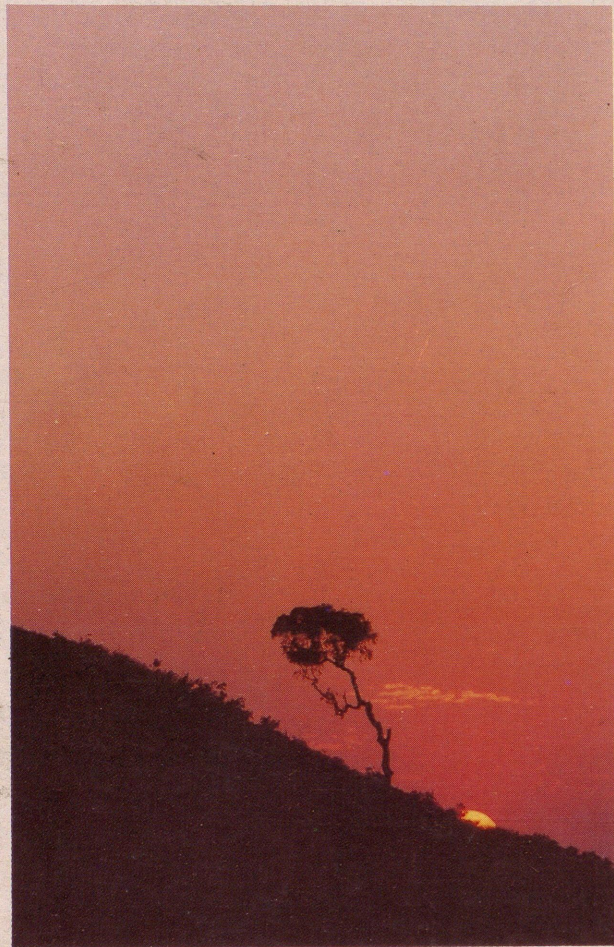


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# No Cancelling Tomorrow



ROP: 3

GOVT. OF GUJARAT  
Gandhinagar





# SARDAR SAROVAR PROJECT

## NO CANCELLING TOMORROW

A critique  
of the report of the  
Independent Review Mission

AUGUST '92  
GOVT. OF GUJARAT, GANDHINAGAR  
INDIA, PIN 382 010

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The Independent Review Mission's (IRM) report calls upon the World Bank to "Step back" from the Sardar Sarovar Projects on the grounds that rehabilitation is "Impossible", human rights, especially of the tribal population are being and must necessarily be infringed, and that on account of lack of water in the Narmada the project will in any event "not perform as planned". This is not mere pessimism but outright rejection based on misperceptions, unsubstantiated conjectures and fallacies partly related to issues far beyond its terms of reference as set out by the World Bank.

### **IRM condemns hopes of millions**

The IRM's findings, would condemn millions of potential beneficiaries, including the so-called project affected persons to continued deprivation and immiserisation just when opportunity beckons after long decades of controversy, adjudication, investigation and mobilisation to effect a positive transformation in their lives.

### **IRM disregards human right to development**

These long-suffering tribal and other marginalised communities mired in poverty are in effect being cruelly told to cancel tomorrow. This is unacceptable and would more truly than the IRM seeks to argue in reverse, be a gross denial of human rights embodied in the right to development and a life of dignity. Worse, and ironically enough in terms of the origin of the IRM, the World Bank - the International Bank for, mark it, Reconstruction and Development - is being told to abandon its charter. The Bank has rightly rejected this gratuitous advice and pledged continued support to the Sardar Sarovar project and Narmada Valley development generally even while striving to mitigate human, environmental and other costs. This coincides exactly with the commitment of the three beneficiary states

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Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, and the Government of India. There remains a strong basis for continuing partnership between the world bank and India in the great enterprise of Narmada Valley development.



### **Aswan dam: UNEP observations**

Two decades and more ago, the Aswan High Dam on the Nile in Egypt was the environmentalist's bete noire as the Narmada Valley projects are today. All manner of dreadful consequences were forecast and it was said that nothing could go right with it. Twenty years after commissioning the project has been evaluated. In a foreword to "Environmentally Sound Water Management" edited by N.C.Thanh and Asit K. Biswas (1990), this is what the Executive Director of the U.N Environment Programme, Mostafa Kamal Tolba has to say: " There is no argument: the dam's contribution to substantially increasing food production and hydropower generation have made an enormous difference to the quality of life of the Egyptian people.... The adverse impacts were all anticipated and plans set for addressing\* them, but international political situations delayed the implementation. So the overall costs of the negative impacts and of their redressing skyrocketed like any other cost in the world today. What is thus necessary is a balanced environment development philosophy within which environmentally-sound water development could occur". And again: "Water development projects... have both positive and negative impacts. What needs to be better understood are the positive impacts of sustainable water management."

### **UNCED observations - Disasters from water shortage**

At the end of the U.N.International Drinking Water supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-90), the Red Cross organisations of the world have banded together to prevent looming "disasters" from water shortages in many parts of the world, south Asia, Africa, west Asia, China and parts of North America among

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them. In a joint Preface to "Water: The International Crisis" by Robin Clarke, published by Earthscan (1991) Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of the just concluded UNCED meeting in Rio, the Swedish Minister for Environment and the Chairman of the Swedish Red Cross speak of the danger of "Water blindness" in discussing the future of growing numbers of vulnerable people. And then: "We should ask how much water there is and how we can best benefit from it. Much of the world is in for a bad time. But in a period of so many opportunities it is not worthy of the international community or any group or individual to succumb or surrender to the Malthusian thesis" with growing populations struggling to survive when water could make such a difference to food supplies and better health.



### **Life giving SSP cannot wait**

It is in this international context that the IRM has called on the World Bank to "step back" and India to desist from going ahead with a life-giving project on wholly untenable grounds. The idea that the tribal condition or the environment in the Narmada Valley will be improved, or even only salvaged, by putting Sardar Sarovar on hold pending further studies or "consultations" - with whom ? about what ? other than that which is already being done - is fallacious. Like the greenhouse effect, current subsistence lifestyles to eke out mere survival is rapidly degrading the environment and eroding the tribals' natural resource base compelling more and more of them to undertake distress migration, first seasonally and then permanently, to urban work-sites, there to live precariously in noisome shanty towns. The evidence is everywhere to see. The Narmada tribals whom the IRM is so solicitous to protect through further studies and improvident delay, are fleeing the Valley - not because of the dam or submergence (which is largely in the future) but because of the scourge of hunger,



disease and lack of opportunity, with ever-growing numbers pressing on the land and vanishing forest. These helpless actors in a Malthusian drama are moving from rural to urban habitations and from hunter-gathering/agricultural to non-farm avocations.

