam must immediately stop.

On this page, we will document the struggle against this dam and request you to take action and provide support to the people struggling for just rehabilitation.

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## **The Indira-Sagar Dam**

The Indira Sagar dam is being built on the Narmada river approx. 10 km from Punasa village in Khandwa district in Western Madhya Pradesh. More details can be found here.

An independent commission constituted by the National Campaign for People's Right to Information to investigate the Indira Sagar Pariyojana, finds, "...that vast human rights abuses have taken place and that the Government of Madhya Pradesh in the construction of the Indira Sagar Pariyojana has perpetrated indefensible social, political and economic injustices on the people of the Narmada Valley." See the full report here:

[http://www.narmada.org/nvdp.dams/indira-sagar/ISP\\_Report.pdf](http://www.narmada.org/nvdp.dams/indira-sagar/ISP_Report.pdf)

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## **The Human Cost Of The Bargi Dam**

### **1. Introduction**

The Narmada is the largest river in Madhya Pradesh, India, flowing towards the west and falling in the Arabian sea. Its total length is 1312 Kms. of which it covers 1072 Kms. in M.P. The Bargi dam is one of the first supposedly completed dams among the chain of 30 major dams to be constructed on river Narmada. The proposal of this dam construction was conceptualised by the Central Water and Power Commission in 1968 envisaging irrigation in 2.98 lakh ha. and hydro-power generation capacity of 105 MW. (Source: DPR, Govt of M.P. 1968). Later the Bargi diversion scheme was planned, increasing the total irrigation potential to 4.37 lakh ha. The total cost estimates initially conceived were Rs. 64 crores which since then escalated to 566.31 crores in 1989, excluding the cost of canal construction which is estimated to be about 1660.80 Cr. ( Left bank canal Rs.565.6 Cr. and Right bank canal Rs.995.2 Cr). (Ref. Samagra Narmada Ghati Vikas, prepared by NVDA, 1997).

The dam construction work started in 1974 and was completed in 1990 when the gates were closed and the dam was filled to its complete capacity. The height of the dam is 69 mts. and length 5.4 kms. A lake of about 75 kms in length and 4.5 kms width, spreading over 26797 ha. in Jabalpur, Mandla and Seoni districts is formed when the water is impounded upto the dam FRL of 422.76m.

162 villages in districts Mandla, Seoni and Jabalpur were affected, submerging about 82 villages completely. Of the 26797 ha of land submerged, 14750 ha. was ownership land, 8478 ha. forest land and 3569 ha. other government land. Among the 7000 families displaced, 43% were tribals, 12% harijans, 38% OBCs and 7% others. (Source: Plan For Roof, Report by Mr. K.C. Dubey, Commissioner, Jabalpur Division , Jabalpur, 28<sup>th</sup> February 1987).

For the full report, see:

<http://www.narmada.org/nvdp.dams/bargi/bargi.html>

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## **Goi Project: A Critique**

### **1. Project Profile:**

The Goi dam is to be constructed at village Panchpula of district Badwani, Madhya Pradesh across the river Goi - a tributary of the Narmada This dam is one of the 30 major dams being built in the Narmada Valley as part of the controversial Narmada Valley Development.

The dam will have a full reservoir level (FRL) of 298m and a maximum water level (MWL) of 298.6m. The length of the right bank main canal will be 41.4 km and the distributary on the left will be 8 kms long.

The command area of the Project lies in 51 villages of Rajpur, Badwani and Thikri tehsils of district Badwani. The area proposed to be irrigated is 13,760 ha. (CCA of 17,265 ha.) with annual irrigation going upto 17,888 ha. The command of the Goi dam is the sub-basin of the Deb and Nahali rivers.

The Project is also intended to serve the domestic consumption of Rajpur town.



According to the Detailed Project Report (Nov. 1991) submergence due to the Goi reservoir will be 1090 ha. in 9 villages of which 506 ha. is cultivable land. As per the DPR, 409 families will be affected by Project. All the affected families are Bhilala tribals.

