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**WHY SOME PEOPLE RESIST AND OTHERS DO NOT:
LOCAL PERCEPTIONS AND ACTIONS OVER
DISPLACEMENT RISKS ON THE SARDAR SAROVAR**

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Why some people resist and others do not: Local perceptions and actions over displacement risks on the Sardar Sarovar¹

Ranjit Dwivedi

Abstract: The paper looks at the problems of displacement and resettlement in the Sardar Sarovar - the reservoir of the Navagam dam on river Narmada. Towards analysing this problem the paper considers three major variables (a) resettlement policies and implementation (b) action group mediation and (c) internal differentiation among people to argue that people will have different perceptions and reactions to displacement risks - while some people will risk resistance others may risk resettlement. Given the importance of these variables, the paper highlights the need for conceptualising the displacement and resettlement as components in a dynamic environment and argues that in the specific context of the Sardar Sarovar, a reworking of the displacement-resettlement problem is possible and perhaps desirable.

1. Introduction: Displacement-Resettlement Problem

In the last decade, studies on development-induced displacement² have generated conclusive evidence about its adverse impact on affected communities. Displacement causes disruptions of production systems and kinship groups, the loss of assets and jobs, the disruption of local labour markets and ties between producers and consumers, the dismantling of social and food security, credit and labour exchange networks and the deterioration of public health among displaced communities (WB: 1994). It unleashes a process of economic impoverishment and socio-political disempowerment where communities lose control over material environment and cultural identity.

In India, estimates indicate that more than 20 million people have been displaced in development projects.³ Roughly 65% of development induced displacement are caused by large river-valley dam projects. The displacement toll of the 300 large dams that are constructed every year world-wide is estimated at 4 million people. South and East Asia account for 80% of this displacement.

When displacement results from development activities it is often justified as costs borne by some people for the greater public good. On a theoretical plane, these costs get potentially off-set through the compensatory principle - in a developmental intervention, if gainers gain more than losers lose, the gainers potentially compensate the losers. In the policy realm, potential offsetting of losers' losses

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² The list of studies is quite long. Some of the major contributions are Scudder (1991), Fernandes and Ganguly-Thukral (1989), Cernea (1990: 1996: 1997), CSE (1985), Das (1995).

³ The magnitude of displacement has inspired Gadgil and Guha (1995) to treat 'ecological refugees' as a distinct category in their three-fold classification of Indian society into omnivores, ecosystem people and ecological refugees. However in their guesstimate as much as 300 million people lead the life of ecological refugees

are inadequately worked upon. Project appraisals tend to ignore displacement costs. Compensation packages are extremely inadequate. Resettlement policies are absent at worst and ad-hoc at best. Resettlement sites lack basic amenities. Project authorities tend to view displacement and resettlement as project bottlenecks to be removed rather than as social engineering challenges that need to be addressed. Promises of compensation and resettlement made to affected people before displacement remain unfulfilled. In practice, displaced communities experience acute marginalisation.

The threat of marginalisation results in strong resentment among affected communities who have often expressed themselves through protests, resistance and movements. In recent years, the active involvement of NGOs and social action groups on displacement issues has contributed towards giving displaced communities a voice, raising national and global awareness of their problem and building a radical critique of the ways in which such projects are justified as being developmental. As a consequence of this increased politicisation, incremental gains have accrued to the displaced communities as project funding and executing states as well as multi-lateral agencies have come under increasing pressure to formulate policies or modify existing policies on displacement and resettlement (OECD: 1991; WB: 1994; GOI: 1994).

This paper addresses the 'displacement-resettlement problem' of the affected people in the reservoir area of the Sardar Sarovar Project (hereafter SSP) in India. It attempts to situate people's risks and responses to displacement and resettlement in an arena of political protests and incremental policy changes. The main objective is to contribute to an understanding of the displacement-resettlement arena as a dynamic environment involving differential risks and opportunities, options and actions of affected people as they respond to project intervention, political mediation by action groups and policy changes. In the specific context of the reservoir area in the SSP, the paper attempts to address the complexities involved in the displacement-resettlement problem and explores possibilities for its reworking.