It is against this background that the planned relocation of project-affected persons in the Narmada Valley should be viewed. To be displaced from ancestral homes, kinship grounds, familiar environments and social network is indeed traumatic and so resettlement and rehabilitation must be infused with compassion and caring. There is no difference of opinion about this or about the objective of ensuring that the PAPs are better off than previously or at least as well off at the end of the day. The Narmada Valley R&R package, and Gujarat's terms in particular, are very liberal and will indubitably lift all those who accept it above the poverty line. To equate transitional problems of resettlement with a permanent incapacity to ensure proper rehabilitation in due course is unfair and unfounded. Notwithstanding any amount of study and consultation there are liable to be teething troubles in any large and complex human undertaking. These can be and are being overcome and it is the IRM's own finding that the R&R package and its interpretation and implementation have steadily improved. Logic would dictate reinforcing that trend rather than crying halt and throwing everything out of gear.

**No violation of human rights-wrong assumption of IRM**

The IRM appears to have adopted the vocabulary of the Narmada activists opposed to the dam in alleging human rights violations and forcible eviction. It has in fact embroidered these themes in speaking of the tribals as "Indigenous people" a common international fallacy these days - the IRM is perhaps

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inadvertently conjuring up visions of American Indians or Australian aborigines being overwhelmed by outsiders. Nothing can be further than the truth. The tribal Indian is no more or less an Indian than any other Indian. The use of the word "Indigenous" in the Indian context is wrong and misleading.



### **Tribal culture not properly appreciated by IRM**

The IRM has sought to disparage the resettlement of Sardar Sarovar tribals from the submergence villages in scattered clusters as inimical to their ethos and culture. It appears to find something almost sinister in some of the terminology used, such as forest-dwellers in a given context, as though violating their pristine status as isolated communities. It would also appear in some places to deny the processes of assimilation and acculturation long in progress and better understood as Sanskritisation, though it admits this elsewhere. Altogether the IRM gets locked into a powerful muddle by inventing a new history, sociology and cultural anthropology for India and from false premises, it leaps to erroneous conclusions.

### **ILO convention not flouted**

Considerable store is set on ILO Convention 107, adopted in 1957 and ratified by India concerning the protection and integration of indigenous and other tribal and semi-tribal populations in independent countries. This stipulates (Article 12) that "the populations concerned shall not be removed without their free consent from their habitual territories except in accordance with national laws and regulations for reasons relating to national security, or in the interest of national economic development or of the health of the said populations". The Narmada Valley projects are certainly in the interest of national economic development and no infringement of the ILO Convention can be made out as lands, alternative employment



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or cash compensation are being paid in all cases with primacy given to land. Long before the ILO Convention, India had provided constitutional and legal guarantees against tribal land alienation and institutionalised other measures to protect tribal life and culture while yet encouraging these communities to develop and modernise at their own pace.

### **Supreme court of India refuses to stay SSP**

That these are not empty promises is evident from the fact that a mere letter from Mr. B.D.Sharma, then Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes and now a leading activist against the Dam, to the Supreme Court of India was converted into a plaint under the rubric of public interest litigation. The court was not convinced by Mr. Sharma's plea for a stay on the further execution of the SSP project "until such time as the basic issues raised in the petition are settled and the concurrence of the tribal people is obtained to the acquisition of land and to the plan for their alternative resettlement if any based on full facts, clear understanding and free will of the concerned people". The stay was refused (August 9, 1991). The "basic issue" Mr. Sharma raised related to "the tribal people's right to life with dignity, their access to and command over natural resources in their habitat and the serious dissonance between the law and the social customs of the people and also their economic system".

### **R & R sub-group**

The Supreme court did however noted the commitments for R&R made by the concerned authorities and the schedule of submergence notified by the Project officials and required that a high level committee report to it once every month on developments and progress in this regard. That the highest court of the land should so promptly and readily take such a direct interest in this matter is sufficient guarantee that any real

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infringement of human rights will surely not go unnoticed. The action of the Supreme Court is unprecedented and it is receiving monthly reports as required.



**Manibeli experience - Dhule District Court refuses stay order**

Forcible eviction has been alleged by the IRM. The reference is to Manibeli, the first village to come under submergence and which happens to fall in Maharashtra. The activists have made Manibeli a test case and have resolved to drown themselves in the rising waters of the Narmada (Jal Samadhi) rather than allow relocation in Gujarat and Maharashtra where alternative land and house sites have been provided. The activists went to the Dhule district court to seek an injunction against enforcement of the statutory eviction notice at least six months before likely submergence. The Court found that of the 267 PAPs represented by the plaintiffs and on whom eviction notices had been served, 153 had already accepted lands in resettlement sites in Gujarat and Maharashtra and their properties in Manibeli had accordingly been long since acquired. However under the Narmada Tribunal Award PAPs are permitted to continue occupations of their ancestral homes and lands, even while enjoying ownership of the new sites given in compensation, until six months before the likely date of submergence when they are to be served the prescribed eviction order. It is at this stage that the plaintiffs petitioned the Court for a stay which was properly refused. The Court found that these PAPs had declined to exercise their option for allocation of new lands of their choice although the Project authorities were ready and able to provide irrigable lands, house sites, and the scheduled civic amenities. As for the remaining 114 PAPs, the Court found the plaintiffs incompetent to represent them. It is on the basis of such subterfuge and defiance that the stuff of

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alleged "forcible" evictions is made.

### **Smooth transition**

Efforts have been made to integrate the new settlers into the host community and smooth the transition for both. If tribal PAPs have in some cases settled in small and scattered clusters this has been of their own choosing after a close examination of alternatives. Nor have they been planted in totally alien cultural surroundings as all the settlement zones up to date lie within or at worst, at the fringe of the existing or extended socio-economic universe of the tribes concerned.

### **Common tribal belt**


Gujarat is committed to resettling in its territory of every family desirous of moving to this State from submergence areas in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Some have already done so and more are likely to follow. They too will not be cultural strangers in Gujarat as the Bhil/tribal ethnographic belt extends along and around the Satpuda range and Narmada Valley and spreads over Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. And in each case there has been a history or age-old cultural inter-penetration with local non-tribal communities.

