

# India: Mass Fast in the Narmada Valley

Friday 4 August 2017, by [India Resists](#) (Date first published: 28 July 2017).

## **Medha Patkar starts indefinite fast in MP, Narmada supporters protest at Jantar Mantar**

*Narmada Supporters hold protest at Jantar Mantar in Solidarity with Medha Patkar and people of Narmada Valley sitting on Indefinite Mass Fast.*

By closing the gates of Sardar Sarovar Dam to final height of 138.68 mts, Govt. have decided to drown more than 40000 families in Narmada Valley without Complete and Just Rehabilitation.

Today at 3 AM, MP Police start dismantling Gandhi Samadhi by brutal force without informing Gram Sabha or the people, crackdown on protestors, and tried to arrest the people sitting on fast.

People in Karnataka hold fast for a day in solidarity with Sardar Sarovar affected communities and Medha Patkar.

New Delhi | July 27, 2017: Today, Medha Patkar and Sardar Sarovar affected communities have started Indefinite Mass Fast against the Govt. attempt of drowning and forcefully evicting people from Narmada Valley without Complete and Just Rehabilitation. Before they could sit for the fast, it came to notice that Madhya Pradesh Police dismantled the Mahatma Gandhi Samadhi at Rajghat, Badwani in the night and was taking away through JCB which was stopped by people gathered to protest the disrespect shown by the Police forces and the Govt. towards the father of the nation. It was unfortunate day for this country to see the dark truth of development cum displacement model which did not even spare ashes of Mahatma Gandhi, Kasturba Gandhi and Mahadevbhai Desai. When protested against the disrespect, the police forces unleash violence on fasting people and NBA activists. After facing continuous protest from the people, MP Police forced to retreat but dismantled few shops violently in frustration. It is clear that Police is acting as per the Govt. clear signals of using violent means to evict communities and trying hard to deter the strength of people holding indefinite fast peacefully out there along with Medha Patkar.

Citizens from all over the country reacted against the use of brute force by Madhya Pradesh Govt. disrespecting the democracy and constitution of the country. Following this, Delhi Solidarity Group and National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) hold a protest in Delhi at Jantar Mantar in solidarity with Narmada oustees, Narmada Bachao Andolan and Medha Patkar against the forceful eviction and drowning of not only a valley but a civilization, a culture and whole communities living in Narmada Valley.

Sanjeev Kumar from Delhi Solidarity Group briefed around 50 people gathered for the protest at Jantar Mantar about the injustices happened in last 32 years of struggle led by the people and communities of Narmada Valley along with Narmada Bachao Andolan. Hannan Mollah (former MP), as a representative of Bhumi Adhikar Andolan said that the Govt. is producing false information in Courts, in front of People and attacking people with force when asked for rehabilitation. On the behest of corporate forces and for the sake of interests of few industrialists, The Govt. have stopped listening to people for genuine demands and the movement which fought for the rights of people since last 32 years. He also extended full support to the movement and the people of Narmada Valley on behalf of Bhumi Adhikar Andolan.

Bhupendra Singh Rawat from Jan Sangharsh Vahini attacked the Govt.'s plan of holding Narmada Mahotsav i.e. the celebration of formal closure of sluice gates of Sardar Sarovar Dam scheduled on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in Gujarat at Sardar Sarovar Dam site and called Narmada Mahotsav, a celebration of drowning of more than 40000 families residing in Narmada Valley without complete and just rehabilitation. It is the saddest truth of this country that the so called development is no more meant for poor, farmers, landless, women, fishworkers, artisans, potters, Adivasis.

Soumya Datta, renowned environmentalist expressed his full solidarity to the movement and refuted the two basic claims given by Govt. to close the gates of Sardar Sarovar Dam. One is electricity to Madhya Pradesh and another is water for Gujarat. Gujarat has failed to utilize the water stored at the dam height of 121.92 mts with gates open as the Canal work is not complete. Also the major portion of water is only going to Coca Cola and industries rather than the claimed farmers in Gujarat. Another false claim of the need of electricity refuted on the basis that Madhya Pradesh is already a power surplus state and already facing corruption charges in purchasing electricity at higher rates from private companies by keeping public sector electricity power plants closed.

Rajesh Singh from Delhi Solidarity Group, Inamul Hassan from Khudai Khidmatgar, Rishit Neogi from NAPM, and Farmers from Tamilnadu protesting at Jantar Mantar also expressed their solidarity to the movements and raised questions against the Govt. attempt of silencing the voices of minority, farmers, workers, women, adivasis, fishworkers from all over the country and condemned the violence unleashed on the people of Narmada Valley and activists of Narmada Bachao Andolan.

In solidarity with fasting NBA activists and people of Narmada Valley, supporters from Karnataka hold a day long fast at Talukdar Headquarters in Challekere, Karnataka. Nearly 50 people assembled and fasted since morning and raised their demands in support to the demands of communities of Narmada Valley and Narmada Bachao Andolan.

\* July 28, 2017:

<http://www.indiaresists.com/medha-patkar-starts-indefinite-fast-mp-narmada-supporters-protest-jantar-mantar/>

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### **Day Three of the Indefinite Fast in Narmada Valley**

*Jal Satyagraha in Narmada by villagers, Challenged Shivraj Singh to Come and face the questions of people of Narmada Valley*

Current Water Levels of Sardar Sarovar Effective in Meeting Irrigation and Power Needs, Why Submerge More ?

