

July 2005

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## **The Struggle... The Hope...**

Dear all,

It is after a year that we are coming back to you, with Narmada Samachar. The delay was due to the time and financial constraint faced as we were engaged in certain fruitful actions but much of struggle. News must have reached many of you through e-mail, media or meetings. Yet the vivid description to critical analysis, we thought, must go and find you in your own battlefields, to strengthen our ties and commitment to the common cause which is beyond Narmada - a truly just development, not only of our natural resources but human communities.

Sardar Sarovar is at a stand still again. It needs to be. It was and is illegal and unjust to push the dam height up leading to massive submergence without rehabilitation and environmental protection measures. Especially considering the enormous problems with the economics and politics of water distribution of the dam as well, this scale of human and natural destruction is unacceptable. Big dams in general and SSP or NSP in particular, are being questioned on these and more grounds, not quite monitored by the Planning Commission or the concerned Ministries either. Yet, the prolonged struggle has brought the legal violations by the governments to the fore, vindicating the NBA's position on inadequate rehabilitation.

While there is some respite, the politics of Narendra Modi government, fooling Gujarat with the lure of Narmada dam waters as the only solution and pressuring the inter-state agencies to permit further construction is not at rest. We have to expose this in a renewed context.

The floods in Gujarat are a renewed hope for those in the Sardar Sarovar's hinterlands because floods are an indicator for Gujarat, to turn to the right path to harness waters under its own feet. But this important fact and its relevance is being deliberately suppressed and distorted through systematic propaganda through media. You too have to join us in countering the false propaganda that flood waters couldn't be harnessed since Sardar Sarovar is only 110 meters high!

While we continue to prevent devastation in our river valley, you are aware of the arrogance and violence of those in power to commodify our waters, to captures our rivers and carry on with the dams – large and gigantic. Many countries including Nepal, Pakistan, Germany, Brazil and others are using the World Commission on Dams guidelines but the Indian government has shelved it! Our efforts, as two of the twelve commissioners from India and a group of our activist-colleagues across the world, haven't been of much use for our own country! But the hope lies in increasing awareness among the dam-affected as well as the drought and flood- affected, whether in Bihar or the North-east, in Narmada or in Godavari which is leading to serious questioning of the paradigm of water management.

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## **I Build a Dam...**

The dawn breaks over  
the dam I build.  
There is no flour  
in the grinding stone.

I collect yesterday's husk,  
for today's meal.  
The sun rises  
and my spirit sinks.  
I hide my baby under a basket;  
my tears beneath a grin;  
I go to build dam.

The dam.  
It feeds the sugarcane crop  
lush and juicy;  
but I walk miles of forest  
for fire-wood.  
I water my plants with drops of sweat;  
dry leaves fill my parched yard.

~ Daya Pawar

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# Supreme Court Vindicates NBA Position

## Recent Supreme Court Judgement Vindicates the People's Cause: Inadequate Rehabilitation Halts the Dam

On March 15, 2005, the Supreme Court (SC) of India gave its judgement in the case filed by the Sardar Sarovar dam-affected adivasi villagers of Picchodi and Jalsindhi (both in Madhya Pradesh), versus the Government of Madhya Pradesh and other authorities. In a vindication for Project Affected Families (PAFs) who have been struggling for the last two decades, the Court took a very clear position on the interpretation of the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award (NWDTA) of 1979 and previous Supreme Court Judgements, strongly upholding the rights of the PAFs to land-based rehabilitation and pointing out the grave inadequacies of current rehabilitation efforts. **It is important to understand that the judgment conveys a serious message about the ground reality regarding rehabilitation of families affected by the Sardar Sarovar Dam vis-à-vis the false paperwork submitted by the government in order to illegally raise the dam height.** This verdict has far-reaching implications and, if enforced appropriately, is a major victory for dam-displaced populations. Below are the major aspects of the judgment:

**Major Sons:** The judgment brings out clearly that each and every major son (defined as those who are over the age of 18 at a certain point of time) should be considered as a separate family and, as per the Tribunal's Award, must be allotted two hectares (ha) of cultivable, irrigable land. Until now, Gujarat was

allotting 2 ha to major sons, Maharashtra was allotting only 1 ha, while Madhya Pradesh (M.P) refused to recognise this entitlement of major sons (M.P has even refused land for the titled holders!). Now, all major sons in all states will have to be allotted 2 ha of land.

In fact, the state of M.P has not even recorded all the major sons in the 193 affected villages of M.P. Thus, thousands of major sons are still left off the lists and there are many in each village. For example, there are 300 in village Ekkalbara, 120 in Bhavaria (both district Dhar) and so on. The government will have to include their names on the list, and then will have to locate land for all the eligible families. Thousands of such families have already fallen into the affected zone at the height of 110m and even below; many more thousands will be affected at 121 metres dam height. If the SC decision is to be honoured and enforced, all of them will need to be identified and rehabilitated before the dam advances any further. Thus, if enforced, the Supreme Court's decision is a major victory for thousands of major sons who have thus far been denied their lawful land-based rehabilitation.

### Temporary or Permanent

**Submergence:** The judgment also clearly reinforces what is clear from the definition of 'oustees' in the NWDTA: that there can be no distinction between the 'temporarily' or 'permanently' affected families at intermediate stages of the dam height.

Beginning in 2002, when the rehabilitation seemed insurmountable

to M.P, the govt. began drastically reducing families from the official lists, based on a bogus and illegal distinction between 'temporarily' or 'permanently' affected families. M.P argued that those affected temporarily at a certain dam height (meaning those families whose agricultural lands will be submerged for some period of time following which the water will recede, but after destroying the standing crops) do not need to be rehabilitated before the dam height is increased. This was in clear violation of the Award's definition of "oustees." However neither the M.P govt, the Narmada Control Authority (NCA) nor even the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJ&E) stopped this procedure even after it was brought to their notice. Hence NBA approached the Court on this issue.

At the 110 mts dam height, M.P had reduced the number of PAFs from 12681 to 8406 using this artificial division, which is in fact a shift in policy also. With this judgement **M.P will now have to resettle the original figure of 12681 families plus all the major sons that weren't counted.** And it will subsequently have to revise its estimates of PAFs for all future dam heights.

### No Submergence Without

**Rehabilitation:** The Court also strongly reiterated what is clearly spelled out in the NWDTA and previous verdicts: that no submergence, and hence no raising of dam height, can occur until every affected family is rehabilitated, the cut off being one year before actual submergence. The Tribunal's stipulation, one may note is very clear on the linkage between submergence/dam construction and rehabilitation. Clause XI, sub-clause IV (6) (ii) clearly states, "In no event shall any areas in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra be submerged under the Sardar Sarovar unless...arrangements

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are made for the rehabilitation of oustees.” The judgment has defined the concept of ‘pari passu’ and categorically rejected any undue haste or violation of the above clause thus settling the dispute once and for all. In sum, submergence before rehabilitation is illegal!

It is clear from the very Petitioners in whose case the Court has given directives that there are PAF’s below 110 mts - the number in all three states is not less than 10,000 PAF’s, of which M.P. has about 8000+ PAFs, while Maharashtra is yet to rehabilitate at least 1500 PAFs, with at least half of them yet to be recognised. In Gujarat too, there are declared PAFs - but fewer - who are yet to be allotted land and hundreds of others who were allotted uncultivable lands that need to be changed. All those below 110 mts were to be rehabilitated one year before reaching that height but this was not done. For any future height increase, all those who haven’t yet been rehabilitated at lower heights plus all those to be affected at the new height must be rehabilitated **BEFORE** proceeding.

**Land Based Rehabilitation:** The land-based rehabilitation provision of NWDTA has been emphasised without a doubt. The Court has underlined the Tribunal’s provision of offering **only cultivable and irrigable land**, indicating that anything else is not acceptable and can be rejected by oustees. **It is also made clear that the alternative land for agriculture should be allotted to a PAF, at least one year before submergence while full resettlement is to be completed at least six months before.**

In Madhya Pradesh, No PAF has been offered or allotted cultivable land (with the exception of a few of the petitioners in this very case, and that too because of the case). The

judgment proves this to be a gross violation that requires a major shift in the state’s rehabilitation policies and planning, without which the project cannot proceed. **It is an indirect yet indisputable implication of the judgment that MP’s manipulated policy of offering people cash in lieu of land or house plots is unacceptable.** The Minister for Water Resources Mr Priyaranjan Dasmunshi also gave a direction to this effect on March 18<sup>th</sup>, three days after the judgment. He gave directions to suspend all procedures related to allotment of cash compensation until further directions. This is an important move as the government was coercing many families, who rightfully deserve land-based rehabilitation, into accepting cash compensation. We hope this issue will not need a separate legal action. This again leads to the requirement that thousands of hectares of productive land be identified by GoMP and be made available to oustees. This land, it should be noted, must not be the uncultivable govt wasteland or grazing land, which is currently in the govt’s “land bank”. It should be implied by the Court’s decision that those who have already been cheated by the government and paid only a pittance in cash instead of alternative land should be offered the option of land instead.

In Maharashtra too, identification of adequate land for many declared and undeclared PAF’s at 110 mts and higher heights is yet to be done.

In Gujarat, as against the claim of complete rehabilitation, the uncultivable land already allotted needs to be exchanged for good land.

**Resettling As Village Units:** The judgment also upholds the NWDTA principle that villages should be resettled as village units as far as possible. This means not breaking up

villages over numerous sites as has often happened to many displaced villages, especially in Gujarat. On the PAFs right to choose land, the judgement upholds the oustees’ right to reject uncultivable land, but restricts the oustees’ choice to the land offered by the government if it is productive.

**False Records And Manipulation:** The judgment reads with details and references to the false records and manipulation of facts by the governments, especially GoMP since the case pertains to that state. It is known and already exposed by the NBA that the same is true about the reports of each state and the central authority also.

The obvious conclusion emerging out of detailed analysis of the government’s shifting claims is that the monitoring agencies including the R&R Sub-group, the NCA and the GRA have NOT correctly interpreted the NWDTA and prior Court judgements, nor have they correctly monitored the R&R process. At last the voices of the PAFs have been heard.

**Hence, the judgment demands that the governments correct and update their records and lists, and then identify cultivable land for rehabilitation. In fact, a Rehabilitation Master Plan is much needed and though mandated, has not been made till date. There is no doubt that the dam cannot be raised beyond 110 mts at this point of time.**

All this means that a massive rehabilitation effort on the part of the state governments is required if the dam is to legally move ahead. Given the enormity of this task, and the other questionable aspects of the project, it is not too late to halt further construction and focus on

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# The Endless Saga of 'Rehabilitation'

## The Devastating Floods And Water logging In Gujarat

Towards the end of June 2005, normal life was in Doldrums in most of South Gujarat due to unprecedented floods. Thousands of families had to be evacuated to save life even as properties and belongings worth crores of rupees had been lost. While we are in solidarity with the affected people of Gujarat, we do raise questions to the rulers and builders. Why is it that no one could predict or prevent such loss and suffering due to floods that occurred? Even though the rate of rainfall was higher than normal this year, there was huge crop loss last year also. While government may blame it on nature's fury and the incompleteness of the SSP, there is more to it than meets the eye.