The paper is divided into seven sections. In section two, few conceptual issues related to the understanding of adverse displacement effects and resistance are examined and research questions raised. Section three takes a brief overview of the project reservoir area and introduces major action groups and policy interventions. It delineates the differential impact of the project with specific focus on losses of land and land-related livelihoods along with the policies that compensate these losses. In sections four and five people's perceptions of their losses, compensation policies and their actions are analysed in two distinct settings - the plains and the hills of the Narmada valley. In section six an attempt is made to plot the political orientation of action groups in terms of the possibilities they generate for reworking the displacement-resettlement problem. The concluding section maps the dynamic environment of the displacement-resettlement arena and suggests some preliminary policy changes necessary to initiate reworking of the displacement-resettlement problem.

2. Situating the Problem in a Conceptual Arena: Risks and Resistance

One of the most commonly used approaches to displacement related problems is the 'risk-model' propounded by Micheal Cernea (1990: 1995: 1996) and popularised by the World Bank (1994). The main assumption in the model is that displacement (with no or poorly-handled resettlement) results in

eight main risks of impoverishment: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, increased morbidity, food insecurity, loss of access to common property and social dis-articulation. Cernea (1995: 252) observes that these are high-probability risks and 'will undoubtedly become real if unheeded, or can be avoided if anticipated and purposively counteracted.' However, if the warning it serves is acted upon to reverse the consequences through proper policy measures, Cernea - following Merton (1962) - states that the risk-model becomes a 'self-destroying prophecy'. In fact, the reversal of the risk model - i.e. countering landlessness through land-based resettlement or homelessness through sound shelter programmes - helps in identifying exactly what needs to be done to avoid the risks of impoverishment.

The strength of the model is that it outlines major adverse effects of displacement 'reflecting the fact that displaced people lose natural capital, man-made (*sic*) capital, human capital and social capital' (Cernea 1995:251). It also serves as a powerful tool for filling policy vacuity; 'the flames of resistance are often ignited not intrinsically by displacement's hardship itself, but because the policy vacuums and legal vacuums leave few alternatives to political struggle' (Cernea 1995: 258). For the purposes of this paper the model is a useful starting point both to recognise the major displacement risks to the people in the reservoir of the SSP and to form an initial perspective on resistance to displacement.

However, towards developing a conceptual framework, a few variables are added to the risk model: (a) by taking cognisance of the fact that different people (men, women, rich farmers, landless, indigenous people and oppressed castes) - may perceive their risks differently; (b) by incorporating the role of the mediating agencies who define and politicise conditions of uncertainties and risks; simply put, risks are socially and politically constructed; and (c) by incorporating the dynamics that incremental policy changes produce by potentially maintaining risks for some, minimising risks for some and generating opportunities for others. The third variable calls attention to the need for analytically distinguishing displacement risks from resettlement risks. The latter, resulting from implementation lags and failures may accrue to people who risk resettlement.⁴

The meaning implied in the term 'risk' in the model is 'danger'. Drawn from sociological contributions of Giddens (1990) and Beck (1993, 1995) on the pervasive nature of 'risks' in modern society and social life - their public production affecting resources, rights and environment - the meaning of risk in the model is almost synonymous with certainty.⁵ For a 'warning model' it is only prudent to draw attention to the certainty of adverse displacement effects. Yet, for the arguments in

⁴ With regards to points (b) and (c), it can be argued that political actions and policy modifications are not common characteristics in projects so as to take incorporate them in a general model. However, two counter-points can be advanced. First, the list of large dams that have faced displacement-related resistance is rather long - historically and globally. Hence political factors obviously exist. Second, a number of these projects are (co)financed by multilateral and bilateral donor agencies; not only does this fact attract international and national NGOs, but pressures from them have resulted in policy modifications in a number of projects (see for details WB 1994).

