

NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN Press Note

## **“Defeating NBA was necessary for corporatization of land, water, resources but people will resist” Medha**

Shuglu Committee Discredited the PMO and NSSO

Thursday 22 June 2006, by [NBA](#), [SANJAY Sangvai](#), [SUNITI S.R.](#) (Date first published: 19 June 2006).

### **‘How to Confront State Violence? Dilemma for Peaceful Movements’.**

" A joint offensive by the bureaucrats in the Union government - including those in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the corporate powers and multilateral financial agencies, encouraged by the unconstitutional attitude of the Supreme Court, has been instrumental in suppressing the Narmada Bachao Andolan's (NBA) struggle for the rights of Adivasis and farmers. It was necessary to push forward the controversial interlinking rivers project and subsequent privatization of rivers and water ", asserted Medha Patkar while describing the present situation in the Narmada valley and elsewhere.

"This clique is so fanatically opposed to any opposition to any project and policy of usurping people's rights and livelihoods, that it has been manipulating the all legal and constitutional processes and making it impossible for any democratic and non-violent struggle to survive", she said in various programmes in Pune on June 17. Medha Patkar held meetings with the close supporters, intellectuals in the city and delivered special lecture on the death anniversary of veteran socialist ideologue, late the N.G. Goray, on 'Politics of People's Movements'.

She castigated the incoming report of Prime Ministers' Oversight committee (Shuglu Committee) on Narmada resettlement as, "merely eyewash to justify the fraudulent action taken report (ATR) of Madhya Pradesh government on

rehabilitation. The credibility of the Prime Minister's office, the National Sample Survey organization and the Supreme Court is at stake, if they become agents of the corporate interests". For these vested interests, entrenched in the government, we - the NBA and NAPM have become an obstacle in their larger agenda. The NBA and the National Alliance or People's Movements (NAPM), have been building resistance to the rural and urban displacement, against the land-mafias, builder-contractor lobby and against the privatization of water and other public services. They are furious of our strong opposition to the capitalist Globalization and neo-liberal policies. It is unfortunate that Indian ruling class, and the laws and regulations are being manipulated for the sake of the multinational and Indian capitalists and market-economy at the cost of people's rights and livelihood", she made clear while addressing the overflowing auditorium at S.M Joshi Socialist Foundation gathered to hear her.

She strongly hinted that this 'collective of the bureaucrats, corporate powers, political managers and multilateral organizations' is bent upon closing all the options for the non-violent and democratic struggles. " We are firm believers in the non-violent resistance, but the state and corporate brutality has created doubt about the efficacy of non-violent resistance. It may drive some of them to opt for some other means", she cautioned.

### **Corporate War on People**

"It is not only about the Narmada struggle, but also about the issues of fisherpeople's struggle, or the brutal evictions in Delhi or Mumbai, the firing at Kalinganagar and repression in other mining Adivasi areas, suppressing the mill-workers in Mumbai, brutally demolishing the slums and jhuggis in Mumbai, Delhi or evicting the hawkers regarding the issue of the reservations for the OBCs in the higher education and jobs - everywhere the government, managed by the bureaucrats, is openly serving the interests of the Indian or global capitalists, by depriving the people of their rights, resources and by suppressing their resistance", she pointed out. "The Manmohan Singh led the United Progressive Alliance government at centre is hobnobbing with the communal-fascist government of Narendra Modi

in Gujarat on Narmada issue, while, the Left front government in W. Bengal too is implementing the same neo-liberal agenda".

Citing the recent actions of the Union government and judiciary in the case of the Narmada, urban poor, and mill workers or interlinking of rivers, Medha Patkar pointed out that "the state apparatus, including the bureaucracy and judiciary, has turned against the rights and interests of the common and poor people and instead facilitating the rule of the market and capital. It has become inimical to very existence of tribals, dalits, farmers, organized and unorganized workers and marginalized communities; the political leaders, the dominant political parties, the dominant media are trying to smother the dissenting voices and resistance. The nation's policy is being dictated by these corporate and multilateral houses and agencies. They do not wish the movements like the NBA to be able to secure the rights of the Adivasis and farmers and the NAPM to challenge the builders-bureaucrats-politicians nexus. That is why they have declared no holds barred war on the people, using the police, corporate media, and even co-opting the 'progressive' elite". She criticized the Supreme Court of India for, "destroying the spirit of equality and justice enshrined by its architect Dr. B.R. Ambedkar."

The bureaucrats and multilateral financial agencies have vested interests in the Interlinking of Rivers Project (ILR). The World Bank, has again started financing to the large-scale projects, against its own earlier policies. It also shrugged off the report of World Commission on Dams, of which the Bank was a sponsor. "As the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been thinking about financing this trillion dollars project, destroying the land, water sources and forests along with the communities through large scale displacement, we heard that the World Bank President Wolfowitz had already visited India and cleared the loan to the ILR, which it had previously denied. The ILR means building up of hundreds of large dams, without caring for environmental clearances, or the displacement of the billions of people and their forests and their rights. It is the clear sign of privatization of rivers and water and land on a

massive level".

## **Government for Corporates**

People's resistance to the massive evictions for so called 'infrastructure projects' in Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and many other cities has forced the corporate powers and bureaucrats to unleash the repression, demolition and arson on the working people living in the slums. The government is handing over the prime land to the builders lobby and their high-rise projects. The media also has been influenced by these interests, as they do not highlight the tribulations of and resistance by the poor, she said. "The large corporate houses like Reliance are purchasing fertile land tracts in the command area of the Sardar Sarovar Project, though the government could hardly harness barely 10% of the water made available in the canals at the dam height of 110 meters. Despite exposing one myth after another regarding the dam and its benefits, the entire state apparatus including judiciary is not ready to evoke the rule of law" she alleged.

In her comprehensive analysis of the political, social, national and international aspects of the politics of people's movements, Medha Patkar dealt with the interaction with the Left parties. Terming them as the 'natural alleys of people's movements', she appreciated that the Left parties are the only mainstream parties to take a pro-people and pro-NBA stand- though considerably late and if not fully. She hoped that the through continuous mutual interaction, the areas of differences and agreements and cooperation would be clearer.

She made it clear that the people's movements have an independent standing and purpose from the electoral party, though some of the former may wish to raise a pro-people party. The progressive party and movement are the two main areas in larger people's politics. Medha Patkar appealed to all the citizens concerned with democratic rights, equality and justice to participate in any possible way - right from writing letters, articles in the newspapers to highlight the people's issues and about the designs of vested interests.