While the people of Gujarat were flooded and submerged, the rulers were using this opportunity to ensure the creation of public opinion (through media) supportive of the destructive SSP. They were harping on how water got wasted in the Narmada because of the incomplete dam!

For any ordinary observer, it is obvious that the floods happened not much in Narmada district but more so in Vadodara, Surat, Kheda and other districts. Though the city dwellers were able to briefly experience the afflictions that the adivasis in the Narmada Valley are going through (from 1994 onwards), this time it is not the Narmada River but other rivers and their catchments that were flooded more. Even now, the water level at Sardar Sarovar dam

site has not crossed 115m while it was over flowing upto 118m last year. Why is it that there is no talk on the wastage of immeasurable amounts of water that has got lost (outside Narmada) during this year's floods? It is an open truth that due to the overarching concentration on one single project (SSP), the govt. lost focus on harnessing the numerous waters that are available in Gujarat during monsoon, through various sustainable, low cost, more employment creating methods and technologies. **It is to be understood clearly that media campaigns targeting SSP are deceptive and wedges all attempts at creating alternative, sustainable, cost-effective and people-friendly solutions to Gujarat's legitimate water requirements.**

Devastation by water is of many kinds, the most dreadful being Tsunami and high floods. But what happened in Gujarat is not just floods i.e. an over flowing due to the rise in river water levels. **The disaster was acute not only because of heavy rainfall but also due to blocks created in natural drains.** Even now rural areas are facing severe water logging and huge crop loss (especially many of the R&R sites of the SSP affected adivasis) whereas in the cities waters have receded, much to the relief of the people. In the rural areas, some of the affected regions have been under canal irrigation (of various projects) for many years and hence have become prone to water logging.

The most important thing to note in South Gujarat is the kind of structures that have turned up in the

last few years, blocking natural drains without adequate alternatives. They are the snake-like network of the Narmada canals, the express high way, and many more symbols of the so-called development. If we probe deeper we see a whole lot of disturbed rivers in Gujarat were numerous dams are built, the Sardar Sarovar leading the list. Whether there is heavy or light rainfalls, floods and water logging have become a common feature during the monsoons wherever planners have unwisely intervened in nature's course, whether it is Bihar or Kerala, Uttaranchal or Gujarat.

The dailies of Gujarat quite obviously focused on the wastage of water due to the overflow of the Sardar Sarovar as if a completed dam would have prevented the floods. They quite notoriously kept silent on the possibilities of utilizing the tremendous quantities of water that poured from the sky. If the policies on water harnessing are going to remain the same, we are in for more trouble.

A study conducted by NBA on the situation of canal construction in the R&R sites in Gujarat clearly predicted that there will be disastrous water-logging and crop loss due to the retention of floods waters as the canal network has blocked the natural drains in most places. Last year, the Main canal breached in three places. This year there is already disaster and the monsoon has just begun!

**It is high time that we learn to harness water locally and plan development in tune with the geography and problems of specific regions. The campaign for a change in both state and national policies on water management, flood control, disaster management and relief and rehabilitation operations has to be intensified before we get into a point of no return.**

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## **Disaster Yet Again Hits SSP Resettlement Sites in Gujarat**

As South Gujarat reels under floods and water-logging, nearly 6000 SSP affected adivasi families who are resettled in Kheda, Vadodara, Narmada, Baruch and Surat districts (out of a total of more than 10,000 families settled in over 7 districts) are facing a severe livelihood crisis with most of their monsoon crops destroyed. Last year, NBA conducted a sample survey of 10 R&R sites with about 200 families in Vadodara district, who were affected by water-logging and crop loss and found that just in terms of the prices of seeds and fertilizers there was a cumulative loss of nearly 5 lakh rupees. This will play a major role in the pauperisation of those severely affected as most of the money had been borrowed either from bank or moneylenders. The Government or SSNNL had not given any relief to the PAFs last year. The officials shy away from the problem by saying that flood are a natural disaster and that PAFs are not the only ones who are affected.

This argument is a serious violation of the NWDTA provisions and State Rehabilitation Policies that ensures an improvement in the livelihood standard of the PAFs who are affected by the SSP. Not only that people are cheated in the process of land allotment, but also the field canal-network intended to help the populations has blocked most of the minor natural drains resulting in water stagnation on the agriculture fields. The canals have breached in several places causing severe damage to crops and houses.

While the free water received during monsoon goes waste, the people are supposed to buy water from the canals or from local landlords for the winter cultivation. Is it not clear from this that the government is more interested in profit-making through

water marketing than ensuring the availability of sufficient, sustainable and affordable resources to the citizens? While that may happen only through local initiatives involving people, we believe that the benefits from mega projects are not only unsustainable but also destructive.

### **Faulty Electricity Cables Cause Fire in Resettlement Site – Homes and Property Worth Lakhs of Rupees Destroyed**

On April 3, 05 two houses were fully charred to the ground, and another two were partially burned in a fire caused by low-hanging electricity cables at Thuvavi Rehabilitation site, Dabhoi taluka, Vadodara district, Gujarat. For the thirty-one people in four families who have lost their possessions in the fire, this will be the second time they will have to rebuild their lives. After the loss of his family's last remaining resources, one of the PAFs said, **“We feel like dying”**.

### **PAP in Gujarat Jailed for Demanding Fast Redressal of His Grievance**

Kantibhai Rimal of Savli Resettlement site, (originally from village Mokhadi in Gujarat) was arrested for threatening to commit suicide in the Sardar Sarovar dam. These are gestures of resistance by oppressed individuals who are driven by absolute despair. No organization suggests, encourages or condones the practice and politics of suicide, but every organization, is obliged to consider who is responsible for producing conditions that force people to extreme measures. This incident is the 4<sup>th</sup> of its kind in the last two years, including the suicide attempt by 15 youths in December 2003. In each of these incidents the government has tried to scare and suppress the real issues and

humiliate and criminalize the affected persons.

### **Current Resettlement process in Maharashtra**

The Bhoomi Haq (Land Rights) Satyagraha at Somaval in Taloda taluka of Maharashtra went on for more than a month. (May 7<sup>th</sup> to June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004). The struggle has forced the administration to purchase private lands in Vadchhil and Vadi Javda villages, as desired by the adivasi PAFs of Maharashtra. In Vadchhil some 250 families have received land and in Javda vasahat, more than 500 acres of land has been purchased and have been made available to around 200 families.

All this has been possible because of the ongoing struggles of the people. On one hand are the victories but on the other hand are the battles yet to be won. Vadchhil vasahat is facing serious shortage of water for drinking and irrigation. A few months back, their water pumps have been stolen. Electricity Meters have not been made available and other amenities like drainage, sanitation facilities, cremation grounds are yet to be constructed. Even after shifting to Vasahat, people have not been issued Land Rights in their names. In few cases, even after being declared as a PAP (Project Affected Person), people have not received land or other facilities.

The construction of Javda Vadi was decided in April 2003 but government had been delaying it without any reason. The people had to face the hardships of floods last year and this year also because of the delay. In such a situation, people were temporarily shifted to transit camps where even water facilities were not available. People facing such hardships have been forced to construct their houses there.

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## Desperate Attempts to Raise the Dam Height

Even though it is clear that the dam height cannot legally be raised at this stage, the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Ltd (SSNNL), the Government of Gujarat and Chief Minister Modi are all desperately trying to get a height raise sanctioned. Thus, it is evident that they have little regard for the law and are intent on raising the dam height even without the just and legal rehabilitation of all affected families. In fact, some unidentified officials have been making statements in the press that can clearly be considered as 'Contempt of Court.' For example, on March 25, an Indian Express story quoted an official as having said, "our government could have avoided this predicament had it tried to have an early meeting with the NCA and obtain its nod to raise the dam height before the Narmada Bachao Andolan moved an application in the apex court."

The attitude is clearly that the dam must go ahead by hook or by crook, even if it means circumventing the law and neglecting rehabilitation and environmental regulations and 'throwing good money after the bad'.

### The NCA Website Drama: Right to Misinformation?

In November 2004, a press release from the Prime Minister's Office stated that all information regarding rehabilitation should be placed on government websites, since the Narmada Bachao Andolan has been constantly disputing the official figures of rehabilitated families. **What followed was a charade that continues until today, as incorrect and false information has remained on**

**government websites in spite of the Supreme Court verdict making it evident that rehabilitation has not been completed, and even though it has been brought to the notice of the concerned authorities.**

The information first appeared on the website of the Narmada Control Authority (NCA), where it was incorrectly shown that the balance of families remaining to be rehabilitated under dam height 100 meters and 110.64 meters (current height) was 'zero'. As noted by the recent Supreme Court judgment among others, this is clearly untrue and false. In Madhya Pradesh alone, thousands of families are living in villages of Jhabua, Dhar and Badwani districts who are affected at 110.64 meters and whose rehabilitation is still pending. An estimate of the number is over 10,000 families, and yet when you access the information on NCA's website, even three months after the verdict, it shows you the number of balance families as "zero".

As a result of our campaign against this 'website drama', the NCA first removed the data from their website altogether, instead putting up old data showing the rehabilitation status at 95m of dam. Meanwhile, the disputed data appeared on the website of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJ&E)! Then it also reappeared on the NCA website and continues to be there till today. It has repeatedly been brought to the notice of all the concerned authorities that this information is completely false, but to no avail. It continues to be on the website, and used as a justification to push the dam forward. In the MSJ&E website, due to our

campaign, the column showing '0' balance has been removed from the status chart of rehabilitation at 110.64m, but the false figures of 8860 in M.P instead of the 12681 remain. The figure of 8860 is false as it is achieved through a deliberate under-counting of PAFs using temporary or permanent and other such artificial factors, which shows an attempt at diluting the state's rehabilitation policy. In May 2003 (one year after the first introduction of the temporary or permanent distinction at 95 and 100m), the 110m PAF list drops "tentatively" by over 7,000 families (from 12,681 to 5,607) and now increased to 8860 on the website. More like taking a bail against further embarrassment the following footnote is given in the website home page:

"Disclaimer: Data and information regarding resettlement of Project Affected Families (PAFs) concerning Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) are provided for informational purposes only, and are not intended for any other purpose. Neither Government of India/State Governments nor any of the data or content providers shall be liable for any errors or delays in the content, or for any actions taken in reliance thereon. By accessing this site, a user agrees not to redistribute the information found therein. Government of India/State Governments shall not be liable for any damages or costs of any type arising out of or in any way connected with use of the information or any loss to any person caused by any shortcoming, defect or inaccuracy in the information available on website. See <http://socialjustice.nic.in/NARMADA/home.htm> Is this the Right to Information or Right to Misinformation?