⁵ Douglas (1992:48-9) summarises this predicament in the following words. 'Probability analysis arrives at politics in the form of a word "risk". The word gets its connection squeezed out of it and put to the same ... uses as any term for "danger"... (It) arrives at the moment in which it can not deliver what politics most wants from it ... - certainty.' Elsewhere she mentions: 'Risk is the probability of an event combined with the magnitude of the losses and gains it will entail. However ... from a complex attempt to reduce uncertainty it has become a decorative flourish on the word danger' (ibid:40).

this paper, maintaining the conceptual distinction between certainty and risk - i.e. defining risks as the subjective probability calculations of actors - seems necessary if the differential impact of displacement and different perceptions of risk distribution are to be addressed.⁶

Furthermore, using risk and certainty synonymously is to ignore a critical phase in displacement impact: affected people spend a considerable period under conditions of 'uncertainty' without adequate information on the nature of impact and the resettlement entitlements if any. Paradoxical as it may seem, the risk of lack of information is a high risk. Uncertain conditions drive people to resistance - at least theoretically, the resistance will necessarily be more intense under uncertainty as without information probability calculations of losses and benefits are not possible.

In this paper, risk is understood as subjective calculation of different groups of people embedded differentially in political-economic and environmental conditions. Beck highlights the differentiated nature of risk perceptions: 'every interested party attempts to defend itself with risk definitions...the urgency and existence of risks fluctuating with the variety of values and interests' (Beck 1992:32). However the calculations of losses and gains are influenced by cultural norms of acceptance and legal frameworks of assigning compensation (Beck 1995:43). Hence when people (or groups therein) perceive their risks to be more than what is culturally acceptable or when mediation of action groups results in redefining what risks are acceptable, resistance to displacement is bound to be acute and so will be demands for changes in public/state assignments of liabilities and compensation.

As Oliver-Smith (1991) points out, factors such as patterns of internal differentiation within communities, multi-faceted relationship to the immediate environment and to the state, availability of local and non-local allies and the quality of the resettlement process are crucial to understand how people perceive risks and why they resist displacement.⁷ Towards this end, the paper considers three major variables - internal differentiation, quality of resettlement policies and political mediation of activist groups - and advances the hypothesis that the interplay of these variables affect risk perceptions of different groups of people and their propensity to resist displacement or risk resettlement. Substantiating this hypothesis, it is hoped, will contribute to the projection of a dynamic displacement-resettlement arena.

3. Overview of Issues in the Sardar Sarovar: Differential Interventions, Differential Impact

The Sardar Sarovar Dam is the terminal dam in the master plan of the Narmada Valley Development Project. It is part of a multipurpose (hydel, irrigation and water supply) project under construction in Gujarat. Upon completion, the SSP envisages an irrigation command of 1.8 million hectares, installed power generation capacity of 1450 MW and drinking water supply to 8215 villages and 135 urban areas. The reservoir when filled to its maximum water level will cover 410 sq.kms. of land whereas its main irrigation canal will be approximately 440 kms in length. The adverse impact of the SSP is

⁶ In his most recent work, Cernea (1997) has reflected on the importance of these aspects to displacement risk analysis

⁷ These variables are by no means exhaustive. Several other factors such as gender and community histories are equally important. For a treatment of the gender factor see Mehta (1992) and for an exhaustive analysis of the latter see Baviskar (1995) both in the context of SSP.

spread across the reservoir zone, the command area⁸ and downstream of the dam.⁹ However, for in-depth analysis, the study is delimited to the displacement impact of the reservoir zone.¹⁰

The Narmada river basin is inhabited by 22 million people in the states of M.P., Maharashtra and Gujarat, 80% of whom live in rural areas and depend primarily on agriculture. 245 villages in the basin get affected because of the Sardar Sarovar (the name of the reservoir) - 193 in M.P., 33 in Maharashtra and 19 in Gujarat. The submergence area can be divided into two distinct socio-ecological settings. The villages in the lower hills of the river basin (upstream of the dam) spread in the three states are inhabited by adivasi groups mainly Bhilalas, Vasavas, Bhils,¹¹ Tadvis and Powras. While the affected villages in Maharashtra and Gujarat have a near total adivasi population, approximately 65 villages in M.P fall under this category. The adivasi villages are marked for sparse population and subsistence-oriented livelihoods heavily dependent on rain-fed agriculture, live-stocks and forests. Although the incidence of landlessness is extremely rare in these areas - almost every family owns some revenue land and 'encroached' forest land (locally called *nevad* which means 'new') - the marketable surplus generated is negligible. Collection and selling of forest products - gum, bamboo and wood and fishing and seasonal migration to the Nimad plains in M.P., and to Gujarat for wage employment form important part of the survival portfolio of these communities.