### **Consultation of PAPs**

The IRM echoes the activists' allegation that the tribals "have not been consulted". This is untrue as there has been continuous interaction between political leaders, officials and others on behalf of the "state" and the local communities, including the tribals, both directly as well as through the mediation of NGOs, some of whom have been working in the area even before the commencement of the project. That apart, the affected communities are not without local, state and national representation through elected legislators. Gujarat has 26 tribal representatives in a Legislative Assembly of 182 Members.



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Some of these are from the submergence and command area. Indeed, during the early 1980s, Mr. Amar Sinh Chaudhury, a tribal himself (though not from the Narmada region), was Chief Minister of Gujarat and there have always been tribal Ministers in the State Cabinet who could be relied upon zealously to protect real tribal interests. Nothing in this suggests a wilful, gross, continuing disregard of human rights. The charge is grotesque.

### **Activists talking in the name of tribals**

On the other hand, it is instructive to look at what is said about the activists claiming to speak for the tribals and "the people" generally by Ms. Amita Baviskar, a doctoral scholar who is quoted by the IRM in another context. The Lokayan Bulletin issue of May-August 1991 carries her article "The Researcher as Pilgrim" and introduces her as "a supporter of the Narmada Bachao Andolan, easily the best-known of the many activist formations".

### **Activists manipulating tribal symbols**

Amita Baviskar asks "what role does the Andolan accord to the adivasi in its theoretical and practical scheme?". Her finding: "I maintain that adivasis (tribals) as well as non-adivasis from the Valley - do not initiate any programmes of Andolan action. Strategic and tactical decisions are taken by act.... so the structure of the Andolan is pyramidal...." Again, "... The Andolan takes recourse to the manipulation, (and we use the word advisedly) of adivasi symbols. The *shapath* - pledge not to move from the Valley - has been repeated several times in Andolan's public meetings - in the name of Narmada and *Juvar Mata*. Activists argue that these *shapaths* are indigenous and that we are making creative use of adivasi culture. But authentic *shapaths* or *mantras* occur in a ritual context and are taken by



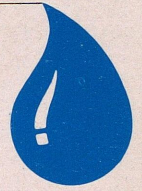
believers in the religion. In Andolan programmes, on the other hand, we have instant *shapaths* recited over microphones shorn of their religious meaning. Such decontextualisation only serves to make the programme seem gimmicky to adivasis who are asked to pledge their resolve over and over again. However, adivasis go along with such strategies so long as they believe it serves their interest in the cause of the Andolan". In the Dhule case mentioned earlier, activists went to the district court on behalf of PAPs, 114 of whom they had no authority to represent as the Court observed.

### **Activists opposing "Development"**

But return to Amita Baviskar on another issue that places the opposition to the Narmada Valley dams in perspective. "The Andolan resists the dam not only because it benefits (the) urban middle class and capitalist (both industrialists and farmers) interests but because it embodies "development", i.e. a process based on values antithetical to adivasi culture. we (have) based our beliefs on the Andolan's press for *Jan Vikas* (People's Development) by *Jan Andolan*" (People's struggle). The notion of *Vikas* - egalitarian, need-based, sustainable development - is posited as a counter to Vinashkari "development" - destruction brought about by modernisation and industrialisation..... The dam is a target of protest because it is both a symbol and a part of "development".

### **Romantic image of tribals**

Return to Amita Baviskar just once more. This time on the image evoked by the word "tribal". "In many minds, the picture painted is essentially a romantic one of forests and people living in harmony with nature, practising some sort of primitive communism. As will be seen, this image is as problematic as the earlier, notorious notion of the "*adivasi*" as "noble savage".



Further : "The romantic image of the "Tribal" does not match the reality of adivasi existence as variously experienced in the Narmada Valley .... While the Andolan in Dhar and Khargone (districts in Madhya Pradesh) is dominated by *Patidar* land-owners, it is also supported by adivasi land-owners. Adivasi labour, like their harijan counterparts, are sympathetic to the Andolan but participate only marginally in its programmes.....Agriculture in these two districts is capital-intensive, employing the full complement of HYVs, fertilisers, pesticides and irrigation - a far cry from harmony with nature".

### **Depleted resource base for tribals**

"In Jhabua and Dhulia (districts), the so-called adivasi areas, the Andolan comprises only adivasis ... And although they (the adivasis) depend on the forest and river to make ends meet, their resource use cannot be termed sustainable" Finally, "somehow the reality of (the adivasi's) depleted resource base remains unperceived. Adivasis seem to believe that the forest is inexhaustible and this faith in the regenerative powers of nature paradoxically facilitates its destruction. This perception has changed only recently.....".

### **Ground realities not appreciated by IRM**

Amita Baviskar is quoted at length only because she is a friend of the Andolan and a scholar cited by the IRM. But she is by no means the sole source for these perceptions. Myth making is an ancient hobby. Ground realities are different. The activists, using a romanticised image of the tribal, are not just fighting the Narmada dams. They are fighting "development". These are the real terms of debate and they are free to argue their case. But this is the hidden line the IRM has bought and propagated. Is this the purpose for which the IRM was appointed - to oppose

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modernisation, fertilisers, irrigation, industrialisation, development ? Is the World Bank being called upon to "step back" while its charter is rewritten by neo-Luddites ?




### **Gujarat's liberal package of R & R**

The IRM has referred to the disparities between Gujarat's most advanced R&R package and the somewhat more modest terms offered by Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh in terms of major sons, encroachers and landless in the Sardar Sarovar submergence zone. It must however be appreciated that all three submergence States have variously improved upon what was at that time a path-breaking minimum package prescribed by the Narmada Tribunal in 1979. Gujarat has gone farthest in extending the two-hectare irrigable land allocation to all landholders and at later stages to major sons, landless agriculturists and encroachers. Each PAP family also gets a homestead plot of 5400 square feet apart from transitional allowances, cash assistance and access to a number of civic amenities such as electricity, tubewells and standpipes, schools, dispensaries, communication facilities, etc., few, if any, of which are available in the submergence area. Fuelwood lots, fodder banks and ration shops are being organised in a steadily developing programme aided by social workers and NGOs and monitored by the project authorities. Yes, there have been some delays and mistakes, some hard cases and the usual complement of transient problems all of which have been or are being corrected. Land sites have been exchanged in certain cases. None of this suggests human rights violations.