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# IPT Conducts Public Hearing

In September 2004, a team of panelists consisting of Mr. Harsh Mander, Dr. B.D. Sharma and Ms. Chitra Palekar, constituted by the Delhi-based Indian Peoples' Tribunal, visited communities affected by the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP), and attended three large public hearings.

On September 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, they held public hearings in Khaparkheda village, tehsil Kukshi, district Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, Nimgavan village, tehsil Akrani, Nandurbar district, Maharashtra and Parvetta-2 rehabilitation site in Sankheda tehsil of Vadodara district, Gujarat.

Kishorbhai from Kharya Badal, a forest village and the first affected village of Badwani district, explained how his fields with standing crops were destroyed this year and the M.P. government has never offered any compensation. In fact, even the land acquisition process in the seven forest villages of Badwani district has not been done properly. People were distraught as they narrated the devastation of their fields, crops and homes, many of which have been affected every year since 1994. They talked of faulty level surveys, lack of proper 'tapu' surveys, inadequate or lack of land-based rehabilitation for declared people who chose to be settled in their own states and the alarming number of undeclared people still left in the villages.

Most people from resettlement sites complained that the land allotted to them was uncultivable or unproductive, affected by a host of problems such as water logging, daab grass (a dangerous weed), was less productive etc. Appropriate irrigation still remains a dream for most PAFs. Many also brought up the issues of

lack of proper civic facilities like drinking water, electricity, 'pucca' roads to the sites, approach roads to fields, cremation grounds and grazing land.

The most serious concern was brought by Raijikkaka, Bhaghawanbhai and others of Gadher and Vadgam villages who have returned to their original village due to lack of sufficient livelihood. They said that forest officials have threatened to burn down their houses if they don't return to the R&R sites. The government argues that since the people have already accepted the lands offered to them, they have no right to return to their original villages. According to the policies, the people can have access to their lands previously owned till they get submerged. This is being denied even as the forest officials encourage people from other villages to stay and cultivate and take bribe from them.

Many PAFs in Gujarat insist that the government has tricked them in land selection. They were shown the lands during Feb-March when the winter cultivation was about to be harvested. The hill tribes of the valley easily fell into the trap after seeing the standing crops of original owners, as they had no idea about agricultural issues in the plains in varying seasons. With crop after crop failing due to water logging or lack of irrigation and desperate to earn a decent and dignified livelihood, they sought to cultivate the areas in their original villages that have not yet come under submergence. The government ought to provide income security to PAFs rather than kicking them out of their original lands.

**The IPT has brought out a comprehensive report of the latest situation of rehabilitation in SSP and the report was released on 8 February 2005 in New Delhi. The report criticizes the governments for non-compliance with the NWDTA and appeals to the Supreme Court to ensure justice to the affected populations.** Urging the judiciary and the political leadership to intervene in the matter, Mander said his group would send copies of the report to President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi as well as to the Supreme Court Chief Justice R.C. Lahoti. It felt the apex court should take the violation of its order as a contempt of court. "When (Booker Prize winner) Arundhati Roy questioned the court order, the court said it was a contempt of court. And when the same verdict was violated [by the government], why did the court not take note of it?" asked activist Swami Agnivesh.

## The Chixoy Dam Legacy Issues Study

This report on Guatemala's Chixoy Dam reveals the full extent of social injustices resulting from the project, and recommends legally binding reparations for those harmed by the 22-year-old dam. The dam was built by the military government of the time with World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank support. More than 4,000 people were affected, and 444 people were massacred after resisting forced resettlement.

For the report, please visit [www.irn.org](http://www.irn.org)

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taking the available waters to the drought prone regions of Kutch and Saurashtra. This will save the lives and livelihood of more than 25,000 families who are yet to be affected by the dam. The final intended dam height is 138.68 mts (i.e. 28 mts yet to be built). So far at 110m, nearly 22,000 families are affected of which the governments are able to resettle only about 12,000 families, which has also created many unresolved problems. Does the government have the necessary political will and capacity to complete all these tasks before the dam is taken ahead?

### **Latest following The March 15th Judgement...**

Since the Court order was to allot cultivable and irrigable lands to the petitioners i.e. 23 PAFs from Picchodi and 14 from Jalsindhi within three months of the Judgement i.e. 15 June, the M.P government had started the process to buy private lands for rehabilitation. But on the last day of the three month period, after failing to buy adequate productive private lands, the government ex-parte allotted uncultivable grazing lands from their land bank to 18 PAFs from Picchodi village (district Badwani) in Dhar district about 150 km away! Ironically, the Grievances Redressal Authority in M.P had earlier rejected the very lands during its first order stating that grazing lands should not be allotted. This was in the context of conflict that arose between local villagers and PAFs when they went to see the land.

Moreover 23 families were to be given land and there are many more families under 110m in Picchodi itself. On the basis of non-cultivability of the land, the 18 PAFs have not accepted the offer of NVDA and instead send a notice demanding

an explanation for the ex-parte allotment of un-cultivable land. They demand rehabilitation on 'cultivable, irrigable' lands where the families can gain a secure, sustainable livelihood and as much as possible, community-based rehabilitation. In the existing context this is possible only if the government buy good private agricultural lands.

Earlier, ex-parte land allotment had been made for the 14 declared Jalsindhi PAFs in Khajouri, almost 150 kms away from the Narmada River on the Rajasthan border. There the land is good but local villagers who are doing sericulture in those lands may create problems for the new comers as is happening elsewhere. Moreover there are undeclared families in Jalsindhi who are filing a case in the Supreme Court to be declared. By the time they get declared, their parents or cousins will already be settled in a place where there will be no more space for the newly declared families, thus breaking the community. The Jalsindhi people want the government to buy good private lands closer to their relatives where it is possible to rehabilitate all the families as one unit. Even after 20 years of struggle, they still await appropriate, community-based rehabilitation.

**It is quite evident that the government could not comply with the SC order. If the M.P government has failed in a small task of providing good lands for Jalsindhi and Picchodi, how can the people trust them for the massive task of rehabilitation that is at hand. With the new Supreme Court verdict, the SSP PAFs in M.P are legally empowered for land based rehabilitation, not only those who filed the case but all PAFs who are eligible according to the NWDTA, the number being more than 8000 families under 110m and 35,000+ in M.P. with 40,000+ in three states at full dam height.**

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In both these vasahats, NBA runs the Jeevanshalas, which are partly shifted from the original villages. In Vadchhil, people from Domkhedi, Nimgavan, Surung have been shifted and in Javda Vasahat people from Bharad, Savariya-Digar, Atti, Keli, Thuvani etc have been shifted. Few people from Savariya-Digar refused to move out as they were not allotted house plots in Javda.

Because of the low ground water table level in rehabilitation site of Vadchhil, NBA has decided to initiate watershed programmes as also in other vasahats and training camps for organic farming.

Along with the rehabilitation work, the work of the Task Force formed on the directions of Daud Committee is continuing. Around 127 PAFs whose names had been left out of the declared list have been included. Majority of the 9 villages in Akkalkuva and Bhadal in Akrani are yet to be rehabilitated. Fight for their rehabilitation is continuing.

The Collector's Office Task Force had not declared many people who are eligible to be declared in the list of people aged above 31. This act of injustice was made public and presented before the Commissioners and in Mantralaya, Mumbai. As a result, 94 PAFs, whose lands were already submerged, were declared.

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### **Large Dams for Hydropower in North-East India**

A Dossier

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# “Nav Nirman” (Reconstruction)

## **Narmada Nav Nirman Abhiyan (NNNA)**

The NNNA is a recently set-up trust to further our engagement in the constructive activities of the Narmada Bachao Andolan. The trustees of the NNNA include many PAPs from affected villages like Ashish Mandloi from Chota Barda, Kailash Avasya from Bhilkheda, Mohan Patidar from Bhavaria (all from Nimad) and Keshav Vasave from Nimgavan village (Maharashtra). Apart from them Vijaya Chauhan, Suniti S R, Sanjay Joshi and Shyam Patil complete the core team of Trustees. Pervin Jehangir functions as the Managing Trustee.

## **Jeevanshalas – Excellence of a Different Quality**

At present the NBA is effectively running 15 schools - Jeevanshalas ('life schools') all along the interior, tribal regions of the Narmada Valley. Though the state governments do not yet properly acknowledge these schools, they have produced many brilliant students and even a few star athletes. At least 13 of the SSP affected students of Jeevanshalas children have been chosen to participate in various sports at the national level, with some of these children winning the sports scholarships (of 'kreeda probodhini') where they undergo training along with their studies in places like Pune and Akola. (See table below)

As people are shifted from original villages to resettlement sites, we are moving some of the Jeevanshalas with them. The school at Nimgavan will be completely shifted to Vadchhil rehabilitation village of

Shahada tehsil in Nandurbar district and the one from Bharad to Javda rehabilitation village. Presently workshops and training programmes are being carried out in the schools and almost 1300 children are receiving the 'knowledge of life' at the Jeevanshalas.

Since 1991, when the battling communities of adivasis decided to have educational endeavours of their own, Jeevanshalas have been working as the only source of education in the Narmada valley. Starting with 2 schools at Nimgavan & Chimalkhedi, the number of Jeevanshalas has now grown to 15 by this year. The local teachers, who are the teacher activists, have been teaching in the schools with full commitment & dedication towards their own community. Our consciously adopted methodologies, such as using tribal dialect, mother tongue for teaching first generation learners from the Adivasi communities have had a good impact towards strengthening the educational base. The progress of the Jeevanshalas during the last 14 years has become a source of inspiration for others who have been working in the field of alternative education and the schools have become a center of overall social unity & power for the Adivasi communities who participate in the running of the schools.

Bhimsing Parshi Vasave, student of Manibeli Jeevanshala participated in 400 and 800 m dash in 2003 and won Bronze medal in 400m, Silver in 800m and selected for Olympics training camp [presently staying at Balewadi National level sports complex-Pune]. Similarly, Gulabsing

Parashi Vasave of the same Jeevanshala participated in 400 and 800 m dash and 10 km marathon in 2004. He won Rural Athletics events – Silver medal [presently staying At Prawara Nagar Sports complex]. Other students who won laureates in athletics are Hanumanta Surajya Vasave (400m, 800m, 5000m marathon, Maharashtra state level winner), Magan Gorji Vasave (400m and 800m, won Malegaon Sports Marathon, Nashik Marathon) and Rajesh Singa Padvi (200m, 400m, marathon, won the Malegaon marathon, qualified for the Ahmednagar Sports Academy).

## **Hands on Health**

Over the last year, NNNA activists have been working relentlessly to improve the health conditions of the villages in and around the Narmada Valley. The doctors have been successful in overcoming and curing diseases such as scabies and epidemics such as malaria that have become more prevalent because of the stagnant waters of the reservoir.