In 1972, the anticipated Project cost was Rs.678 lakhs. In 1991, this increased to 980.9 lakhs. This is likely to increase even further. The status of the Project is that it has gone for clearance to the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Planning Commission, Central Water Commission and for administrative approval from the state government.

## 2. Displacement and Rehabilitation:

2.1 According to the 1991 DPR, a total of 1090 ha. of land will submerge in the Goi reservoir of which 506 ha. is cultivable, and 2035 people of 409 families in 9 villages would be affected. Clearly, by now the population figures will have gone up even further.

The DPR does not present any socio-economic picture of those to be submerged. However, we do know that the submergence zone is almost entirely tribal comprising of Bhil and Bhilala populations. We also know that today the submergence zone is intensively irrigated . For example, village South Panchpula alone has 95 irrigation pumps.

The DPR mentions that a survey of the affected area revealed that the Project affected people desired land-based rehabilitation. The NWDT Award and the MP policy for the rehabilitation of Narmada oustees also clearly mention the land-for-land principle. Yet, the DPR after mentioning the need for land-based rehabilitation does not mention or detail the availability of any land for R&R. In fact, it goes on to talk about cash compensation - mentioning around Rs.6000 per acre for unirrigated land and Rs.15,000 per acre for irrigated land, a pittance compared to actual land prices.

Clearly, although ritual mouthing of rehabilitation principles has taken place, there is no planning or provision for land based rehabilitation. Even the cash compensation is so minuscule, that the affected families can never hope to purchase land or replace their assets.

## 2.2 Where will the canal affected populations go?

530 ha. of land will be submerged under the canals of the Lower Goi dam. Of this 260 ha. is irrigated land under cultivation with an assessment of 70 Kuccha and 45 pucca wells.

These lands too will be merely acquired and compensated for in cash. The Rehabilitation Policy of the GoMP for the oustees of the Narmada Projects clearly states that any family whose land (over 25%) or livelihood is required for the Project for any purpose will be regarded as a Project Affected Family (PAF) with full entitlements. Yet even the accounting for populations and categories who are entitled to rehabilitation has not taken place, let alone complete rehabilitation plan!

Over and above these lands which will be undergoing submergence through canals, 10 ha. of land will be acquired for the colony and 480 ha. of land will be acquired for other temporary purposes.

For the full report, see:

<http://www.narmada.org/nvdp.dams/goi/goi.html>

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## **Jobat Project: a Critique**

### **PROJECT PROFILE:**

The Jobat dam is to be constructed at village Waskal of District Jhabua (Madhya Pradesh) across the river Hathni-a tributary of the Narmada. This dam is one of the 30 major dams being built in the Narmada Valley, as part of the controversial Narmada Valley Development Project (NVDP).

The main dam will have a maximum height of 34.6 m with a subsidiary earth dam that will have a maximum height of 17.73 m. The main canal of length 29.73 km is on the left bank. The area to be irrigated will be 9848 ha., with the proposed annual irrigation going up to 12,507 ha., according to the DPR (Detailed Project Report) of the Project. The Project has no power generation component.

The command area lies in 27 villages of the Kukshi block of Dhar district. The topography of the command area is highly undulating.

According to the DPR (1983) submergence due to the Jobat reservoir will be in 1216 hectares in 13 villages of Jhabua district and will affect 595 families. The forest area to be submerged is 104.24 ha.

### **DISPLACEMENT, COMPENSATION AND REHABILITATION : OUSTING THE DWELLERS OF THE RIVERSIDE AND COMMAND**

#### **2.1. WHAT IS AT STAKE: HOW MANY PEOPLE, HOW MUCH LAND?**

According to the 1963 DPR, the dam will cause submergence in around 1210 hectares in 13 villages of Jhabua district. The number of families to be affected by reservoir submergence, as mentioned in the DPR is 595. Without doubt, this figure must have greatly increased with the passage of the last 15 years.