### **Gujarat setting new trends**

If PAPs from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh are opting for resettlement in Gujarat, it is in some cases on account of proximity and in others because of the more attractive R&R package for major sons, landless and encroachers. Maharashtra

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and Madhya Pradesh have not gone as far as Gujarat as they are concerned with setting a precedent for the many other large and medium water resource projects as well as other development programmes in progress or yet to be taken up entailing substantial land acquisition where similar norms will be sought in an increasingly land-short situation. For Gujarat, Sardar Sarovar is virtually its last large dam. Furthermore, as a fast industrialising State with a well-established entrepreneurial tradition, Gujarat has found it easier to generate the kind of land market required for resettlement with landowners willing to sell their lands and invest the proceeds in the secondary and tertiary sectors. Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh are not so fortunately placed as yet.

### **IRM's wrong appreciation of R & R policies of states**

Nevertheless, both States which have legislation governing rehabilitation (a State subject under the federal provisions of the constitution), have announced improvements from time to time a process that has not necessarily come to an end. At the time the Narmada Tribunal gave its Award in 1979, there was an assurance that degraded forest land would be available for R&R. But with the passage of the National Forest Conservation Act in 1980 this avenue was barred. Many difficulties have essentially stemmed from this change. However, Gujarat could find out a novel solution to purchase agricultural land from the private owners through the District Land Purchase Committee. Maharashtra, which had made some prior commitments has after considerable discussion been permitted to open part of the forest land in Dhule district for resettlement. It has also announced that encroachers regularised up to 1978 will be entitled to two hectares on resettlement, including major sons, while all other encroachers, will be given an acre (0.4 ha) each. Madhya Pradesh has also moved cautiously in the direction of



liberalisation. The landless too are being offered preference in employment and income generating schemes. There too earlier encroachers have been regularised. In the districts of Khandwa and Khargone in the Narmada Valley alone 5000 square kms of forest lands have been encroached upon. (M.N. Buch, Lokayan, May-August., 1991)

Encroachment is taking place by tribals and non-tribals for cultivation and grazing with the inexorable pressure of population. Alternative avenues of employment must be found through increased labour intensity of agriculture with irrigation and more agro-processing and industrialisation, which require power. The Narmada Valley projects are designed to provide that irrigation and energy. The IRM's theory of pristine tribal rights to all forests, thereby conjuring away altogether the notion of encroachment cannot be accepted Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh legitimately fear that if all encroachment is regularised, this will offer *carte blanche* to anybody, everywhere to invade the forest, the forest conservation act notwithstanding.

However, the bottom line is that any encroacher or landless PAP and his major sons can opt for R&R in Gujarat. The IRM argues that this means shifting of M.P and Maharashtra PAP to Gujarat. It does. But listen to the IRM on Gujarat's "scattered" R&R. Here the worry is that the tribal PAPs are free to make a choice between "one parcel of land and another. The parcel of land offered in Gujarat are proven cultivable lands and not Govt. waste lands. This focuses their attention on agricultural potential. We may ask whether, under these conditions outstees are able to take account of their social and cultural preferences .... Are they being forced, in effect, to sacrifice social and cultural needs as a result of an overriding economic apprehension, or, indeed, through a wish to maximise economic



opportunity?... The policy itself, with a central emphasis on two hectares of land, the conception of development that prevails in the institutions that design and implement policies, and the social scientific difficulties that arise when it comes to measuring non-economic variables - all these factors converge to limit the entire issue to narrow economic concerns".

It's a no-win situation. with reference to R&R in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh the "central emphasis" to the extent of alleging cultural rape and human rights violation, is on "two hectares of land". In Gujarat, the actual allotment of two hectares of land for R&R is seen as a bait and a "narrowing of the issue"! No comment is necessary.


### **Assesment of "Canal Affected Persons"**

When it comes to the so-called canal-affected persons in Gujarat, who are described as CAPs and fully deserving of PAP entitlements, "two hectares" is again emphasised. The fact is that the median holding in the Sardar Sarovar command is 0.4 ha., though it is larger in the dry arid zones through which the canal will pass in the second phase, beyond the Mahi river. Those receiving canal irrigation are by and large beneficiaries though some may lose modest parcels of land.

There will be hard cases too and the project authorities and the Gujarat Government have promised to look into these cases and consider assistance to CAPs to enable them to purchase some land or assistance for income - generation schemes and give preferential employment.

The Sardar Sarovar Nigam has studied the canal land requirements in some detail. From the main canal to the field outlets just under 74,000 ha. will be required (in a command area of 1.8 m ha). Just under 170,000 land holders will be affected. Of these almost 146,000 will lose less than 25 per cent

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of their holding and another 15,766 between 25 and 50 per cent. Only 758 will lose the entire holding and 1992 over 75 per cent of their land. Another 4997 will lose between 50 and 75 per cent of their holding. It is only the last two categories that will need something over and above cash compensation under the Land Acquisition Act. This is being looked into. Some Canal affected persons also hold lands elsewhere in the command which would also mitigate their loss.

The IRM observes "Ironcally, a parcel of irrigable land would be more appropriate compensation for the canal-affected people than for the tribal villagers for the submergence areas .... Canal communities are already accustomed to farming in the Gujarat plains, are not dependent on river and forest resources, and can be expected to adjust well and quickly to relocation to the vicinity of their existing villages...". The IRM's bias in favour of tribal isolation is evident.

### **Conclusions on R & R**

The IRM has presumptuously concluded that the kind of R&R stipulated under World Bank covenenants and international human rights norms are virtually unattainable. Even if all the Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh PAPs were to be resettled in Gujarat, true rehabilitation would be impossible. The fact is that all bar 700 Gujarat PAPs have been resettled and are being rehabilitated and the remaining numbers should be relocated within the next 12 months.

As currently estimated of the 2464 Maharashtra PAP families 625 have so far expressed a desire to relocate in Gujarat and two third of them have already shifted to Gujarat. The other PAPs wish to remain in Maharashtra. Some 2700 ha of Taloda forest have already been released and another 1000 ha may be dereserved. This was the precise area that the Andolan had



earlier agitated to secure for R&R on behalf of the tribals. The World Bank also pressed for de-reservation here. Now that this land has been allotted, it is curious that objections are being raised by the Andolan and the tribals to the very site they sought.

The IRM has raised issues about Taloda forest as an appropriate relocation site and about possible secondary displacement. It has done so on inadequate premises. If two problems are raised about every solution then one is inevitably trapped in a vicious circle. A problem-solving approach is required and any problems that may arise in Taloda are capable of reasonable solution.