In keeping with their aim of trying to make the people self-reliant, the 'Vaidu' (traditional healers) training program was launched. Under this program, almost 200 traditional tribal health workers were trained at four personal health centres in various allopathic and Ayurvedic medical processes and in the procuring of traditional medicine.

To help in this cause, the Abhiyan is trying to provide these health workers with a language module in the local "pavri" language that includes medical terms and interactive lessons for health workers.

Recently the Abhiyan has started a health care centre at Kumbhari, an

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interior village in the Akrani Tehsil. Here every Sunday a diagnostic health camp is held for 9 villages. The facilities include pre-natal and post-natal check ups, follow up on malnourished children, reference services for people who require surgical treatments or with chronic problems along with general treatment for less serious patients. These health camps have seen very good responses from the people, which have given encouragement to the activists and doctors to keep up the good work.

Dr Revati Joshi, Dr Ujjwala Dakare and Dr Pallavi Raut, who have first come to the valley during the 2003 monsoons, have continued to work on the health front.

### **Experimentation in Wind Energy Begins**

After the successful working of the Micro-Hydel electricity project in Bilgaon the Narmada Nav Nirman Abhiyan activists have now taken on the responsibility of generating electricity in another forest village, Trishul. Here it has been decided to use wind power to generate electricity. Michael and Shivani Patel who work on alternative life and energy in Gujarat, along with Mark and Richel Pitter, PhD students, undertook surveys regarding wind speed. The response of this survey was positive and proved the efficiency of wind power in this area. Accordingly, a workshop was arranged in Dhulia (Maharashtra) to train and inform activists. The study showed that at least one windmill will be required per 100 people and the entire village will require at least 3 windmills. The project is due to be launched within a year's time. In the meantime, the struggle to electrify other villages is still on.

### **Caste Certificates - en bloc!**

Among its numerous constructive activities, the Narmada Nav Nirman Abhiyan has now taken up the responsibility of providing adivasis of almost 64 villages with caste certificates. These certificates that identify people as tribals are of great importance to the people for proving their eligibility for the various government schemes for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (SCs and STs) as well as for admissions to various educational and professional institutions. This importance is well understood by government officials which has led to immense corruption and red tape in the distribution of certificates, thus costing each individual almost Rs.1000 if s/he were to approach the officials directly. The NBA having identified this problem has taken up the responsibility of distributing these certificates to the people of 55 villages in Akrani and 9 villages in Akkalkuva tehsil of the Nandurbar district. The bulk of these certificates (almost 8000) are already ready and the rest will be completed soon. A government official has also put forward a helping hand in the process thus encouraging the activists to keep up the good work.

Eminent dignitaries distributed the first few certificates on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May at the inauguration of the NNNA at Dhadgaon. The rest of the certificates will be distributed by the activists personally in the villages itself, saving the people the trouble of travelling to the tehsil.

### **Shobha Wagh Library at Bolthan**

In memory of Shobha Wagh, a committed activist of the NBA who met with a tragic death by drowning at Domkhedi village in 2003, NNNA is starting a library in memory of her, at Bolthan, her birthplace in Maharashtra. The library will be

named after Shobha. This initiative is done through the Narmada Nav Nirman Abhiyan.

### **Narmada Beckons – Youth Participation in the Narmada Struggle**

The number of youths and researchers coming to the Narmada valley for voluntary work and to understand the struggles of the people is ever increasing. Youths from various backgrounds and nationalities keep coming to the valley to participate in the struggle, understand the issues that affect people, to learn about dignified ways of fighting the destructive powers, strategic actions for initiating policy changes and alternative reconstruction.

Youths, apart from their temperament for exploration and philanthropic concerns, are serious about learning more and more about the faulty development triggered by a blind scientific positivist paradigm and the neo-liberal global politics of resource appropriation and environmental and social costs that are to be paid. An increasing interest to explore alternative ways of living in all aspects of life is being encouraged as a result of this realisation. Youths with varying skills and knowledge have a lot to contribute both in campaign and reconstruction actions.

The twenty years of persistent campaign has helped in spreading awareness about the real dangers that await the modern world, especially the poor. Today University textbooks include chapters explaining the NBA cause and researchers are interested in getting to the depth of issues towards finding solutions or alternatives. There are

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# NBA in Solidarity

The people of the Narmada Valley have received support from hundreds and thousands of people from all over the world in the last 20 years. The NBA, in its turn, has tried to return support and solidarity to other communities and movements across the country. This past year, the NBA became very involved in giving support to the slum-evicted communities of Mumbai.

Since December 2004, the government of Maharashtra have undertaken massive and large-scale demolitions in the slum communities of Mumbai. Over 90,000 homes have been demolished, evicting 3½ lakh people from their homes and hearths. In spite of the fact that the Congress-NCP government's election-winning position was that they would not touch any slums that they established before 2000, the government went back on its word barely 2 months after coming into power, thanks to the votes of the slum dwellers.

From December onwards, thousands and thousands of families have been rendered homeless. Some of them, like those at Rafiq Nagar and Sathe Nagar still live on the same land, but even their modest homes are gone, and they instead live under tarpaulins. The malicious attitude of the government is visible by the amount of filthy garbage, which has been dumped at these bastis (slums). But people have not left - they have nowhere to go. Other evicted communities have taken up residence at the nearby graveyards. How can cities like Mumbai ever aspire to be a world-class city when the lives of its living residents is worse than death? Other communities have been thrown off their land, which has been cordoned off with barbed wire.

Private security guards keep people off the land and harass the women. Men, women, children, babies, old people, and pregnant women- no one has been spared in this brutal demolition drive.

The NBA, who understand the trauma of displacement very well, have been supporting the slum-dwellers of Mumbai, by joining in their actions, sharing and discussing their 20 years of experience with these communities.

## **NBA in Tsunami Relief**

In January 2005, a Team from NBA had visited the Tsunami affected areas in Tamilnadu and extended support to the affected. Whether developmental or natural, any uprooting of communities leading to dispossession needs our immediate priority in planning and action. The devastation due to tsunami is not so much due to the earthquake near Indonesia and the resultant giant waves but due to the pathetic state of our disaster warning system and lack of clearly worked out policies and structures for relief and rehabilitation. Though the Prime Minister wisely denied the relief support offered by the US, even 7 months after the disaster, many who survived the Tsunami still await appropriate rehabilitation and secure means of livelihood.

NBA continues to uphold the cause of the affected and support their rightful demands not only for food, shelter and employment but also for an effective Tsunami warning system and eco-viable ways of creating natural protection, like mangroves, in the coastal belt.

## **NBA joins other organizations to welcome Rozgar Adhikar Yatra**

NBA participated in the 50 day Rozgar Adhikar Yatra (Right to Employment Campaign) as it passed through Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The yatra was taken out to consolidate the campaign for a full-fledged, universal and irreversible Employment Guarantee Scheme. It also seeks to affirm the right to work as an aspect of the fundamental right to live with dignity.

We are in solidarity with the Rozgar Adhikar Yatra and do not want any dilution of the Employment Guarantee Scheme.

## **NBA Team Against Coke: Participation in Janadhikar Satyagraha**

A 101 days National resistance – Janadhikar (peoples' power) Satyagraha- is on under the banner of NAPM in solidarity with the adivasis of Plachimada (North Kerala) fighting against the Hindustan Coca Cola Beverages Ltd. A team of 26 people from NBA participated in the same from May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 7<sup>th</sup> 05, which was conducted in front of the State Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala.

The NBA believes that the struggle against Coke as well as Pepsi, the bottled water, is one against global imperialism and its offshoot, the MNCs and the State, all in alliance to snatch away the common natural resources for profit-making.

The Kerala High Court's judgement has raised issues related to the powers of Gramsabha and Gram Panchayats vis-à-vis those of the State - legislative and judiciary as also the rights of the corporate vs the citizenry, drinking water vs water markets.

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# Unravelling Bhakra

The Bhakra Nangal project, completed and dedicated in 1963 by Jawaharlal Nehru is considered as 'the new temple of resurgent India' and 'the symbol of India's progress'. It is accorded overwhelming, at times the sole credit for rescuing India from hunger and famine, for making India self-sufficient in food grains production. Forty years after it was completed, the project continues to be used as one of the main arguments in justifying new large dam projects in the country. Indeed, "What would be the situation without the Bhakra project?" is a question that is used less as a question than as an answer, as an argument, as a justification to gain legitimacy and hegemony for the construction of Mega dams.

**Unravelling Bhakra** is a study, examining the reality behind these perceptions related to the Bhakra project. The study attempts to look at the broad developmental impacts of the project, in particular its impact and contribution to food security in the country.

Published by: Manthan Adhyayan Kendra, Dashera Maidan Road, Badwani (M.P.) 451 551 Pages 372, A4, Rs. 150.00 (individuals) Rs. 300.00 (institutions)

## Narmada Sarvade? Only 15 pc villages covered till now: Study

Kamran Sulaimani, The Indian Express, July 18, 2005

**Ahmedabad, July 17:** Though touted as one of the largest drinking water projects, the Narmada Pipeline Project is yet to deliver on ground, say a study carried out by the citizens' monitoring committee of NGOS — Centre for Development Alternatives, Pravah and IWMI-TATA Water Policy Programme (ITP).

According to the target set by the government, it planned to supply water to 8,215 villages by April 2004. However, so far only 15 per cent of the villages, that is about 1,224 villages have been covered under the project says the study. Also, most of the villages shown "officially covered under the project" are only on paper. The actual survey shows something else.

In the survey carried out in 1,022 villages in the "covered" list of government, only 781 villages actually received Narmada water during November 2004 to January 2005. This was the third round of the study conducted by the organisation. The districts in which the survey was undertaken were Ahmedabad, Amreli, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Kutch and Rajkot.

Many of the villages which have been shown in the "officially covered list" of the government, actually did not receive even a single drop of the water, report reveals. When asked why these villages have been shown under the covered category, S K Vyas, Chief Engineer, Planning, Gujarat Water Supply and Sewerage Board said: "The work is going on in these villages and will complete soon." Of the 2700 km pipeline project initiated in 1999-2000, so far a pipeline covering 1343 km has been laid down.

Apart from this, the quality test of water is not being done under the Narmada Pipeline Project. Government has even provided relaxation in the standards of water quality which may have adverse impact on health of people, the report warns.

The results of the tests conducted on water samples collected by Gujarat Jalsewa Training Institute (GJTI) have not yet been made public, informs the report.

"That's not our responsibility, people have to do it themselves in their villages and homes. However, we have sent 20 teams in various parts of the state to educate people about how to chlorinate water," says Vyas.

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# The Vignettes

## Rampant Corruption in SSP

The daily news from Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh shows rampant corruption happening in the rehabilitation process, both while acquiring land from original villagers and while distributing cash and other amenities.