Yet in the February 1997 proposal for obtaining loan from NABARD submitted by GOMP, while on one hand project costs have been shown as having gone up from 26.91 crores to 96.92 crores (at 1996 prices) the number of families to be affected have been reduced to 325 families. So costs and prices gallop ahead, but the rate of growth of population is negative!

Obviously the reduction of the number of affected families to 325 is patently false. If it is not a gross error, it can only be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to minimise the impact of the submergence and the concomitant rehabilitation responsibilities.

#### **CANALS SUBMERGE TOO:**

The 1998 Status report of the NVDD for the Man Project mentions that the land required for main canal and distributary is 226.12 ha against which 116.896 ha is already acquired, and for balance 109.224 ha., proposal is under consideration. If this is so, it means that hundreds of families will be affected by canal submergence in addition to the originally mentioned 595 families in the reservoir submergence, who will actually qualify as Project Affected families entitled to rehabilitation, as per the MP rehabilitation policy for Narmada Projects. But where is the land and where is the rehabilitation plan for canal oustees?

#### **LAND FOR NISTAR**

The Environmental Appraisal Report of the Jobat Project (April 1983) mentions that the extra area required for forestry in the command area to compensate for the Nistar and grazing needs of the people shifted from the submergence zone to the Command area is 500 ha. Diversion of the is part of

the command from the present use, which will entail some cultivation certainly, will increase further the list of oustees.

## LAND FOR RESETTLEMENT

Supposing, even if the outdated and extremely conservative estimate of 595 families given in 1983 is used to represent the total universe of oustees due to the Jobat Project, a minimum land area of 1600 hct (600x2x1.3) will be required for R&R purposes for reservoir oustees alone. Updated figures for reservoir submergence as well as accounting for those losing their lands in the canals will raise the requirement of land for R&R by several factors.

Any governmental lands or private lands acquired for the purpose of R&R and which oust further populations will only add to the list of Project Affected families entitled for resettlement. (No end in sight)

2.5 The Rehabilitation Policy of the GOMP for the oustees of the Narmada Projects define the Project Affected as those....“whose lands will be permanently or temporarily submerged or which are required by the Project for any other purpose”.

Under this policy, all persons losing more than 25% of their lands to the Project become entitled to receive land for land and community resettlement (the other oustees will have different entitlements).

It is clear that when the total numbers of families affected by the canals, those losing their lands for additional nistaar development as well as those losing their lands and livelihoods for the development of rehabilitation villages are counted, the figures of those affected will go up to several thousands of families.

Yet, till today, despite the Rehabilitation Policy, no enumeration or comprehensive attempt to account for displacement by the Project and the subsequent outlining of the responsibility for rehabilitation has been done.

## STATUS OF R&R: EMPTY PROMISES FOR FUNDS AND CLEARENCES

In the Environmental Appraisal Report of the Jobat Project (April 1983) it is mentioned in the checklist submitted to the MOEF (mandatorily required under the Environmental Protection Act ) that...

“....the persons displaced by the submergence are proposed to be resettled in adjoining areas in the command area by giving them plots of land in the existing villages. All basic amenities are also proposed to be provided to the oustees of the submergence area as per norms fixed by the NWDT Award”.

Further

....“mostly the people affected by submergence will be absorbed in the villages in the command. However, a final project specific plan is under finalisation with the National Productivity Council which has already given its first report on the basis of socio-economic surveys...”

In the same report, in response to the specific query as to whether Master Plans have been prepared for rehabilitation colonies and what the administrative technical arrangements proposed to ensure “quality of life in rehabilitation settlements”, were, GOMP replies that “...detailed plans of rehabilitation colonies are being prepared. State government policy as per Narmada Tribunal Award

will be implemented ". The same plans and premises of rehabilitation and resettlement are echoed in the DPR

Yet, in February 1997, in the proposal for loan submitted to NABARD by GOMP, the project authorities report a progress in the R&R front stating that 62 hectares of private land coming under submergence has already been acquired and compensation PAID. Clearly, cash compensation paid. In the same paragraph, the proposal mention that "...resettlement of affected families is in progress in accordance with the provisions of the R&R policy of the Narmada Valley Development projects of the state".