In the plains of Nimad, upstream, in Kukshi, Dharampuri, Barwani, and Thikri sub-districts, the affected area consists of approximately 120 villages. Densely populated largely because of the fertile land, the Nimad plain is the 'bread bowl' of central India. Since ten years the region has undergone dramatic agrarian transformation, mainly because of a 'pump revolution' bringing large parts under irrigated agriculture. The major crops include bananas, sugarcane, cotton, papaya, chillies, soybean and wheat. The Kanbi-Patidars, migrants from Gujarat and in a few villages Jats, migrants from Rajasthan are the big land owning castes in this area. Their ownership of land holdings vary between 10 to 40 hectares. The middle peasantry, also largely belonging to the Patidar caste (although Rajputs, Yadavs and Ahirs and in few villages Bhilalas also belong to this category) own holding ranging from 4 to 10 hectares. Landless farm labourers mostly are adivasis and dalit castes constituting about 50% of the population.¹²

⁸ It is estimated that between 60,000 to 85,000 ha of land will be ultimately required for the 40,000 kms canal network. Official estimates indicate that the majority of affected farmers (estimate between 145,000 to 170,000 farmers) will lose less than 25% of their land (see Alagh 1995: 305). The argument is that their remaining 75% of land will get irrigation and hence the risks they perceive would be qualitatively different from those in the reservoir area. However, the extent and nature of impact and terms of compensation have been a matter of dispute. For an overview of the disputes see IIM (1991), Patel (1992), and IRC (1992).

⁹ Downstream effects will mainly be deprivation of livelihoods i.e. fishing and those engaged in river transport. At least 5000 fisherfolk families will be deprived of their livelihoods (see Soni 1993: 7; IRC: 1991).

¹⁰ The people in the state of Madhya Pradesh in the three subdistricts of Alirajpur, Kukshi and Barwani that bear the major brunt of submergence effects are the main focus in this study. The data is mainly based on informal discussions and interviews with the people and activists in the area. Field visits to ten villages in the submergence zone and five resettlement and rehabilitation sites in Gujarat augment our data base.

¹¹ The term Bhil is used as a general category to denote different adivasi groups in the region, including Bhilalas and Vasavas, particularly in government records. In the hills however, those considered Bhils are a distinct subgroup, different from other groups such as Bhilalas and Vasavas.

¹² The distinction between caste-plain villages and adivasi-hill villages somewhat conceals an intermediary area. Inhabited mostly by Bhilalas, these few villages have a relatively heterogeneous composition compared to the

Intervention and Uncertainties

Although project appraisal began in the early 1980s,¹³ information over the nature and scope of displacement available to the people in the reservoir area was scanty. The findings of a 1987 study conducted by an action research group in 26 adivasi villages in M.P. are revealing:

In none of the 26 villages, had the government of M.P. given any notices under section 4 or section 6 of the Land Acquisition Act (1894).¹⁴ Only in some villages and that too to a few farmers, notices under Section 9 of the Act were issued. Even these were not read out or explained and so generally people remained ignorant about their rights. In most villages, the initial information about the dam came from Central Water Commission's personnel, who marked the reservoir level. Information also came from varied sources including wandering *sadhus* (sanyasis). In no cases have the district authorities in M.P. informed the villagers about the dam. In only 9 or 10 villages (state) government officials have held meetings to inform villagers about their displacement (MARG 1986: 1-2, footnote added).

