

Press Release

On Sardar Sarovar Project

Wednesday 24 January 2007, by [NBA](#) (Date first published: 21 January 2007).

- Mr. Modi's dedication, not of benefits or rehabilitation nor the Project but merely power turbines, is a political farce.

- SSP stopped at 122 mts cannot reach the full height since rehabilitation is not in sight.

- Centre must review the project with socio-economic-environmental impacts and massive corruption proved.

It is just unfortunate and totally unjust that CM of Gujarat, Mr. Narendra Modi restoring to one more act of fooling people of Gujarat and nation as a whole. Mr. Modi dedicated to nation, the power turbines of Sardar Sarovar Project and not the project itself or even the benefits, which are far from completion and achievements. The people all over the country, who have watched the struggle and challenge the falsehood that helped push the giant Dam of Sardar Sarovar to 122 mts, should very well know that the turbines which were brought from Sumitoto and Hitashi, two of the Japanese companies as per the condition put forward by Bilateral Development Assistance agencies of Japan, have not been functional or up to the mark as yet. Both the power houses - River Bed Power House (RBPH) and Canal Head Power House (CHPH) have generated much less power and much costlier power than was expected at 110 meters of dam height itself.

Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, who are to get only power and not a drop of water, are sacrificing their generation old adivasi and farmer communities, prime agricultural lands and thousands of crores of rupees till date, while a huge investment is yet to occur, with balance of financial liabilities and affected families in their account. It is to be noted that Sardar Sarovar has not yet come on the list of projects providing power to Maharashtra as per the

official documents of MSEB.

Madhya Pradesh, where thickly populated villages and townships are thrown into the affected area of the dam at the present height of 122 metres, also has not received the real power beyond negligible minimum. This has happened because, in spite of height raised to 110 mts during monsoon of 2006, Gujarat govt. could not use water in the reservoir for producing power in Canal Head Power House. The reason was the fear of villages on canal banks getting drowned with breaches in the canal, carrying not just water but also corruption.

With the farcical celebration of the so-called dedication of turbines, the government has also restored to fake publicity through advertising, spending lakhs of rupees from the public exchequer. Just as the promises of Rehabilitation over years have not come true in case of thousands of Sardar Sarovar Project affected families, the promise of 1450 MW also cannot be. This being the generation capacity (installed capacity) at Full Reservoir Level, which is to be at 138.68 mts, cannot be achieved at either 122 mts or even at the full height. The claims of government of Gujarat regarding power generation are unwarranted and in discrepancy with the calculations of Central Electricity Authority, which is actually only half of what Gujarat government claims. The actual generated power has always been less than generating capacity (in any hydro power project) and in the case of Sardar Sarovar, it has to start with 439 MW and within years, will come down to 50 MW, once irrigation targets in Gujarat are achieved. The conflict between irrigation and power in any Multi Purpose Project is well known to the country, which will be much more in case of Sardar Sarovar, with inter state conflicts that are bound to infest Sardar Sarovar sooner or later.

Mr. Modi could not dare gift Irrigation, even the whole project, obviously because the project is far from being completed. More than 40,000 families still await full and complete Rehabilitation as per law and court judgment and hence continue to live in their lands, under threat of submergence.

The permission to raise height, even if by

putting gates, is not and cannot be given by Central agencies, including Rehabilitation Sub-group of NCA. It is revealed from the reports of few of the research organizations of Gujarat that mere 10% of drinking and irrigation targets claimed at 110 mts could be achieved by state. People of Kutch and Surat are deprived, not of non-performance of water supply network but also because of distributive in-justice. The later reason has come to be worse, with transfer of water and land in command area of SSP to corporates first, before the drought affected farmers and others, who were made to await the mirage of Narmada all through these decades. It is in this context that Gujarat Congress, the government and the authorities at the Center must show the rational and political acumen not to support the political agenda of Mr. Modi, rather should expose false claims of benefits and Rehabilitation both. When central authorities have power and responsibility to ensure justice to oustees before submergence and even withdraw the sanctions to a project as well its financial support through Planning Commission, beyond the boycott of dedication function of Mr Modi. It could do good if along with:

a) Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) undertake with Planning Commission and update the Cost-Benefits of 40,000 crore project i.e. Sardar Sarovar .

b) MoWR does not sanction any further funds under its Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme, much criticized by CAG.

c) Not allow any further work at the Dam site including erection of gates if no legal and justice based Rehabilitation is in sight for thousands of families i.e. a few lakhs of people in the river valley, the oldest of civilization.

d) Ministry of Environment send special team to review compliances put forth as on the Environment compensation measures as pre-conditions in the project clearance, which too are only on paper.

e) Direct Ministry of Social Justice to ensure immediate allotment of land and establishment of R&R sites for already affected and to be immediately affected adivasis and

farmer communities.

f) Undertake CBI enquiry into huge corruption in the name of Rehabilitation and compensation, which is proved through documents by NBA.

Noorji Padvi, Yogini Khanolkar, Chetan Salve, Ashish Mandloi, Medha Patkar