In the same proposal, in response to the pointed query "whether rehabilitation problem is likely to come in the way of completion of project work", GOMP responds that ..."no rehabilitation problem is arising because the rehabilitation works are in progress in accordance with the R&R policy of the Narmada Complex Projects of NVD of the State".

So, this is the reality. That private lands have been acquired in village Badi, Khattali, Sindhi and Dabhadi and cash compensation paid without rehabilitating the affected families or giving them land. That similar plans for land acquisition awards and cash compensation are in progress for the other 12 affected villages and their overwhelming number of tribal families. That there has been absolutely NO rehabilitation until now, only land acquisition under an Act framed in colonial times. That not only is there no rehabilitation, no concrete possibility or plan for rehabilitation exists. No detailed plans for rehabilitation colonies. No Project specific plan for resettlement made by the National Productivity Council. No identification of land for resettlement in the command. Not for housing , not for agriculture, not for nistar. No plans even for the basic amenities. Indeed even the status report on Jobat of the Narmada Valley Development Department of Sept 98 states that of the 548 affected families only 311 families are to be rehabilitated and that only 5.9 ha of land has been acquired for rehabilitation purposes till now!

It reiterates the refrain being carried on since 1982 that the proposals for the R&R of oustees is under finalisation and that the oustees will be settled in nearby area of this project.

The promises of resettlement and the reiteration of policy are only for the funders and the clearances. For the affected people there is only land acquisition, cash compensation, dispossession. Only the wiping out of their village from the map of India without the erection of another land to call their own.

And this is the status in 1997-98 when out of the originally planned 26.91 crores, 2674 crores have already been spent on the project, but not a single paisa has gone towards rehabilitation.

Clearly, this is unacceptable. The status of R&R or lack of it is a flagrant violation of the Narmada Award and the state policy and of the environment clearance given to the Project by the MOEF and the NABARD.

It is a betrayal of the constitutional responsibilities of a democratically erected government towards its people.

## OF LANDS, SOILS AND FORESTS

In the environmental appraisal report submitted to MOEF, GOMP states that it would undertake to do the following as part of environmental measures for the Project.

A. To conduct and carry out an environmental studies survey

B. To do soil conservation work in the command. The soil conservation work was to be done in 45,000 hectares of the catchment with 4000 hct taken up every year.

C. to do afforestation work in the catchment

D. to do afforestation work in the command

E. to raise canal side plantations.

This in situ work in catchment and command should have preceded or at least been parri passu with the construction works. Yet while 10% of the dam work and 30% of the canal work has been completed, no implementation of the promised environmental safeguard measures has been done.

The status report 1998 mentions that 392.43 ha of forests are coming under submergence, and that the project has finance of nearly 27 lakhs for afforestation, and that in the future plantation along canals will be taken up. The question is when will it be done.

Similarly the Status Report says that the study for catchment area treatment has already been conducted by IPI, Dehradun and proposal are under finalisation with the Agricultural Department. A provision of 30 lakhs has been kept for this activity which is likely to be completed by 2003! Similarly the restoration of the construction area has been considered and a proposal for 5 lakhs has been kept for it.

It must be pointed out that the above measures are not bureaucratic requirements. Apart from being legal requirements conditional to the environmental clearance, they are predicated on an understanding of the fundamental relationships between forests, soils and water holding capacities and are in essential and a PRIORI requirement, for the full development of the catchment and the command as well as long term, sustained yields and use of irrigation potential. Yet, like R&R, there has been no work done on this front, violating the conditions of the clearance.

#### PROJECT BLACKLISTED.

As a result of no work having been done in the areas of rehabilitation or environmental safeguard measures by the Project authorities (which they had undertaken to do as conditional to the environmental clearance) in the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Expert committee of the MOEF for river Valley and hydro-electric Projects held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of May, 1995, the Jobat Project was blacklisted for not following/fulfilling ANY of the conditions laid down in the environmental clearance.