In November 2004, 37 officials of the Narmada Valley Development Authority were suspended after the discovery of an enormous misappropriation of funds during an auditing of Narmada Valley Development Authority (NVDA) accounts. This makes it evident why the Government of Madhya Pradesh has been taking the utterly illegal position of allocating cash compensation to PAFs instead of carrying out land-based rehabilitation. **Obviously, there is far higher margin for corruption with cash compensation than with allotment of lands.**

It is more than obvious that the decision to allot cash instead of land, in utter violation of law, was not to benefit the oustees but the officials, employees and a handful of political leaders who also were involved.

It is now clear that the team of officials were deliberately leaving flaws in the land acquisition process, carrying out the same in pieces, leaving out names of families and their houses from the records, conspiring to value similar houses differently in the compensation awards and even recording wrong survey levels. Despite all these anomalies, all PAFs were reported as 'rehabilitated', and the dam height was fraudulently raised on that basis.

All this was to scare the project affected families and make them run

to the respective offices to plead and offer bribes. In spite of all these attempts, when thousands of families, adivasis and non-advasis, have still been refusing to accept cash and insisting on land-based rehabilitation preceding submergence, the falsehood of the authorities stands more than exposed. It is a known fact that builders, shopkeepers and some city dwellers have constructed thousands of new houses in order to receive compensation for them. Thus people not even affected were receiving compensation, and paying bribes to the officials. As the allotment of cash compensation has been temporarily suspended, we hope for a change in the situation.

Moreover it has come to light (Hindustan Times, January 24, 2005) that Subhash Yadav, the ex-deputy Chief Minister of M.P. has diverted some part of Rs. 240 crores meant for rehabilitation of SSP PAFs and has instead used it for development projects in his own constituency. The Gujarat government after discovering this misappropriation of funds now intends to recover the amount. Thus, while thousands of adivasi families remain in the Valley without rehabilitation, government officials are making profit out of their misfortune and stealing the money intended for them.

In Gujarat, several reports of scams during the land acquisition for developing rehabilitation sites are coming out. It is now clear, as reported in TNN (October 3, 2004), that the Sardar Sarovar Punarvasavat Agency has indeed bought poor quality lands at high prices, with corrupt officials pocketing the extra money.

Nearly 200 acres of land in the villages of Dhantej and Tulsipur in Vadodara district were acquired by the state for the purpose of rehabilitating Sardar Sarovar oustees.

Curiously, this poor land, which was valued at Rs. 22,000 per hectare, was bought for an exorbitant price of Rs. 1,85,820. The extra money, needless to say, didn't go to the farmers, but to government officials involved in the transactions. Complaints from farmers who sold their land helped to expose the scandal.

AK Singh, now a deputy collector-level official, has been charged along with two patwaris for cheating the public exchequer of Rs. 72.32 lakh and farmers of Rs. 41.32 lakh. But beyond this, the land they acquired was of very poor quality, much of it barren and dotted with ravines. One wonders how they intended to resettle displaced farmers on it! These facts vindicate the grievance of many PAFs that the land allotted to them are bad as just and legitimate. The GRA Gujarat has cleared more than 13000 such petitions as redressed after the SSPA (Sardar Sarovar Punarvasavat Agency) produced the Agricultural University's Certificate stating that the lands are productive! While the government continues to prove things correct on paper, the people continue to suffer.

All these incidents show the lack of integrity in the government offices implementing the SSP and their lack of good faith in providing rehabilitation for dam-displaced families.

## Benefits - Claims and Reality

The benefits scenario is not reassuring either. The irrigation, drinking water and hydropower claims of the SSP are proving to be highly exaggerated (as the NBA has indeed been saying for years!) as these claims were merely for gaining legitimacy and clearance for the ill-planned Project. One can see a slow and subtle shift in priorities as a result of political and market

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compulsions. The beneficiaries are going to be very different from what was originally claimed, as it has become clear that the drought prone areas are not being prioritised and that the water is indeed going elsewhere. Meanwhile nearly Rs. 18,000 crore (\$4 Billion) has already been spent on SSP and canal construction!

## **The Canal Network – Lifeline or Death noose?**

The SSP Main Canal, which is touted as an engineering marvel, faced large breakages in several places last monsoon, which even stopped water from flowing in the canals for almost two months from Aug 3, 2004 till September end. The canal system has blocked the natural drainage of other rivers in many places, resulting in flooding and water logging when monsoon rains arrive. The heavy rains last monsoon caused large breaches in the canal, which flooded several villages and required their evacuation overnight. Hundreds of hectares of standing crops were destroyed and the affected people got very paltry amounts as compensation. This year the situation is worsening.

While the government claims that the Main canal (458 km in length in Gujarat and 70 km into Rajasthan) is almost 75% complete, the rest of the 75000 km network of canals are not even 30% completed. It may take at least another Rs. 17000 crore to complete them according to current estimates (out of the total Rs. 44000 crores (\$10 Billion) total projected cost of the project, almost 80% is for the Canal related works). **The Gujarat government and its media usually places the blame for project delay on the NBA, but the reality is that the people's struggle or even the Supreme Court stay has nothing to do with the canal construction.** Then how come the canal construction is in this shoddy state and not even half

way through, after 25 years of construction?

Apart from this, over 23,000 families who are losing more than 25% of their titled lands because of the Main canal and the people affected by water logging and canal breaches are not even recognized as project affected and not compensated appropriately.

**Tushar Shah of IWMI (Anand), who usually takes a pro-dam position argues in one of his articles on the irrigation network of SSP, titled "Institutional Vacuum in the Sardar Sarovar Project" (EPW) that at the present time, it is difficult to see whether the Sardar Sarovar Project is really going to deliver on its numerous promises and claims. The Water Users Associations have been created only on paper. A project that looks world class on paper is slowly becoming a nightmare in reality.**

The tenders for canal construction are fixed at unrealistically low prices and hence most of the contractors, for profit reasons, do a shabby job and the farmers are bound to suffer. One contractor said how he had to fix a tender for 9 km of field channels at Rs. 12 Lakhs. There was no way he could complete that section within that amount and still earn a profit. So he commented that within four to five years, most of the canal network is going to come under repairs. **In the long run, what is meant to be a lifeline will turn out to be a death noose for Gujarat.**

### **Withering Promises!**

Not only the State's promises with the Sardar Sarovar canal network but the canals itself stand breached. The massive network of 75000 km (including the main, branch and sub-minors, field channels) in length, has given much trouble even before it could prove beneficial.

It all started in August 2004 – the first very monsoon and heavy rains since the main canal began drawing water. **The big river-like canal broke on August 3<sup>rd</sup> near Borda, in Vadodara district. With the siphons, narrower than it should be, got defunct with silt, cut trees and garbage blocking the outlets. Surface siphons or the underground ones, could not take the heavy water flows from fields and rivers to the canals.... And the big breaches (50 to 70 ft each in three places) drowned more than 7 villages and their standing crops. 700 houses and 5000 hectares of agricultural lands got affected.**

## **How 'power'ful is SSP Today?**

It was not long ago but till June-July 2004 that the Gujarat as well as the Central governments claimed they would solve not just the water crisis but also the power crisis with Sardar Sarovar Dam raised to 110.64 meters! None else but Mr. Modi himself during his Prachar Sabha – the election propaganda in Nimad, M.P. (adjacent to the dam-affected area) had pointed out to the height of the dias and said, "you give me this much of dam height (meaning 10m) and your state will glitter with SSP power". The dam was raised to 110.64m and yet... Our information shows that M.P. didn't get any power from the Dam, in spite of having forcibly submerged its adivasi villages from Jalsindhi to Kharya Bhadal and beyond, and having spent not less than Rs.1500 crores. The state government is mum, obviously.

The bureaucrats, if not the politicians in Maharashtra played a gimmick! On being questioned by NBA activists in an official meeting in Mantralaya,

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they claimed and celebrated receiving of SSP power. The reply to our query under the Right to Information Act too gave the statistics: At least 30 MW received by the state. However, on checking the minutes of all the meetings, August 2004 to February 2005 of the Maharashtra State Electricity Board meeting that record all the sources and magnitude of power received by the state, it is clear that Maharashtra too haven't received any. "How can we say anything when there is no measuring equipment set up till date at the entry point to assess the SSP power received?" question back the engineers at the grid. SSP has generated very little power for very short period.....after the breached canal was temporarily repaired (September-October 2004) and the geological problems at the power house, murmured among the local workers, resolved, but the one or two turbines too stopped functioning, leaving everyone suspicious.

As TOI reported 2 years ago, it is a myth that the state's power situation facing a demand-supply gap of 2000MW, would be eased with SS Dam reaching a height of 110.64 metres. And yet the argument made to seek NCA's permission to drown the people, homes and fields and raise the dam to 110.64, was that it would bring in 'power'. The dam is proved 'powerless', not people, till date.

## **The Exaggerated Image of Irrigation and Drinking Water Network**

The Main Canal system is built to carry about 40,000 cusecs of water. At 110.64 m, half of that capacity is available in the canals but the government was not able to use even 50% of the available water since the canal network at this stage is

insufficient. Much of the water is presently diverted to urban use and industries as against the stated plans.

With regards to the Saurashtra Pipeline Project, a CAG (Comptroller Auditor General) report from 2003, which was presented in the Gujarat State Assembly, states that only 44 per cent of the envisaged people received the benefits after two years of execution of the augmented project that cost Rs 464.71 crores.

### **“Saurashtra pipeline did not deliver”: CAG - Excerpts**

The Asian Age, Ahmedabad edition, February 23, 2005  
The Indian Express, Ahmedabad edition, February 23, 2005

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India in its report for year ended March 31, 2003, raised several anomalies in the implementation of Saurashtra Pipe Line Project, stating that only 44 per cent of the envisaged people received the benefits after two years of execution of the augmented project that cost Rs 464.71 crores.

The CAG report tabled in the State Assembly on Monday said the SPP was launched way back in 1999 for catering to the drinking water needs of 3.44 million people in 1,860 villages/towns in the three districts of Ahmedabad, Amreli and Bhavnagar. But only 543 villages had benefited from as of March 2003, covering just 1.51 million people. Not only this, **94 % of the 1.51 million beneficiaries covered under the project were supplied the water unsuitable for human consumption.**

The Saurashtra Pipe Line Project was envisaged to cater to drinking water needs of 3.44 million people in 1,860 villages and towns in three districts but benefits could be taken to only 543 villages covering 1.51 million

people up to March 2003. The report pointed out that the delay had been caused by non-execution of distribution canal works and pitching work at Pariej. The report pointed out the state government had diverted drinking water intended for the Saurashtra region to a thermal power plant of GEB at Wanakbori, Vadodara Municipal Corporation, and industries situated in the cities of Baroda and Ahmedabad, in violation of its own stipulation.