Aam Aadmi Party to Launch "Save Narmada Displaced, Save Madhya Pradesh" Yatra from August 1<sup>st</sup>

Badwani, Madhya Pradesh. 29, July 2017: Today is the third day of indefinite fast in the Narmada Valley. Hundreds of the villagers today entered the Narmada waters and observed jal satyagraha. They challenged the government's plan to force death upon 40,000 families by closing gates of Sardar Sarovar Dam without any complete rehabilitation in the Narmada Valley. Shyama Behn, Bhagirath Dhangar, Saraswati Behn, Devram Kanera and others posed tough questions from Shivraj Chauhan, whose job as a Chief Minister is to serve people. They demanded that let Shivraj Singh

Chauhan come and answer these questions in public ? They said, “are these 40,000 families of Narmada valley, millions of trees, their cattle, farm-barn, temple-mosques, schools and entire ancient civilization not a part of India? Can’t the government, pretending to give water to Gujarat, see the people of Madhya Pradesh, their livelihood, forests and rivers? Will the Narmada Valley be sacrificed by the government for the private profit ?”

They added, “Shivraj Singh Chauhan says he will not allow any sewage to come in the Narmada but will he allow the death of the lakhs of the people ? Does he think that Narmada needs the blood of its children ? No mother wants the blood of its own children then why is MP government so willing to sacrifice their life for the sake of Gujarat ?” Today there is a lot of resentment among the people of Narmada Valley, and by denying every attempt of the administration; the Narmada Valley refuses to leave without full and justified rehabilitation. We will face the flood, but will not yield to this unjust government; with such determination people are sitting firmly and fasting.

### **Support Continues from Political Parties**

Ramesh Patel, MLA, Badwani (Congress) came to the fast venue and extended his full support again to the people. Shailesh ji, a project affected person himself and of the Aam Aadmi Party, came along with 10 other members today. They supported the struggle of the Narmada Valley on behalf of the party and announced that from 1<sup>st</sup> August ‘Save Project Affected and Save Madhya Pradesh’ yatra and reported the coming of the MP Bhagwant Mann on August 1<sup>st</sup>. Alok Agarwal, Aam Aadmi Party Convener, has come before to the Narmada Valley and exposed the government’s fake claims and the need of the electricity, which is primarily for benefiting the industrialists. The heavy rains in Gujarat have completely exposed the current situation where the branch canals are not ready and not managed, but still the politics over Narmada water is being played over lies and false claims.

### **NDRF forces arrive in Badwani**

Despite all this, the administration and the government are eager to displace the people of the Narmada Valley, without resorting to rehabilitation, and forcibly evicting them from the valley. A large number of NDRF detachments have reached in Badwani today. This clearly shows that despite knowing about the tragedy, the government is deliberately working against the people. As the water level increases, there will be havoc in the valley, but not a natural event, a completely man made disaster.

### **Flooding in Gujarat, Water Levels in Sardar Sarovar**

In Gujarat, all the canals are flooded after rains and due to the excess capacity of electricity in Madhya Pradesh, the government is abusing the public exchequer by purchasing power from private power ventures on expensive prices, by shutting down the government power ventures. There is no need of water from the dam or electricity, then why is the state of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh forcing flooding and submergence in 192 villages of Madhya Pradesh by closing the dam gates? Now, when Gujarat is in the midst of floods, the government is giving compensation of Rs 50,000 to the flood affected people in Gujarat and Rs 2.5 lakh to the dead. Such a situation could have been averted in Gujarat if the government had planned decentralized water planning to manage excess water. At the current level of the dam, there is enough water for the irrigation and drinking purposes. However, the water is being diverted for the coca-cola and car factories located in the command area. All the needs of the Gujarat can be met at the current level, something which Narmada Bachao Andolan have argued for long, then where is the need to impound the dam to its full reservoir level of 139 mts and force submergence.

### **Solidarity Programmes Across the country**

Support from across the country continues to pour in. Today a number of solidarity programmes were held, starting with Kisan Sangharsh Samiti's in Tapti Sarovar of Multai, MP; protest demonstration by mass organizations in Bhopal; in Jabalpur a solidarity programme by Mahakaushal support groups (Marxist Communist Party, Aam Aadmi Party, Barghi Dam visthapit sangh, Jhanshighat Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, Madhya Pradesh Kisan Sabha, Chutka parmanu sanyatr virodhi sangharsh samiti, Janvadi Mahila Samiti, Madhya Pradesh Mahila Sangha, Bhumi Adhikar Andolan, Adivasi Kisan Mazdoor sangathan, Manav Adhikar Seva Sangh, Dalit Adhikar Sangh, Bundelkhand Mazdoor Kisan Shakti organization and others) in support of the struggle of the Narmada valley and fast against the government.

Many college students have taken to social media to extend their solidarity to the struggle and demanding an intervention from the government to save this catastrophe and do justice.

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\* <http://www.indiaresists.com/day-three-indefinite-fast-narmada-valley-photos-report/>

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