The uncertainty conditions prevailed despite the fact that eight years before in 1979, the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (see footnote 13) had elaborately spelt out the provisions for resettlement assigning liabilities and responsibilities of the state governments. Every displaced family losing more than 25% of its land holding was entitled to irrigable land that it lost and of its choice - subject to the prescribed ceiling of the state concerned¹⁵ and a minimum of 2 hectares. Adult sons (above the age of 18) were to be treated as separate families. The Gujarat government was assigned the major responsibility of resettlement: resettlement villages were to be built in the irrigation command of the SSP (in Gujarat) for all those families willing to go to Gujarat. The governments of M.P. and Maharashtra had to extend the same benefits to those displaced people wanting to settle in their

adivasi villages in the hills, both in terms of class and ethnic groups. A small class of farmers on the upper end of the spectrum own 10 ha of land suggesting economic differentiation. Since ten years, these villages have access to irrigation through the pipe lines as in the Nimad Plains. For the main arguments in this paper, the intermediary area - west of Barwani in M.P. and across the river in Akrani taluka of Maharashtra - does not warrant specific attention.

¹³ The project history actually spans almost four decades as the project was first mooted albeit in a much smaller scale in 1956. Conflicts over the shape of the project mainly between Gujarat and M.P. had to be resolved through the constitutional setting of the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (hereafter NWDT) which determined among other issues the shape of the project and resettlement entitlements in 1979. For an overview of project history see Paranjpye (1990).

¹⁴ Under the Land Acquisition Act (1894), governments need to abide by the following procedures. In the first stage under section-4, they have to issue preliminary notification that a particular patch of land is needed or may be needed for public purpose. Under section-6, the government declares its intention to actually acquire land. Notice under section 6 has to be issued before the expiry of one year of the notice issued under section 4. In the third stage the government invites concerned persons to raise objections if any. After due valuation of the property that is to be acquired, notice under Section-9 is issued within two years of the notice under section-6. The final award is made under Section-11 and land is acquired under Section-16 of the Act.

¹⁵ Land ceiling varies from state to state although as suggested in the National guidelines of 1972 ceiling limits are as follows: dry lands - 21.85 ha; irrigated with one crop - 10.93 ha; and irrigated with two crops - 4.05 to 7.28 ha. Actual ceilings for the state of Gujarat for the above three categories are 8.09 to 21.85, 6.07 to 10.93 and 4.05 to 7.29 ha. For the state of Maharashtra the figures are 21.85, 10.93-14.57 and 7.28. For the state of M.P. the figures are 21.85, 10.93 and 7.28 respectively. Given the fact that irrigated land was to be allotted for resettlement states could use the ceiling laws to limit compensation to a maximum of 8 ha.

respective states rather than moving to Gujarat. Depending on the cluster of families infrastructure facilities had to be provided - home sites, primary school, dispensaries, seed stores, water and electric supply, approach roads and community and religious buildings. Irrigable land and house sites were to be provided a year in advance of submergence.

In more than one way the Tribunal redefined established norms of resettlement: ruling out cash compensation, treating adult sons as separate families, seeking to off-set major displacement risks pertaining to land, homes, health, education. However these were risks only of the landed class owning private revenue land (in the reservoir area). Compensation for loss of jobs and other livelihoods in the reservoir area were not explicitly considered by the NWDT. With the involvement of the World Bank in the project, pressures from affected people and activist groups and studies of research organisations and Bank consultants resulted in a compensation package for the landless and 'encroachers'. The 1985 World Bank loan agreement with the three states and the Indian government incorporated landless labourers as eligible for livelihood compensation in the agricultural and non-agricultural sector.

Demands placed before the SSP authorities by the affected people and their allies in 1986-87 reflect the lack of information in the submerging villages regarding land, forest, common property, job losses - who is going to be affected by the submergence and to what degree - and rights and entitlements as per the compensation schemes - who is to get, how much, for what, when and for how long. Demands included right to information on extent and schedule of submergence, land availability, fresh land surveys and the assertion of the rights of those affected to settle in their own states. Major uncertainties prevailed in two areas (a) loss of lands - private and encroached forest and other government land and (b) loss of jobs and livelihoods - landless agricultural labourers, other landless people i.e. shop-keepers, fisherfolks, artisans, dairy farmers etc. Although activist groups did demand resettlement of villages as units, perceived risks of socio-cultural disarticulation were tempered by existing feuds and conflicts between and within villages, hamlets and kinship groups (see Joshi 1991:36,43,51; Baviskar 1995:126) and within households (Thayer Scudder, World Bank consultant on resettlement, personal communication) somewhat inhibiting local assertion over socio-cultural disarticulation.

