

Sardar Sarovar Project - A Summary

Why in news?

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The Sardar Sarovar Dam was recently dedicated to the nation.

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How has the project evolved?

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- A small dam of 49.37m height was planned across Narmada in 1956 but the project was subsequently dropped.
- The Sardar Sarovar Project was proposed in 1979, that envisioned a massive 138.68m dam.

\n Narmada Vallev Project The Supreme Court has warned that it would stop the work on raising the height of the Sardar Sarovar Dam if the concerned states did not carry out the relief and rehabilitation work for the displaced people in adequate measure The two power houses at the Sardar Sarovar Project are to have a joint capacity of 1450 MW. The power is to be shared by Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat in the ratio of 57:27:16 respectively Burhner Dam Barna Dam | Chinki Dam MADHYA RAJASTHAN Hoshangabad Dam PRADESH Kolar Dam GUJARAT Narmada River Punasa Dam Barwaha Dam Heran Project Hiranphal Dam Ahmedabad Basania Dam Sitarewa Dam Tawa Dam Vadodara Bichhia Dam Latia Dam Omkareshwar Bichia Canal Narmada Sagar Narmada Basin Jalsindhi Dam MAHARASHTRA Sardar Sarovar Dam

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- The project ran into controversy due to the enormous negative impact on communities and the ecosystem.
- \bullet While the barrier wall of the dam has just been declared open, only 33% of the project canals in Gujarat have been completed till now. \n

What are the controversies?

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• **Impact** - Full reservoir capacity will cover 40,000 hectare and hence expels 244 villages and one township.

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 About 10 lakh people involved in diverse economic activities would have to be displaced.

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• Vast tracts of forest stare submergence.

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• Prime agriculture land and at least a few thousand cattle in each village will be lost.

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• NBA - "Narmada Bachao Andolan" an NGO started an intense campaign against it.

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• It elaborately documented the economic damages and the plight of the displaced.

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- Its research on the environment & ecological implications of the project even won the applause of the apex court.
- Court Rulings While the project wasn't stayed, Supreme court passed orders to address the greviences of the displaced. \n
- A Grievance Redressal Authority (GRA) was step up to receive complaints and pass directions to the state authority.

• Those entitled to land were sanctioned Rs.60 lakh compensation.

 \bullet SC also directed that all amenities, mandatory under law, should be in place at resettlement sites by June 2017 – an enormous task. \n

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What is the plight of these being displaced?

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• While the state & the GRA have defaulted considerably in facilitating smooth

migration.

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- \bullet Many of those eligible for compensation have not received them, but are facing pressure to shifting immediately nevertheless. \n
- Rehabilitation sites are also not ready they do not have drinking water supply, drainage facilities and cattle grazing lands.
- They currently suffer harassment by the police and other government machenity.

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How can the future be better planned?

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- Development of power plants, dams or government townships will all considerably contribute to the economy.
- \bullet But the larger question that needs evaluation is that wether it is worth the socio-economic and ecological losses that it might cause. \n
- \bullet In almost every major developmental project, there is little concern for compensation and mitigation like in Narmada's case. \n
- Evolving systems for ensuring better rehabilitation is a prerequisite if the frutits of development is to be shared equitably.

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Source: The Hindu

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