The report stated that the Gujarat government had decided to lift water from the Sardar Sarovar dam and supply it to Pariej and Kanewal tanks through the Mahi Canal System to drought prone people of Saurashtra, which cost the state government Rs 48.15 crores. However, of the 258.92 mcm water lifted from Sardar Sarovar only 52.20 mcm was supplied through Mahi canal.

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in his report for 2002-03 has rubbished the BJP Government's claims of solving the drinking water crisis in parts of Ahmedabad and the Saurashtra region through the Rs 464.71 crore Saurashtra Pipeline Project (SPP).

It further points out that when the people of Saurashtra region were in acute need of water, the government decided to lift water from the Sardar Sarovar dam and supply it to Pariej and Kanewal tanks through the main canal system at a cost of Rs 48.15 crore. This included Rs 18.33 crore spent by Gujarat Electricity Board for providing infrastructural facilities and energy charges. As much as 258.59 mcm water was lifted from the Sardar Sarovar, of which only 52.20 mcm was supplied to the SPP through Mahi canal, while the remaining 206.39 mcm was supplied for the GEB's thermal power plant at Wanakbori, the Vadodara Municipal Corporation and industries situated in the VMC and Ahmedabad district areas.

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No recovery for the water charges from the corporations and industries concerned were carried out, the CAG report said.”

Similar is the situation in Kutch where water has reached the southern port cities and industrial belt through pipelines, with majority of the 848 odd villages in Kutch being outside the supply belt.

### “Advertising Mirages to Mask Reality” - Himanshu Upadhyaya digs deeper.

“While hoardings put up in Rajkot and other cities of Gujarat congratulate Narendra Modi for having provided “pehla Narmada naa nir ne have Vijali” (having ensured the drinking water from the Narmada river, now moving towards ensuring electricity), the Down To Earth issue of 15 June 2005 ([downtoearth.org.in](http://downtoearth.org.in)) has carried a full page advertisement from the Water and Sanitation Management Organisation (WASMO) showcasing how Gujarat has become the case for “Changing rural landscape and lives”. WASMO is registered as an autonomous body under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 and the Bombay Public Trust Act of 1960 with initial support from the governments of Netherlands and Gujarat. The organisation is based in Gandhinagar. Reports in the print media were telling quite a different story.”

“The reality has emerged elsewhere too, not merely in the English press. Bhumiputra, a fortnightly Gujarati language news publication, reported on a recent seminar on water scarcity in the state. The seminar was organized by International Water Management Institute, Satyajee Trust, Kutch Navnirman Abhiyan and Gandhidham Chamber of Commerce and Industries. The report quoted speakers opining that **since the**

**Narmada based drinking water pipeline could serve only 11% of the villages, to rely on it blindly would only be suicidal.** The report also said that it was emphasized by speaker after speaker that village communities must think of creating reliable local resources and at the best long distance bulk water transfer can only be adopted as a supplementary measure.” (Courtesy: [www.indiatogether.org](http://www.indiatogether.org))

### Kevadia Eco-Tourism Project

#### Two Houses/Shops Demolished, the fate of 900 families hanging!

As if displacing hundreds of thousands of families from their homes wasn't enough, the Gujarat government is planning to add insult to this injury by turning the ancestral lands of the 6 Kevadia villages into a tourist attraction. The GoG plans on developing the Sardar Sarovar dam and the surrounding areas as a tourist destination complete with golf courses, water parks, upscale hotels and restaurants, and adventure water sports.

This horrendous project will affect adivasis of the six villages of Kevadia, Waghodia, Kothi, Gora, Limdi and Navagam, which comprise the ‘colony-affected villages’, which were never even acknowledged as project-affected and hence never offered a just rehabilitation package. The lands of these villagers were acquired for the dam as early as 1961. In return they were given a trivial and unjust compensation of Rs. 80-250 per acre. They would've been evicted from their properties too, but as a result of their intense and brave struggle, they managed to remain in their homes and painfully etched out their livelihoods. Even though they live in constant police terror, they have managed to survive. This project is a

renewed threat to their survival. They are being offered a meagre Rs.36,000 as maximum compensation, which officials falsely claim will fetch them 3 acres of land, when in reality it won't be enough even for one acre! Most of them haven't accepted this paltry amount but are still fighting to retain their homes, small pieces of land and their dignity.

But on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 05 the Modi government launched an assault on adivasis in the Kevadia area. On the day when SSP-affected families travelled to Delhi to join a large rally of unorganised workers from all over the country to demand comprehensive legislation providing social and economic security, that same day two houses/shops belonging to Natwarbhai Bhaiji Tadvi and Chandubhai Maganbhai Tadvi were demolished by bulldozers in broad daylight. The houses, also used as small shops serving the officials and labourers of Sardar Sarovar, were on land that once belonged to Natwarbhai. Both Natwarbhai and Chandubhai are original adivasi inhabitants of Kevadia. They were ousted from their land and houses in 1961 when their lands along with standing crops were acquired by the government using the Land Acquisition Act of 1894. Along with 300+ families, Natwarbhai lost his livelihood for the dam and the acquired lands were used for the officers' colony, storages, offices and guesthouses. Balance land was also allotted to Swaminarayan Trust, Television Centre, and a Museum for promoting Adivasi Culture. In spite of promises and advice from the World Bank to NCA, these colony-affected families were not declared as Project Affected Families, even though their land was used for the infrastructure and works related to the Project and they faced the trauma of displacement. The recent assault is in preparation for an eco-tourism project estimated at Rs. 170 crores, with investments from a Mauritius-based company, a water

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parks company, ITDC and owners of a star Hotel in Baroda. Involving academicians from the Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) and other such bodies, the project planning is non-transparent and has not taken into account the ground level situation at all. About 900 families on 1400 hectares of land would have to be evicted and their structures demolished if the plan goes through. In addition, the project is bound to destroy the remaining good forests around the dam and affect villages in the vicinity as well.

The attack on and demolition of 2 houses is just the beginning. Earlier during September 2004, six huts belonging to Noorya Poholya's undeclared family members were burnt down near the dam site, in the name of eco-tourism. They had returned from the resettlement sites back to the original village in order to earn a better livelihood.

Garudeshwar Weir which is given clearance recently as a support dam downstream of SSP is bound to submerge atleast 13 villages including some of the 6 Kevadia Colony affected villages.

## **The Thwarted Visit of GoI officials**

In the last six years, and especially after the Supreme Court Judgment of October 2000, there were no field visits by the Narmada Control Authority, the official body that monitors the progress of the project and rehabilitation. The dam has gone up from 80.3 to 110.64 meters during this period based purely on reports from state governments claiming complete rehabilitation. This is a serious violation as the NCA is

depending solely on these reports, without verifying the field reality.

In this context, after our meetings with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Ms. Sonia Gandhi, the Prime Minister on November 22, 2004, gave a directive to the Water Resources Minister Mr. Priyaranjan Dasmunshi who is also the Chairperson of the Review Committee of the NCA, to visit the valley and assess rehabilitation situation. The Chairperson of the R&R sub-group Ms. Sarita Prasad, who is also the Secretary of MSJ&E, was given a similar directive.

Mr Dasmunshi decided to send his Personal Secretary and others for a three-day tour of the valley. A team consisting of Shri Manoj Agrawal (Secretary to Mr Dasmunshi), Mr Varshneya (Central Water Commission) and Mr Afroz Ahmed (Director of Rehabilitation, NCA) were to conduct a tour from December 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, which was to include the SSP-affected villages in the Nimad plains of Madhya Pradesh, the interior tribal villages in Jhabua district of M.P and Nandurbar district of Maharashtra which have already faced submergence, the six colony-affected villages near the Sardar Sarovar Dam site and the Gujarat resettlement sites in order to assess the progress in rehabilitating affected families.

However, the team did not complete the stipulated tour. On December 11, the team attended three large public meetings in the plains of Nimad, where it was made evident to the team that rehabilitation had certainly not been completed, in fact, cash compensation was being illegally distributed and oustees were being cheated in various ways. Though Ahmed in his closing speech said that the team would be visiting the interior adivasi areas the next day, the team vanished from the area late that night and returned to Delhi,

thereby not attending the other meetings planned and agreed upon by the team itself.

Meanwhile, it came to light that the Gujarat government had made extensive preparations to sabotage the tour. Police patrols were stopping all buses and trains coming into Gujarat, "looking for Medha Patkar" to arrest her. **Police were harassing PAFs at rehabilitation sites in Vadodara and Narmada districts, as if the PAFs were wrongfully raising their voices to demand their full rights.**

Thousands of PAFs are facing serious livelihood issues in the R&R sites and government is desperately trying to suppress PAFs' genuine voices from being heard outside.

The December 11 newspapers in Gujarat reported that one Shri Manubhai Patel, a Gujarat-based office-bearer of an NGO had threatened to have an agitation along with Swami Sacchidanand, against what they called a "Medha Patkar-led team sent by Sonia Gandhi." The NBA activists, undeterred by these threats, conducted its meetings in the adivasi area as well as in Gujarat, where they were harassed and detained for hours by the police.

## **New Delhi Action – A Timely Intervention**

The people of the Narmada valley had to once again go to New Delhi following the thwarted visit of the GoI officials. It became very obvious that government was trying to go ahead with the dam in spite of the Prime Minister's directive for a field assessment regarding rehabilitation. So, on March 15, 2005, about 500 people from the Narmada Valley reached New Delhi to bring to focus the complete lack of rehabilitation even under the current dam height, and to protest the probable dam height raise to 121 metres, as was constantly

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being attempted by the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi. The people were there to demand answers from the various concerned Ministers and Secretaries.

**Within a few hours of reaching the gates of Shastri Bhavan, they received the welcome news of the Supreme Court case victory.** Armed with this verdict, they met with the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Mrs. Meira Kumar along with her Secretary, Mrs. Sarita Prasad; Minister of Water Resources, Shri Priyaranjan Dasmunshi, members of the Planning Commission, even members of the World Bank, the body responsible for initiating this disastrous project, who withdrew in 1993 due to pressure from the affected people. As soon as the Adivasis reached New Delhi and had meetings, Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment left for a visit to the resettlement sites in Maharashtra which was very scandalous as she avoided visiting the submergence affected villages in the valley where adivasi families remain to be rehabilitated.

The Delhi Action lasted from March 15 to March 18. Over 800 people from the slum- evicted communities of Mumbai also joined the people from the Narmada Valley. Together, they raised a battle cry against unjust displacement, whether it is in remote rural communities or visible urban centres.

## **Chairperson ST Commission Visits Valley**

As an immediate result of the New Delhi action, the Chairperson of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, Mr Kunwar Singh made a three-day visit to the Narmada river valley from April 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, visiting adivasi communities and villages affected by the Sardar Sarovar Project

(SSP). Shri Srinivasulu, Member of the Commission, Shri R.C. Durga, Director of ST Commission of Maharashtra and M.P. and others, accompanied him. They visited several adivasi villages of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and rehabilitation sites in Gujarat, and convened 8 meetings in different villages to assess the state of rehabilitation of those displaced by the SSP. A large number of officials of each state toured with the Chairman.