Discrepant Policies and Divergent Action-Groups

Ironically, while the resettlement provisions for the reservoir affected people were being comprehensively treated, affected people were left largely in the dark about their losses and rights. The role of few action groups - Arch-Vahini (hereafter Vahini) and Rajpipla Social Service Society in Gujarat, Khedut Mazdoor Chetna Sangath (hereafter KMCS) in M.P and Narmada Dharangrasta Samiti (hereafter NDS) in Maharashtra - were crucial in protest mobilisation, extracting information from project authorities and disseminating this information about losses and rights among the affected villages. These mobilisations resulted in further incremental policy gains, the latter however were neither uniform across the three states nor was their implementation trouble-free.

In 1987, the Gujarat government substantially revised the compensation package for landless labourers making them eligible for 2 hectares of irrigated land and other infrastructure amenities.

Like with the landed households adult sons were treated as separate families. Maharashtra government modified its policies five years after, in 1992, recognising compensation of 1 ha of land for adult sons, adult unmarried daughters and landless project affected people indirectly including 'encroachers'. The M.P government did not undertake any policy modifications.¹⁶ While M.P. tried to compel its people to move to Gujarat by offering sub-standard compensation, the Gujarat government dithered from its policy obligation of 1987 to resettle all those from M.P. interested to move to Gujarat.¹⁷

The 1989 mission report by the resettlement consultant for the World Bank, while describing the 1987 Gujarat government policies as 'admirable' and 'excellent' noted 'innumerable and unacceptable implementation inadequacies' particularly with regards to Gujarat's efforts in preparing resettlement sites for the M.P. oustees (Scudder 1989). Scudder noted problems in procedures of locating land of quality and in quantity, lack of infrastructure amenities and high child mortality rates in resettlement sites and lack of bureaucratic gestures of goodwill that foster favourable responses among the people to the policy changes (Scudder 1989:22). Instead the Gujarat government preferred to use force and violence to quash democratic forms of protest (see Srinivasan 1993; 1994). The Independent Review Commission (IRC) set up by the World Bank to look into the resettlement and environmental aspects of the SSP and suggest remedial measures noted serious policy deficiencies, planning and implementation failures, non-availability of data and recommended that the Bank should step back from the project until these problems are addressed.¹⁸

Like the policy domain - showing gains, discrepancies and failures - the mediation of action groups was neither static nor uniform. While the Vahini, KMCS and NDS worked together up to 1987 - politicising uncertainty¹⁹ - the information generated from such process and the ensuing policy modifications of the Gujarat government led these groups to adopt different and conflicting politics. United in politicising uncertainty, they were divided over politicising risks.

The Vahini directed its attention on ensuring that oustees from the 19 adivasi villages in Gujarat get land as per the policy gains of 1987. It assumed the role of 'careful watch-dogging of the implementation process' (Anil Patel, Arch-Vahini, interview dt. 14.3.96). The Vahini became actively

¹⁶ M.P has shown reluctance to adopt policy modifications and instead has asked for a reduction in the dam height (since 1993) so that the displacement impact can be reduced. It was mentioned earlier in the paper that dam height was a major bone of contention between the states of Gujarat and M.P. The height of the dam is considered a non-negotiable feature as it has been settled by the NWDT. However, the contention between the two states has since remained spilling over into almost every aspect requiring inter-state co-ordination. Resettlement is only one of them. For an overview of the contention over dam height see Shah (1994) and FMG (1995).

¹⁷ On this aspect see Scudder (1989: 23). For details on the resettlement policies of the three states see GOI (1995), IRC (1992) and Parsuraman (1993).

¹⁸ The Indian government a year later (on March 30th 1993) announced that it would forgo the undisbursed \$170 million loan of the World Bank loan. For details on the build up to the loan cancellation and its implications see Appa (1992).

¹⁹ These groups along with other organisations, NGOs, environmental groups outside the valley had formed the Narmada Action Plan in 1987 to undertake research, mobilisation and networking.

involved in the implementation process overseeing land acquirement through purchase and allotment in an attempt to minimise bureaucratic risks.