The number of PAPs in Madhya Pradesh is much larger, some 23,180 families in all. Of these 11,250 have indicated that they would like to be relocated in Gujarat and 818 families have already relocated in the State. The Gujarat R&R land bank now has 1600 ha reserved for further Madhya Pradesh PAPs with a further 3000 ha on offer. Together, these will take care of 2300 families or all those willing to resettle in Gujarat until the submergence year 1996-97, with something to spare.

The real problem in Madhya Pradesh will arise in 1997-98 when as many as 21,057 families will require to relocate. Of these, 9137 families are willing to come to Gujarat which should have no difficulty in finding land for them by that time. The remaining 11,920 families will have to be resettled in Madhya Pradesh itself. The bulk of these PAPs will be from 193 partially submerged villages out of a total of 245 affected villages. R&R for this number pose fewer problems as only the lower portions of the villages will be submerged, and that too mostly for the period July to September/October. Homestead plots can be found at higher locations in the same villages in a large number of cases. The land losses can be made good to a considerable



extent by granting the original landholders rights of drawdown cultivation in the nutrient-rich lands that surface as the annual floods recede. Some additional compensation to improve their remaining lands or homes or to invest otherwise may persuade them to remain in their original surroundings.

Madhya Pradesh started later than the other in building up an R&R organisation because it is affected by submergence much later. It has sufficient time now to do so and has already begun to locate land for resettlement of PAPs within the State.

The IRM's conclusion that R&R is going to be impossible is not founded on fact but on conjecture and a jaundiced conviction that there can be no real rehabilitation in the circumstances.

The notion that there should have been a total master plan for R&R at the state exhibits impractical idealism in the case of a very large project, spread over a huge area stretching across three States. People will not be hustled into making instant decisions and any elaborate plans made so far in advance could only be notional and likely to go awry. The task is being done *pari passu* with the submergence schedule but within a known framework. Certainly, the task of R&R is challenging and will not be accomplished without meticulous organisation, training of personnel, surveys, timely consultation, preparation and monitoring. The magnitude of the undertaking is not being minimised. But it can and will be accomplished with all round goodwill and cooperation to everybody's final satisfaction.

The Kevadia and so-called dyke village problems are relatively minor (numerically) and manageable.

So much for R&R. Let us turn to the environment impact assessment.



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## **Environmental Impacts**

The IRM is equally damning of the Sardar Sarovar project on environmental grounds. But its arguments are perhaps weaker than in regard to R&R.

## **Hydrological premises**

For a start it questions the hydrological premises of the project and makes the totally unsubstantiated assertion that 28 million acre feet of water at 75 per cent dependability, which is the basis of the Narmada Tribunal's Award is most uncertain and that on this count alone the project design and related environmental assessments must fail. The basis of this extraordinary statement in the face of expert opinion to the contrary is not revealed.

## **Premises on back water effects**

The IRM's dissertation on another technical matter, namely backwater effects, is again without foundation. Its assertion of severe backwater effects requiring larger-than-planned R&R efforts is needlessly alarmist and can only aggravate misconceptions about the projects which have attracted the "hostility" it laments. No backwater effect of any significance is likely to manifest itself over the next several decades. With catchment area treatment extending into the upper Narmada Valley and the construction of the Maheshwar, Omkareshwar, and Narmada Sagar dams on the main stream of the river, and other storages on tributaries above the SSP, sedimentation must in fact decline.



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## **Assesment of down stream effects**

The IRM is once more tilting with windmills in its despairing assessment of downstream effects on fisheries, salinity, availability of industrial water and so on. The fact is that river flows will not be fully diverted into the main canal until 30 years after the system comes into operation. Till then the river-bed power house will discharge its tail-race waters back into the stream. Moreover, the lower Narmada below Sardar Sarovar is flanked by the Mahi, Karjan and Orsng irrigation commands. About 30 percent of the water released into this area is expected to be regenerated, some part of it replenishing the river as return flows. In addition to this, the dam will continue to spill excess flows during the floods between July and September.

The least that can be said is that the kind of worst-case scenario of downstream effects that the IRM implicitly portrays as imminent, is in fact quite some time away. The impacts are likely to be far more modest. There is more than sufficient time for making more realistic downstream assessments in the light of actual observations and for instituting ameliorative measures as required.

## **Planned fisheries development progremme**

The hilsa's migratory run could probably be adversely affected. But, as experience at Farakka (on the Bhagirathi-Hooghly arm of the Ganga) shows, the hilsa can adjust to shorter runs in course of time. coastal fisheries adjacent to the mouth of the Narmada could similarly suffer some deleterious effects. But,, as at Ukai (on the Tapti river) reservoir fishing can be very productive. The Sardar Sarovar canal will also feed innumerable tanks and fish ponds in the command which can be developed into highly profitable shrimp fisheries. The net gain to fisheries

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can therefore be enormous both in terms of protein and employment. What it needs is a sound fisheries development and training programme. This is planned.



### **World-class technological sophistication of SSP**

Poor Water management, over-irrigation and faulty crop planning can lead to waterlogging and salinity in the absence of proper drainage. The anxieties of the IRM on this score however appear to be exaggerated as much careful planning and technological sophistication have gone into the design of this part of the project. As usual, the IRM claims to have made its own studies of the irrigability characteristics of various soil types found in the command and come to categorical conclusions. It cites the poor water management record of various earlier irrigation projects in India. It finds it difficult to concede that anybody can learn from experience and is judgemental in pronouncing that none of the technological innovations of the SSP will work. So the project is damned though, sets new standards and equally damned on other counts for allegedly failing to set or conform to higher standards.

### **Drinking water supply**

The drinking water programme for Saurashtra and Kutch is derided as unplanned and in any case more or less unimplementable. An allocation of 0.86 m ha has been made for domestic water supply and off take points are being provided. The Gujarat Water Supply and Sewrage Board is preparing a separate scheme and project report. The quantum of water allocated is estimated to take care of the needs of a growing population upto 2025. Should this for any reason appear likely to fall short of requirements, adjustments in sectoral allocations can be made or savings affected through switching to drip irrigation for horticultural and other crops in some of the more

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arid zones of North Gujarat, Saurashtra or Kutch apart from other modes of augmentation that may be available later.

### **Health impacts**

The health impacts, and especially of malaria, have evoked strong comment from the IRM. There was some rise in the incidence of malaria in 1987-89. This could have been brought about by the influx of construction labour at the dam-site. There has otherwise too been a reported increase of malaria in other parts of Gujarat during this same period which witnessed relatively good rains following three preceding years of drought. The IRM has quoted the findings of Dr. N.I.Kalra which the Gujarat government disputes partly on the ground that large conclusions have been drawn from narrowly-focussed data. Prevention is certainly better than cure and prophylactic measures are being intensified.