The adivasis spoke of their trauma and the agony of displacement, and of how their legally guaranteed rehabilitation still evades them even though many thousands have already faced submergence. They brought out cases of legal violations and contempt of court. They also gave instances of cheating and corruption by the Government officials in allotting land. It was established before the chairman that there are thousands of families residing in the villages, in the submergence zone at the present dam height itself, while the official reports show them as rehabilitated.

The Chairman heard all the issues patiently and sympathetically for all three days. He said that he would be calling a meeting in Indore on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of April, to discuss these issues with the concerned NVDA officials. In addition, he will also convene a national-level meeting in Delhi, where the representatives of the affected people will also be officially invited, to discuss these issues in depth. He promised to solve the issues of Narmada adivasis after questioning officials on various issues. He added that he would also like to raise larger national issues about adivasis who are facing displacement without rehabilitation since the constitution demands the protection of their rights.

## **Participating in National Policy Making**

The Narmada Bachao Andolan has been raising questions about the development paradigm and policy, displacement, the environment, and the rights of tribals, farmers, peasants and marginalized people in the country. In many ways, NBA tried to initiate the discourse around displacement building up in this country, at a time when large projects were not questioned, and displacement was considered necessary for the greater common good.

We have come a long way since then. In this regard, NBA has also been actively contributing to the national-level efforts for giving our input in the various national policies that are being explored at the Centre. The National Advisory Council, chaired by Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, is in the process of preparing a National Policy for Displacement and Rehabilitation, in which we have been providing substantial input, based on decades of ground-level work. Similarly, with the Centre considering the National Right to Information Bill, the Employment Guarantee Act and the procedures for Free and Prior Informed Consent, we have been making significant inputs in these processes.

## **Towards a National Policy**

National Convention on Displacement was organized on Nov 30<sup>th</sup> – Dec 1<sup>st</sup> by NAPM with Habitat International, Indian Social Institute, MATU, Delhi Vikas Manch and many allies of NAPM including NBA

About 250 of Narmada (Sardar Sarovar) affected and hundreds of others from Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, A.P, M.P, Himachal Pradesh, UP, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Delhi and Rajasthan participated. They all had the

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representatives of some of the political parties CPI, CPM, RSP, Forward Bloc, JD (S) who just not supported but signed the resolution and the Central Water Resources Minister Mr. Priyaranjan Dasmunshi himself was present for a session, was questioned and spoke on the alternative ways of harnessing water resources.

V P Singh, the former Prime Minister of India inaugurated the conference, condemning displacement that leads to destitution as unacceptable and inhuman.

A strong and detailed resolution passed marks the determination and comprehensive perspective both.

Therefore, a small group of senior activists had gathered and drafted a National Rehabilitation Policy, with a need to change the NDA-promoted 2003 policy on rehabilitation. A meeting was held with NBA as participant, with members of the National Advisory Council and officials from the Planning Commission, The Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Ministry of Rural Development. What next? We all await a final nod and formation of the policy, which doesn't require much public debate or legislative approval in this country.

## **Research on the Inter Linking of Rivers**

The Parliamentary Committee on Water Resources recently invited depositions from the public regarding their views on the ILR proposal. A letter was submitted from our part, asking for an opportunity to make an oral presentation to the committee. In the submission, concerns on procedural, socio-economic, environmental and technical issues were raised. It was also highlighted that the government has only released

one feasibility report out of thirty, making it difficult for the public to form an opinion on the project.

Since the government has stated that the Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal is one of the priority links, we are studying this link in closer detail. The aim of this link is to divert surplus waters from the Parbati, Kalisindh, and Newaj rivers to either the Gandhisagar or Ranapratapsagar reservoirs across the Chambal River for irrigation purposes. It is being assessed whether these rivers are actually surplus basins and whether the Chambal is a deficit basin. Additionally the potential for rainwater harvesting is also being estimated.

## **News from Goi Dam**

The struggle for rehabilitation in Goi dam in Madhya Pradesh is gaining momentum. In 2004, the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board invited the affected families for a public hearing, as it was a requirement under the Ministry to Environment to go ahead with the project implementation. The issue is that in order to conduct a public hearing, certain studies like the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) should be in place first, which was not done.

The people out rightly rejected the hearing but instead went to the officials and protested the unjust and undemocratic haste shown to go ahead with the procedures circumventing the regulations. They demanded transparency and the release of full information regarding the project including the Detailed Project Report, Rehabilitation Plan, Economic aspects, Environmental Impact Assessment, Flora and Fauna, Downstream Impacts etc. Until the studies are ready, the people have decided to boycott the public hearing, which is required to get clearance.

Whether Goi or SSP, Bargi or Maheshwar, Narmada Sagar (Indira Sagar) or Omkareshwar, Vega or Jobat, the NBA continues to resist the undemocratic and destructive water harnessing plans and its illegal implementation being done in the Narmada Valley, in the name of development.

## **Crocs will make way for tourists at dam site**

The state government plans to have crocodiles removed from four dykes at the Narmada dam site to make them safe for water sports.

SSNNL wants to develop the dam and surrounding regions as a tourist spot, with facilities for boating and water sports at the four dykes that hold water discharged from the canal head hydel station and divert it for irrigation. But crocodiles are a danger: in the last five years, they have attacked and killed two villagers fetching water from the dykes.

It was decided at the meeting to trap the reptiles and release them in the main reservoir, which won't be open to tourists. The forest department, which will undertake the task, estimates this will take four months and cost some Rs 10 lakh.

Since the crocodile is protected under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife Act, the plan will have to be cleared by the centre's environment ministry.

Courtesy: Indian Express  
July 13, 2005

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Our humble contributions to the building of people's power movements as also to the policy-making couldn't have come true without your co-operation and support.

The latest public confession and commitment by the CM of Arunachal Pradesh following the South Asian meeting in Nirjuli is an achievement of the same. "As far as possible, storage projects involving high dams will be avoided," the Apang government's communiqué said. Explaining the government's decision, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Secretary Ashok Kumar said in New Delhi: "Huge reservoirs create displacement problems and lead to submergence of large tracts of land. Consequently, the rehabilitation process becomes much more complicated."

Much more, however, is demanded, whether in the form of boardroom politics, legal intervention or mass action. We can't but challenge the ADB's financing to privatising of our waters, whether by the Hindustan Coca Cola Beverages Ltd, Pepsi or the other giants whom we are fighting under the NAPM's banner. Water is precious and should not be marketable. It is vital, it supports life. Let us judiciously use it as our right and protect with all our might.

Until a fair rehabilitation policy and a rational water policy are created and followed, until a self-reliant plan to harness our resources with a value-framework of equity and justice is attained, the struggle and reconstruction will continue in the valley and beyond.

We've had some notable recent successes such as a favourable Supreme Court decision on March 15, 2005 upholding the rights of affected families to rehabilitation and showing

the government's claims of rehabilitation to be false. This vindicates what the NBA has been saying for years: that rehabilitation is indeed not complete and thus the raising of the dam height, which is currently 110.64 metres, is illegal. In fact, the verdict shows that even families affected at 80 metres still lack the mandated rehabilitation. The work at SARDAR SAROVAR had to be suspended. With this positive verdict, we need to fight now harder than ever to ensure that the Court's judgement is enforced, that those who have already faced illegal submergence be rehabilitated right away, before the monsoon begins, and that the dam not be built any higher until rehabilitation of all families is completed.

When there isn't adequate land (at least 10,000 hectares needed) for completing rehabilitation and there isn't adequate money (at least Rs.22,000 crores (\$5 billion) more) for completing the project, when canals are not ready for the optimum use of the waters available today and while several problems such as water-logging persist, then one must demand that the dam be stopped at 110.64 meters and the Sardar Sarovar Project be reviewed.

Our colleagues, continuing to struggle against the devastation due to the Narmada Sagar and the unjustifiable Maheshwar, Veda and Goi dams in the Narmada Valley, are exposing the Madhya Pradesh government, its flaws and farcical claims, both.

We earnestly appeal to you, to open your hearts and continue to generously support the genuine efforts of struggle for Justice and Reconstruction going on in the Narmada Valley and beyond, whether through cash and kind or through volunteering and campaigning.

**Narmada Bachao Andolan**

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plenty of primary resource materials available with NBA, not only as texts but the experiences of the dam-affected populations and activists in struggle. Many educational institutions like TTS (Madurai), SNTD (Mumbai), NCAS (Pune) and organizations like Spic Mackay (New Delhi), Initiative (Mumbai) regularly sent students, for example Urvashi, Priyank, Nivedita, Junnka, Rajneesh, Peter, Davidson and others came this year so far, for voluntary work and exposure to the valley. Students like Anand and Kinjal even came out with effective reports and photo features on key issues. The NBA enables the youth to get clarity about the complex issues to perceive the inter-connection between various issues.

**For further information contact NBA offices (see inside front cover for details) or [initiative@riseup.net](mailto:initiative@riseup.net) or [napm@riseup.net](mailto:napm@riseup.net)**

### **'Corrupted' Dams**

A new report by the international corruption-fighting group Transparency International (TI) focuses on corruption in the construction industry, and calls attention to a number of large dam projects. *The Global Corruption Report 2005* includes detailed assessments of the state of corruption in 40 countries, and describes the findings of the latest research into corruption and ways to combat it.

*The new corruption report is available from <http://www.transparency.org/>*

## 'Swadeshi' power

Mr. Ashutosh Govarikar, Lagaan fame film director-producer had it again. He made another award winning film and telecast across the country was 'Swadeshi', depicting a rural community action happens to be based on our Bilgaon Micro-hydel power project with a 15 KW capacity. Mrs and Mr Govarikar stayed in Bilgaon, learnt the project and made this impactful film using many scenes, reminding one of Andolan's programs and practices.

Many of us, however, felt shocked to see that the film shows a youth – NRI – coming from USA, the global centre of power to transform India. While this is certainly a story that can motivate the youth settled abroad, the fact that India youths, well trained and better equipped to deal with peculiar Indian realities – the inequity within, the community's strength and resources, too can and do take up the challenge.

Bilgaon project, erected by the adivasis of the village who did shramadan along with the technical expertise of Mr. Anilkumar and Madhu of People's School of Energy, Kannoor, Kerala and his colleagues, who have successfully completed a number of micro-hydels in Kerala and one in Domkhedi. Anilbhai, who planned the project to the last minute detail also worked with the people. This brilliant engineer with the hands in his soil and heart with the common people in this country has a vision to workshop expertise that makes him different. The Bilgaon project received financial and material support to the Bilgaon Navnirman Samiti from many individuals including young engineers-activists settled abroad, who are a part of Association for India's Development and Bombay Sarvodaya Friendship Centre. 'Swadeshi' technology and resources, with no displacement, submergence or destruction, is our strength and this work on alternative is a challenge to Sardar Sarovar and us, both.