In 1988, the NDS and the KMCS got together along with few other organisations in the valley and outside in a network called the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement, hereafter NBA). NBA declared a total opposition to the SSP on the grounds that it was socially, environmentally, economically unviable. Along one axis the NBA highlighted lack of surveys, inadequacies in policies and plans, non-availability of land for proper resettlement, terrible conditions on resettlement sites and human rights violations through forceful evictions. A second axis expanded definition of affected people included non-agriculturist occupational categories - tailors, carpenters, shop-keepers etc. - in the reservoir zone as well as people affected by the canal network and those downstream of the dam. Along a third axis it moved beyond displacement risks to articulate performance risks of the project - e.g. whether the benefits proposed will accrue (Dharamadhikary 1993, Ram 1993); financial risks -e.g. whether money is available for the project (Thakar 1993); environmental risks - e.g. whether reservoir induced-seismicity will affect the dam (NBA 1993); and distributional risks - e.g. whether benefits of the project will not be cornered by rich cash crop farmers and industrialists (NBA 1992). Through the third, a fourth axis enables the NBA to question all major large dam interventions.

The KMCS although working within the NBA network focused on risks to the adivasi people in Jhabua district of M.P. While recognising the specific nature of displacement-related uncertainties and risks to the adivasis, the KMCS has strived to integrate these issues with other risks of material and cultural impoverishment that adivasis living outside the submergence villages face in the area.

Differential Impact and Different Interests: Some Scenarios

In this section two major displacement risks (following Cernea's terminology) are plotted - agricultural land losses and losses of livelihoods related to agriculture - to understand the differential impact of displacement on different groups and to assess the ways and extent to which resettlement policies (if properly and uniformly implemented) can off-set these losses. It also gives an indication of how people may subjectively calculate losses and gains and how this may affect their perceptions and even actions.

The differential impact of the reservoir in M.P on land loss can be gauged from the following estimates of government agencies. Of the 193 villages affected, 49 villages lose more than 25% of their land: 30 villages lose 26-50%; 14 villages 51-75%; 4 villages 76-90%; and 1 village 100% of agricultural land. In the remaining 144 villages, the loss of agricultural land is estimated to be less than 25% (GOI 1995). The break up for these villages is as follows: 30 villages lose 10-25% of agricultural land, 54 villages between 1-10% of their agricultural land. The remaining 60 villages lose only homestead land and government wasteland (WB 1995:17; GOI 1995).

While these figures emit the certainty of impact they have been questioned on the grounds of inadequate land and village surveys. Although these figures - as information - form the basis of people's risk calculation, they give reasons for suspicion in the valley.²⁰

If the impact across the region is considered, the extent of submergence in the 75 odd adivasi villages (both in the hills and the intermediary area) that lie closer to the dam is more than the villages in the plains of Nimad. According to the estimates of the World Bank (WB 1995), it is in these villages that the loss of land is more than 10%. Within a particular village, people (households) may or may not lose land. Those who do lose, the loss could be anywhere between 1-100%. Those who do not lose any land or lose parts (less than 25%) face the prospects of remaining in a truncated village or owning unviable agricultural plots. In the adivasi villages, because of the undulated terrain, hamlets in the lower reaches get submerged whereas others at a height are spared.

The government policies on SSP consider those losing out more than 25% of land eligible for compensation with a minimum of 2 ha and a maximum equivalent to the prescribed land ceiling of the states, which could vary anywhere between 4 to 8 hectares (see footnote 15). The compensation package is therefore skewed against those farmers losing more than 8 ha of land. The incidence of people owning more than 8 ha of land is more in Nimad plains; in adivasi areas even if 'encroached' *nevad* forest land of a household is considered, few households own more than 8 ha of land. It becomes evident that those losing above 8 ha (the upper peasantry) face the risk of marginalisation as the ceiling limits disallow compensation beyond 8 ha. In a notional mapping a farmer owning 20 ha of land will be left with 8 ha (if losing 100%), 12 ha (if losing 75%) and 18 ha (if losing 50%). Furthermore the latter two scenarios entail truncated holdings - one in the original village and the other in the resettlement site. For instance, a farmer losing 50% of a 20 ha plot is left with 10 ha in the original village (provided both the plot and the village remain viable) and gets 8 ha (the maximum compensation) in the resettlement site. However, the provision of land for adult sons (and unmarried adult daughters in Maharashtra) for such families may minimise the extent of marginalisation.