### **Afforestation and catchment area treatment-Double standards**

The afforestation and catchment area treatment programmes are proceeding apace. The IRM however is critical of the fact that Gujarat has undertaken compensatory afforestation in Kutch, which it describes as "marginal forest land", instead of acquiring land in the command for afforestation as much as for R&R. This is a very curious argument. Why or how is Kutch marginal, and to whom? The ecological value of a forest is not necessarily diminished by its location. In Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra on the other hand, the IRM twists the States for taking "the easy way out" by resorting to densification of degraded forest lands within the Narmada Valley. Once again the IRM would like to have it both ways. The further point about the need for community participation in afforestation and catchment area treatment is well taken. Efforts are being made



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in this direction.

### **Social forestry in Gujarat**

The acknowledged success of Gujarat's afforestation programmes elsewhere in the State testifies to its ability to harness popular support in these endeavors. There is no reason to expect that the Sardar Sarovar catchment area and compensatory afforestation programmes will be any different. Usufruct rights in the catchment area are already going to local tribal communities in the form of grass. The project will green a large part of Gujarat.

### **Studies pari passu with construction justified**

It is noteworthy that the IRM has come to very firm, magisterial conclusions on a number of complex environmental issues in a remarkably short span of time only part of which was spent in the field. Yet it strongly denies the possibility of Indian scholars and scientists being able to come up with sufficient broad and relevant data to provide a framework for designing the Sardar Sarovar Project. It keeps harping on data inadequacies which, beyond a point, if collected in minute detail and far ahead of operational use could end up as a costly exercise in futility. It has come down heavily on the Indian authorities and the world Bank for completing these studies pari passu with construction. On the contrary, it is perfectly compatible with sound planning to sequence operational (not design) studies to harmonise with implementation schedules. The Bank has not erred in going along with such an arrangement on practical considerations as further studies are being completed in time to mesh with operational schedules.

Detailed basinwide studies of the Narmada Valley as a whole may not be available, but framework studies do exist and the various projects in the Valley are unfolding in accordance with



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an overall vision and design. As far as the Sardar Sarovar project is concerned, Gujarat's Narmada Study Group has done a lot of good inter-disciplinary techno-economic and other studies which continue to be developed and refined.



The notion that the project has got lost in a blind alley is mistaken.

### **Unbalanced views regarding cost: benefit**

The IRM has not really stopped to examine the manifold positive benefits, direct and indirect, expected from the Sardar Sarovar project except almost dismissively, in passing. And there too, it has discounted the possibility of the project performing as intended based on its own rather negative calculus. It is convinced that Sardar Sarovar must fail whether or not the Narmada Sagar dam is constructed. These prognostications are not based on fact so much as on fancy.

Yet, the gains are going to be enormous, and costs have little meaning unless matched with benefits. It is surprising that the IRM took such an unbalanced view. It is not only in material but in human, social and ecological terms that the Sardar Sarovar project promises a highly positive outcome. The irrigated agriculture it provides will greatly supplement the nation's larder and help combat hunger, malnutrition and poverty. The provision of drinking water will quench the thirst of 25 million people by 2025. Thousands of village tanks that run dry in the summer will be replenished with Narmada waters through the massive canal network. Together, all these will end uncertainty, distress migration and the servitude of millions of women and girl-children to a lifetime of walking to fetch water, fuel and fodder. The health impact should be dramatic. Assured water availability will mitigate gastric disorders, skin diseases and other water-related ailments which constitute the largest cause



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of morbidity in India.

The R&R package will lift all PAPs above the poverty line and give their children an altogether new start in life. The Sardar Sarovar Dam will prevent flooding in Bharuch town and 210 downstream villages. Catchment area treatment and afforestation will vastly improve the environment. The project is planting 40 trees for every one lost in submergence, and more if project plantations outside the catchment and command areas are taken into account, such as coastal mangroves. All this vegetation will generate oxygen and provide a considerable carbon sink - the SSP's contribution towards fighting global warming.

There is a considerable potential for fisheries development. Five wild life and bird sanctuaries are planned and the animals and birds will thrive with assured water supplies. Power generation and the provision of industrial water will further industrialisation, agro-processing and utilisation of groundwater which will be recharged over wide areas. All this will add to employment and save huge amounts on drought and food relief and on ferrying water over long distances every summer. In the three year drought of 1985-87, Gujarat spent Rs. 1500 crores in famine relief alone. The production loss to the community was equally onerous.

The potential for navigation along the Narmada is another future benefit that awaits development up to Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh, if not further upstream. The commissioning of the Narmadasagar complex of dams will create an extensive inland waterway. It has been well said that the Narmada Valley dams offer the country, the people of the Valley and, not least, the PAPs a great development opportunity. Not to see this and merely look at the costs is to lose the vision of the future. Carping criticism will achieve nothing.



The world Bank has so far given sanctioned to \$ 450 million towards construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam and the first phase of the canal and drainage programme. Some \$ 250m has already been drawn. The Japanese government offered 28 million Yen for river-bed power house which it has since withdrawn after orders were placed on equipment suppliers on environmental grounds. Japanese missions have since visited the project and held intensive discussions. Hopefully this assistance will be soon restored. There have been exploratory talks with the World Bank for two more loans : one for the second phase of the canal and drainage works of the order of \$ 450 m and the second for \$ 90 m for Narmada Basin Environment Development Plan.

### **Invasive usurpation of jurisdiction of IRM unwarranted**

There are many insights and suggestions in the IRM Report that are useful and will be considered with care. Unfortunately, there are other areas where the IRM goes far beyond assessing the implementation of the Sardar Sarovar project with regard to R&R and environmental impacts. It has transgressed into areas of national sovereignty in the matter of cultural norms, federalism, national integration, the judicial process and development patterns and priorities. This invasive usurpation of jurisdiction though undoubtedly well-meant, is unwarranted and unacceptable.

### **Delay means denial of benefits to millions**

Withholding further assistance in the light of the IRM Report could delay the project and thereby give rise to some of the very negative forecasts of the critics in the manner of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Mid-course corrections and improvements are routine . But "stepping back" would mean unrequited delay

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which can be deadly form of denial.