The Project authorities have violated the legally binding provisions of the NWDT Award and the state rehabilitation policy as well as the conditions of the environmental clearance. TABLE

The GOMP has to immediately and seriously intervene. If the Project is allowed to proceed, it will probably attract revoking of the environmental clearance, as well legal interventions in public, so serious are the violations.

#### OTHER LOSSES OVERLOOKED

While looking at the cost-benefit of the Project, many significant losses,-both in quantitative and qualitative terms seem to be either discounted or overlooked.

The only loss that has been acknowledged is that of the 13 submerging villages with 595 families, which have mysteriously decreased to 325 in 12 years time. However, the figure of 595 families and 13 villages has been calculated at FRL.

At MWL, many more lands are likely to be flooded which have not been accounted for. The landscape around the submergence zone is flat and undulating and a small rise in waters may go a long way as submergence. The Hathni is a temperamental and tempestuous river and it is highly likely if the dam is built that high floods will submerge large tracts of land beyond what is anticipated.

Loss due to submergence has been underestimated not only in extent but qualitatively. In 1993, the Project DPR describes the agriculture in the area as primitive with irrigation coverage on only 2% of the cultivable area. The reality since the late 1980s has been that the entire submergence is irrigated through lift from the Hathni as well as the bewildering number of streams that criss-cross and pass through the submergence villages. Thus loss of 693 ha of agricultural land may mean the loss of a gross cropped area of over 1000ha not a negligible figure by any means.

Apart from submergence, the DPR itself mentions that the loss of forests has not been calculated or included in the benefit cost ratio and similarly, that the value of the crops under canals and command has not been calculated or included.

There is no estimate of existing catch from subsistence fishing which probably may be higher than is envisaged in commercial fishing, nor acknowledgement of the fact that several important varieties of fish like the ghagra (*Rita pavimenta*) will be entirely destroyed due to the damming because their rock crevice habitats will be silted over. There is no study of how damming the Hathni will affect the fish that travel upwards into the Hathni from the Narmada, for breeding purposes.

Not taken into account either is the rich archaeological potential of the area with statues and mounds abounding in many of the submergence villages. Also overlooked are the important tribal religious traditions such as the annual tribal fair held at Macchlia on the Hathni banks in the propitiation of their tribal gods. The fair which attracts tribals from distant areas will cease, as the gods propitiated and the sands of the Hathni submerge forever.

The Hathni sands are regarded as one of the best varieties of sand available for house construction. A great deal of quarrying work takes place in Hathni banks which will cease with submergence. This is an important economic activity yet no quantification of this loss is included in the Benefit-Cost Analysis.

Nor has any study of the downstream impact of the Jobat dam on drinking water, lift irrigation schemes or fisheries been studied. It is to be noted that successive administration in Jhabua have initiated many innovative lift irrigation schemes on Hathni banks.

THE QUESTION OF THE COMMAND: DO WE NEED THE JOBAT PROJECT?

OVERLAP: COMMAND AND SUBMERGENCE

The Jobat Command falls in 27 villages of the Kukshi block of District Dhar. 5 of these are in the Sardar Sarovar submergence: Chandankhedi, Molkhad, Bhawaria, Nawadpura and Malwadi. Chandankhedi, Molkhad and Malwadi are affected at 90 m dam height of SSP and have recently received notices to this effect under the aegis of the Supreme Court.

Thus, if the Sardar Sarovar is constructed only a few meters more than 18% of the Jobat command will be UNDER water, not in the need of irrigation waters.

This only underlines the utterly absurd and fragmented nature of planning of the Narmada Projects. It also means that if the Sardar Sarovar is constructed a few meters more, even the non, submerging villages of the command close to the reservoir may have easier access to waters from a considerably

broadened Narmada/Uri/Baghini rivers rather than from the Jobat canal.

For the full report, see:

<http://www.narmada.org/nvdp.dams/jobat/jobat.html>

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