## Events at a Glance

May 7, 2004 - Bhoomi Haq Satyagraha at Somaval begins

June 10 - Bhoomi Haq Satyagraha Withdrawn

July 12 – 15 - Mumbai Dharna

**July- Sept 2004 - Devastating submergence in the Narmada Valley, dam is at 110.64 m**

July end - Rajpipla collector calls the representatives of six Kevadia Colony affected villages, tells them to take Rs.36,000 and leave their villages within 3 months.

August 2004 - CAG Report severely criticizes indiscriminate spending in SSP

August 2004 - SSP Canal-head generators started producing electricity on a minimum scale

August 1-5 - 5 day Dharna in Shahada

**August 3 - The Main Canal breaks near Borda village in Vadodara district causing flooding of several villages in the command area of SSP.**

August 6 - SSP started overflowing at 110.64 m

August 10 - The Main Canal again breaks near Kadi in Ahmedabad

August 10 - District Collector of Jhabua (M.P.) and officials visit Kakrana but leave before meeting the people

**August 11 - Earth Quake of 3.4 Richter Scale near Alirajpur (M.P) in the submergence area**

August 27 - The reservoir level reaches 116.95 m at the dam site while the dam was at 110.64 m

September 6 - Quotations for Kevadia Tourism Project floated by Gujarat government

September 6 - Six hutments of declared PAFs who have returned back to their hamlet in Borida (village Vadgam, Gujarat) due to livelihood reasons were damaged by forest officials

September 6 -7 - The Team of IPT Panellists visits the Narmada valley to conduct Public Hearings – team consists of Mr. Harsh Mander, Dr. B.D. Sharma and Ms. Chitra Palekar

September 9 - Six hutments belonging to undeclared PAFs burnt down near dam site by forest officials

Late September - Medha Patkar and other NBA activists meet the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmoham Singh to give him information about the shoddy status of rehabilitation for SSP.

**Early November - 37 NVDA Officials suspended for corruption charges in rehabilitation process**

Mid-November - Medha Patkar along with other NBA activists meets Mrs. Sonia Gandhi to impress upon her the complete lack of rehabilitation in the valley.

**November 22 - Press Release from the PMO directing the Water Resources Minister and R&R subgroup to make field visits to the Narmada Valley to check truth about rehabilitation**

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Late November - False Information about Rehabilitation put up in NCA Website showing Rehabilitation under 110.64 m as "Zero".

November 24-25 - Gujarat GRA visits a few R&R sites to furnish data to clear the ATR of the state government showing rehabilitation as completed at 121.92 m

Nov 30- Dec 1 - Convention on Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation in New Delhi; Hundreds of affected people from Narmada participate

December 2-3 - Conference on Interlinking of Rivers in New Delhi

December 2 - Delhi Action in front of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Water Resources

December 10 - The Personal Secretary of the Water Resources Minister begins his tour of the Narmada Valley in Badwani. 3 large public meetings in the affected villages in the Nimad plains make the falsity and sham of rehabilitation evident.

December 10 late night - In the middle of the night, the team returned back to New Delhi without completing assessment of rehabilitation

December 31 - Rajpipla Collector calls the Kevadia villagers for the second time. People clearly rejected the existing compensation package and demanded equal status as reservoir affected PAFs

## 2005

### **January 6 - The Environmental Subgroup of NCA gives clearance for the dam height to 121.92 meters though reports were not ready**

January 6-14 - Medha Patkar and other NBA and NAPM activists work in Tamilnadu to contribute to Tsunami relief efforts at the ground level.

January middle - PAFs from Bharad village in Maharashtra shifted to Javda R&R site with the site not even half ready  
February 8 - Release of the IPT Report on SSP Rehabilitation in New Delhi

February 9 - NBA activists participate and give solidarity in the Indo-Pak friendship event organized in Mumbai to welcome friends visiting from Pakistan

February 12 - Mass arrest at Rafiq Nagar (evicted slum), Mumbai. Medha Patkar and NBA activists also get arrested to show solidarity.

February 25-27 - Bal Mela celebrated in Jalsindhi, bringing together children of all the Jeevanshalas for play, competitions, and cultural programs and to better their understanding of the struggle and of adivasi identity.

March 1 - Rajpipla Collector calls Kevadia people for the third time for negotiations

March 14 - Bhopal action; International Day Against Dams, and for Rivers

**March 15 - Supreme Court Verdict delivered in favour of NBA ordering the states to give 2 hectares of land to each declared major son and to resettle all the temporarily affected PAFs before the dam height is raised from 110.64**

### **meters annulling the decision of the M. P State government and the GRA**

March 15-19 - New Delhi Action

March 24-26 - Supreme Court Advocates Muralidhar and Sanjay Parikh, who fought the victorious case, visit the valley

March 25 - Holi at Domkhedi celebrated with festivity and resolve

April 3 - 4 houses burnt down in Thuvavi R&R site in Gujarat by fire caused from faulty electricity lines

April 7 - Environment Sub-Group meets again. NBA sends a letter pointing out that environmental compliance is seriously lacking, and urges review of clearance upto 121 metres, also keeping in mind the latest SC verdict. ESG Chairman does not acknowledge the letter and clearance is not revoked.

April 12-14 - NCST Chairperson Shri Kunwar Singh visited the Valley, 12<sup>th</sup> in Nimad, 13 in Anjanwara and Nimgavan, 14<sup>th</sup> in Lunadra-1 and Karnet -2 R&R sites in Gujarat

May 5-7 - Narmada and Mumbai people again descend on Delhi to attend the Unorganized Workers Rally in Ramlila Maidan, Delhi and to dialogue with concerned officials

May 12-15 - Yatra in North Maharashtra of Narmada and Mumbai slum evicted people to raise awareness on current situation in both the issues

May 17 - Yatra reaches Mumbai; Indefinite dharna of Maharashtra Narmada people and Mumbai slum evicted people begins at Azad Maidan, Mumbai, demanding talks with the govt and rehabilitation before monsoon.

May 28 - Rehabilitation Minister of Maharashtra, Mr. Kadam meets a delegation of PAFs with Yogini Khanolkar, Medha Patkar and Pratibha Shinde of Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti.

June 15 - Three months pass since the Supreme Court verdict, which stated that rehabilitation of all applicants must be completed within three months. Some applicants are allotted uncultivable land at Kesur. The orders of the Court stand violated by the government.

June 15 - Rs. 20 lakh of damage occurred when a transformer burst at the River Bed Power House (RBPH) of the dam. Power generation was stopped.

June 19-24 - SSP starts overflowing at 111.04 metres, because of water released from upstream dam, Indira Sagar.

June 24 - At 3 pm, tremors are felt at the dam site for over a minute, which measure 3 on Richter scale.

June 24 - Real estate dealer and builder A.K. Singh was arrested in connection with land scams in the Sardar Sarovar Punarvasavat Agency. He bought poor ravine lands from landowners and then re-sold it to SSPA for rehabilitation of oustees at a much higher price.

June - July - Terrible floods in South Gujarat, devastation in the resettlement sites as a result of monsoon crop destruction due to water-logging

August - **August marks 20 years of STRUGGLE by NBA** from the time Medha Patkar first went into the interior adivasi villages affected by the project, and people began to get organized.

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# Appeal

It is crisis time once more (the monsoons are already here), and though we have so far succeeded in preventing the increase in the height of the Sardar Sarovar Project, the rehabilitation scenario has been very slow – every ounce of success has been fought tooth and nail!!!

**Jansahayog** - Last year we have delivered relief to 370 adivasi families - 25 families from Gujarat, 87 from M.P., 258 from Maharashtra - who would not have been able to survive without peoples' support. Narmada Nav Nirman Abhiyan and the Bombay Sarvodaya Friendship Centre have contributed equally and worked in close cooperation and coordination to ensure that the Jansahayog program worked effectively.

2 Quintals of Makkai (corn) or 1 Quintal Makkai and 1 Quintal Jowar were supplied to each of these families, depending on availability / cost / preference in that area. Also, 20 Kgs. Dal, 1 Kg. Chilli powder and 1 Kg. salt were provided.

177 of these families needed a second round of relief during the year, the rest managed with one round of help from us. The cost of food per round of relief, per family, comes to approximately Rs 2,500 /-, including transport.

Despite tremendous poverty and need all around, we have had to restrict our aid specifically to those families who live by the river Narmada and who have lost all or almost all their resources to submergence and have not been rehabilitated so far.

Jansahayog is not charity – it is support from those members of civil society who are convinced that the valiant people of the Narmada valley, who have fought for nearly 20 years for their right to life and livelihood, can continue to the non-violent struggle for their birthrights and a sustainable future in a rehabilitation site, if they can first survive!

Support is most urgently required :

**General donations** for the struggle, dharnas and programmes , office expenses – phone bills, transport, xeroxes, faxes, honorarium for full time activists etc.

**Jansahayog: An urgent need to supply food grains etc. and in a few cases, even shelter, to 300 adivasi families at Rs 5000 per family.**

## Some of our requirements

There is a great demand for new Jeevanshals. Some of the 15, which are running currently, need to be expanded or turned into residential schools instead of day schools. A day-school for around 40 children can be started and run at the cost of less than Rs 25,000 /- a year. A Residential School would require Rs 1,00,000 /- per year , to run and maintain.

◆ A Hostel with a capacity of 200 students is coming up at Dhule, with tremendous efforts put in by our Dhule support group. Ex-students of our Jeevanshalas are admitted into regular schools after class 4 and are housed largely in government hostels, where we find that the food and other facilities are often far from adequate. It is envisaged that if we could have the group under our care, not only would they benefit, but continued value oriented inputs would result in a crop of future, well educated and better prepared Karyakartas. Sponsorship would be at the rate of Rs 6000/- per child for one year.

◆ A plot of land has been donated in Badwani .As it is, we have been receiving warnings from our current landlord in Badwani and are seriously considering building a permanent office on the donated plot, which would then serve as a multi – purpose centre. The cost would be Rs. 3 lakhs – approximately.

◆ We also have a few students who have excelled in sports and have reached the national level without any formal aid. One of them seems to have Olympic level potential. If anyone interested in sports is ready to give these kids a boost – please put them in touch with us.

Please make cheques payable to “ Narmada Nav Nirman Abhiyan” and mail to Pervin Jehangir, 261, Jupiter Apts, 41, New Cuffe Parade, Mumbai 400 005

Tax relief under 80 G is available. We accept donations in Indian Rupees only. Please ensure that your names and addresses are legibly written in order to facilitate posting of receipts. Please also send a covering letter specifying the purpose of the donation, if you want to support one or other of the above causes.

Appreciating and acknowledging your dedication and support over the years,

We remain,

**Narmada Nav Nirman Abhiyan**