### **No cancelling tomorrow**

The Narmada Valley projects should not be seen in isolation but as part of a larger project India which the World Bank and other donor nations have consistently supported with sympathy and understanding. This partnership in progress must continue. It is not without reason that the Sardar Sarovar project, an integral component of a larger Narmada Valley development programme, has been described as the lifeline of Gujarat. There is no alternative to the SSP, the design and scope of which has been determined after careful optimisation studies. It does not exclude smaller water harvesting schemes which would only complement it. Its promise of a better tomorrow is real and realisable. Let none seek to cancel that tomorrow.



## Rehabilitation in Gujarat - At a Glance

(UPTO JULY - 1992)



ITEM	UNIT	ACHIVEMENT				
		Guj.	Mah.	M.P.	Total	
1)	Total No. of PAPs	4500	2462	23180	30142	
2)	Allotment of Land	(A) No of sites	175	16	19	210
		(B) No of PAPs	3813	424	821	5058
		(C) Area	7600	865	1642	10107
3)	Allotment of Resi. Plots	(A) No of Sites	81	4	12	97
		(B) No. of PAPs	3217	288	618	4123
4)	Subsistence Allowance	(A) No. of PAPs	3769	264	486	4519
		(B) Rs. in lakhs	139.98	9.96	12.43	161.37
5)	Rehabilitation Grant	(A) No. of PAPs	1940	-	-	1940
		(B) Rs. in lakhs	25.71	-	-	25.71
6)	Payment of Ex-Gratia amt.	(A) No. of PAPs	3038	-	-	3038
		(B) Rs. in lakhs	1717.23	-	-	1717.23
7)	Productive Assets :-					
	a) Relocation-sites	No.	116	4	11	131
	b) PAP families		2745	191	379	3306
	c) Amt. of Subsidv	Rs. in lakhs	1.08	0.03	-	1.11
8)	Insurance Claimed	(A) No. of persons	22	1	-	23
		(B) Rs. in lakhs	1.08	0.03	-	1.11
9)	Employment provided to PAPs	No.	360	-	13	373
10)	Civic Amenities Provided					
	a) Primary Schhol	No.	13	1	1	15
	b) Tin Shed	No.	3205	223	855	4283
	c) Well	No.	24	3	6	33
	d) Hand pump	No.	108	14	14	136
	e) Approach Road	No.	19.40	2	1.15	22.55
	f) Internal Road	No.	52.21	4.33	12.30	68.84
	g) Tree Platforms	No.	61	7	12	80
	h) Electrification	No.	37	2	4	43
	i) Plinth	No.	100	44	40	184
	j) Temple	No.	-	1	-	1

## RESETTLEMENT AND REHABILITATION (R&R) ACTIVITIES OF SARDAR SAROVAR PROJECT (SSP)

Position as on 31st May, 1992 - Submergence Schedule (as approved by  
SSCAC as per Construction Schedule of Dec.89) - (Due to pondage i.e.  
storing of water behind Dam and back water effect)

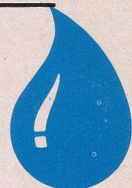


Sl. No.	State	Unit	Submergence Year (July-June)							Total
			Upto 91-92	During 92-93	During 93-94	During 94-95	During 95-95	During 96-97	During 97-98	
1)	Gujarat	No. of submergence villages	5	1	4	9	--	--	--	19
		No. of Families	929	543	1405	1623	--	--	--	4500
2)	Maharashtra	No. of Submergence village	1	4	10	11	--	--	7	33
		No. of Families affected in these vilages.	--	238	411	900	763	--	152	2464@
		No. willing to resettle in Gujarat.	--	238	350	37	--	--	--	625@
		No. willing to resettle in Maharashtra.	--	--	61	863	763	--	152	1839@
3)	Madhya Pradesh	No. of submergence villages	--	--	--	1	16	13	163	193
		No. of Families affected in these vilages.	--	--	--	45	1432	646	21057	23180**
		No. willing to resettle in Gujarat.	--	--	--	45	1428	640	9137	11250@
		No. willing to resettle in Madhya Pradesh	--	--	--	--	4	6	11920	11930@
Total:		No. of submergence vilages	5	2	8	20	27	13	170	245
		No. of Families affected in these vilages.	929	781	1816	2568	2195	646	21209	30144

\$ - Dyke village : @ - Tentative : \*\* For 18 vilages approximate figures are taken. (circulated in the meeting of Sub-Group on resettlement and rehabilitation held at New Delhi on 9.7.92)

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## SARDAR SAROVAR PROJECT



The Sardar Sarovar Project is an inter-state multi-purpose joint venture of four states-Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan with a terminal major dam on river Narmada in Gujarat. It is the largest water resources development project in India and possibly in the world. The main features of the project are :

### (I) Decision of Tribunal

(a) Allocation of Water (at 75% dependable yield)	MAF
Madhya Pradesh	18.25
Gujarat	9.00
Maharashtra	0.25
Rajasthan	0.50
Total.....	<u>28.00</u>
(b) Height of Dam	FRL 455'
(c) FSL of Canal	RL 300'
(d) Power allocation	
M.P.	57%
Maharashtra	27%
Gujarat	16%

### (II) Dam

Length	1210 m.
Max. Height above deepest Foundation level	163 m.
High Flood Level	140.21 m.
Full Reservoir Level	136.65 m.
Live Storage capacity	0.58 m. ham.
Spillway gates	7 Nos. 60'* 60'
	23 Nos. 60'* 55'



(III) **Main Canal and Distribution System**

Length of Main Canal upto Gujarat-Rajasthan border 460 km.  
Design discharge capacity

(a) In head reach	<u>1133 cumecs</u> 40,000 cusecs
(b) At Gujarat - Rajasthan border	<u>1133 cumecs</u> 2500 cusecs

Bed width of Main Canal in head reach 73.1 m.  
Nos. of branches 42  
Length of Distribution System 75,000 km.

(IV) **Estimated cost at 87/88 price level**

Rs. 6406 crores

Total expenditure incurred upto june, 1992

Rs. 2000 crores



(V) Submergence

	Villages affected		Families affected	Families to be rehabilitated including major sons	Total land under submergence	
	Full	Partial	Total		(in ha.)	
M.P.	-	193*	193*	7500	23180	20828
Mah.	-	33	33	1350	2464	6570
Guj.	3	16	19	1900	4500	7469
Total	3	242	245	10750	30144	34867

\* In 79 villages more than 10% Agricultural land will set submerged. In 89 villages less than 10% Agricultural land or only houses will be submerged under FRL due to back water of 1 in 100 years flood. In 25 villages only Government waste land will be submerged.



(VI)

**Benefits**

1. **Annual Irrigation**

Gujarat	18.00	lac.ha.
Rajasthan	0.75	lac.ha.
Maharashtra	0.375	lac.ha.
Total.....	<u>19.125</u>	<u>lac.ha.</u>

2. **Power Generation**

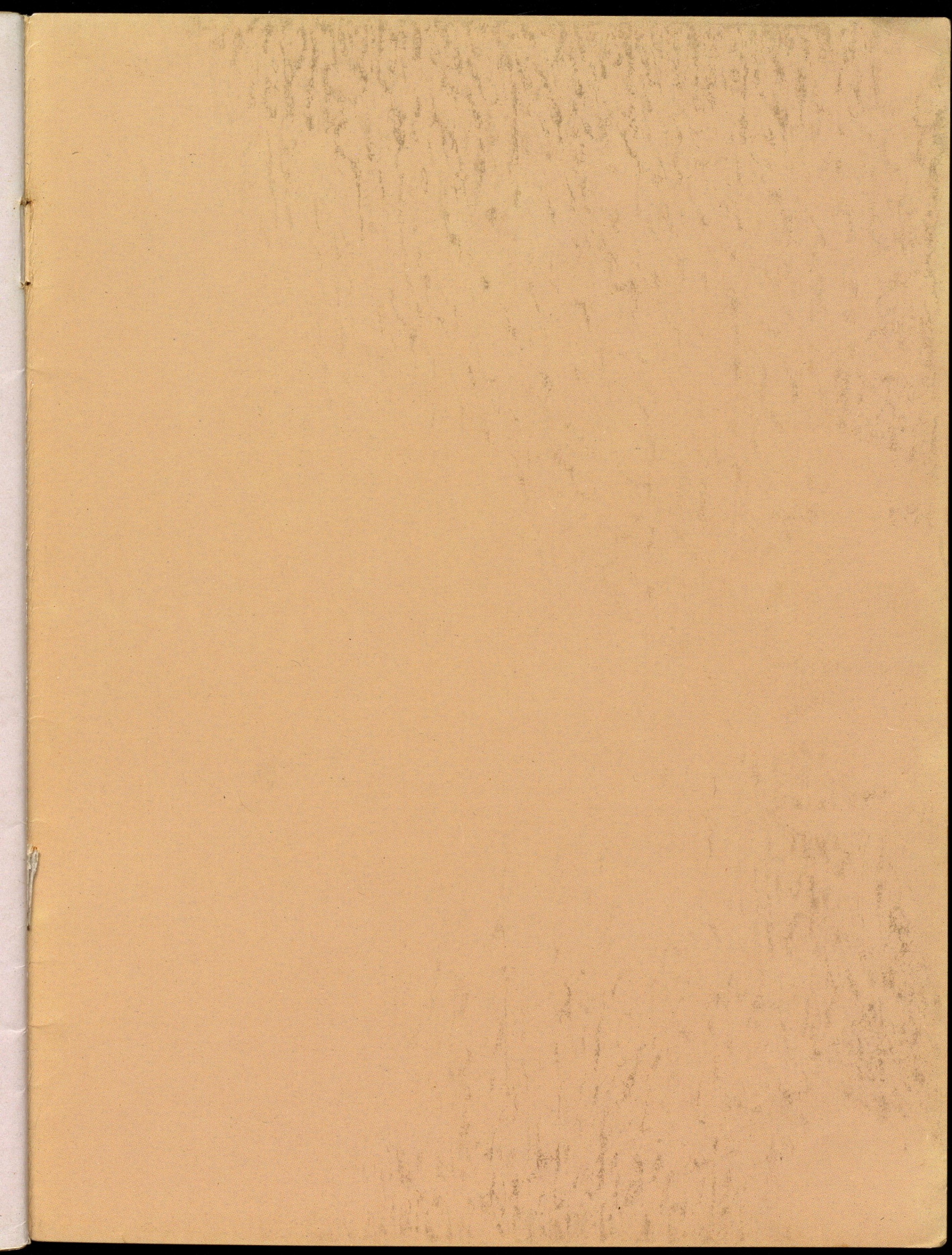
River bed power house	1200	MW
Canal Head Power House	250	MW
Total.....	<u>1450</u>	<u>MW</u>

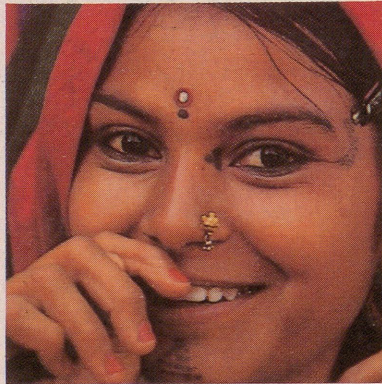
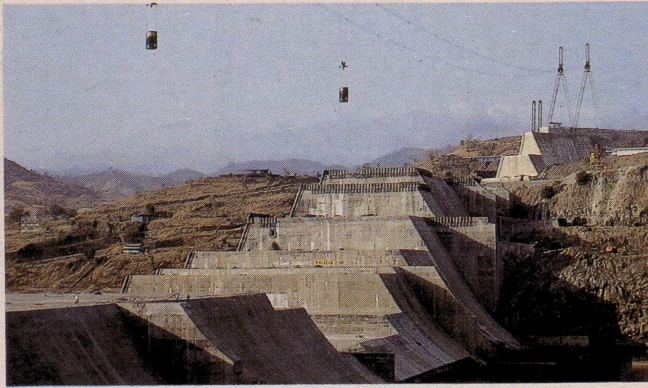
3. **Drinking Water Supply**

<b>Gujarat</b>		Urban centres	Villages
Saurashtra	90	4877	
Kachchh	10	948	(All urban centres and villages)
<b>North Gujarat</b>			
Mehsana,			
Banaskantha,	32	1977	(All no sources villages)
Sabarkantha,			
Ahmedabad			
Panchmahal			
District	3	413	
	<u>135</u>	<u>8215</u>	

**Rajasthan** : Large number of villages in Barmer and Jallor districts will get drinking water supply benefits.

4. **Flood Control** : Riverine reaches measuring 30,000 ha., 210 villages including Bharuch City and 4 lac. population.
5. Fisheries Development, Recreational facilities, development of Wild Life Sanctuaries, Water Supply to industries.
6. **Secondary benefits** : Employment generation, Agro-industries, Gains due to compensatory forest and tree plantation, prevention of loss of cattle and large scale migrations of communities alongwith cattle during drought years. Increase in ground water potential etc.





GOG - P