For those losing between 2 to 8 ha (middle and upper peasantry), the risk of marginalisation - in quantitative terms - is offset by the compensation. Yet several factors enter the risk calculation of this category of losers. For instance, a Nimadi farmer losing 4 ha of fertile and irrigated land runs the risk of marginalisation as the land quality currently possessed may be irreplaceable. A different problem arises for those inhabiting in the adivasi villages. Here, the extent of dependence on and loss of *nevad* land is kept out of the purview of compensation. This implies that a peasant dependent on 1 ha of revenue land and 3 ha of *nevad* is bound to face marginalisation. In all cases of 'encroachment' an adivasi oustee is entitled to only 2 ha of land as compensation in Gujarat and 1 ha in Maharashtra no matter what amount of *nevad* land he/she loses under submergence. However, as in the earlier category, the provision of land for adult sons (and daughters) may minimise the extent of marginalisation.

For the landless and affected marginal farmers owning less than 2 ha of land (revenue and/or *nevad*), the loss of land, jobs and livelihood, common property resources and the security of the moral

²⁰ For instance, in several villages while high/up agricultural and homestead land have been marked as falling under the submergence area, lowland areas and houses have been left out of submergence and compensation

economy of the village, gets offset with possible gains in land entitlement. If moving to Gujarat a landless labourer is eligible for 2 ha of agricultural land. An affected landless labourer wishing to stay in M.P is entitled to only cash compensation.²¹ The provision of compensation for adult sons (and daughters) is a critical variable in risk calculation for the landless people.²² However, the offsetting of livelihood loss through land-based compensation may entail other forms of risks for the landless people - the probability of their being able to mobilise resources for farming as a livelihood depends crucially on quality land and adequate support services.

If losses in terms of agricultural land and jobs are singled out as major risks facing the people in the reservoir area, it becomes evident that the upper peasantry, particularly in Nimad, bears the most risk; despite the compensation package farmers in this category are the worst losers. The pressures from activist groups and consequent policy changes however do create some opportunities for marginal farmers and landless agricultural labourers.

4. Nimad Plains: Risks and Responses²³

The Landed People: Marginalisation as the Major Risk

Nimadi farmers have close associations and networks with local administration and politicians, business and trade. The information at their disposal (because of their many contacts including the NBA) generates a certainty of loss of productive agricultural land and inadequate compensation. However this certainty coexists with an impending uncertainty over the extent of their losses. Consider the following statement of a respondent in village Chikhaldia.

We have seen in earlier projects that the losses are much more than what the government initially claims. Look at Bargi dam. The submergence was three times the projected figures. The government does not have the slightest clue as to where the displaced have gone. It says that out of the 350 ha of land in this village only 100 ha will come under submergence. But we feel that the entire village is going to come under submergence, either because of the reservoir or because of the back water effects (interview, Nirmal Patodi dt. 27.2.96).

Knowing about the experiences of others and exposure to NBA's awareness-building contributes to this state of uncertainty. Doubts over the extent of loss gets compounded with the perceived unfairness in the compensation deal. Few factors that enter risk calculations get reflected in the following response of a farmer:

²¹ In Maharashtra, the landless agricultural labourer is entitled to 1 ha of land 'if the oustee moves with others' in the village (GOI: 1995).

²² In fact the compensation of adult sons (and daughters) seems to be a critical variable influencing people's decision-making. There has been consistent demand for the revision of cut-off dates for eligible children. The dates have been revised at least twice; the present cut off date is 1.1.87. and all those who were 18 on or before this date are eligible to be treated as separate project affected people.

²³ This and the following sections are based mainly on informal discussions and interviews with affected people threatened with submergence, people who have accepted resettlement and members of social action groups. These subjective responses constitute a set of 'voices' in the Narmada valley and allow for an interpretative understanding of the displacement-resettlement problem as people perceive it and as activist groups represent it.

The farmers can not buy much land with the compensation as they are not given the right prices. Suppose I have 9 acres of land and depend on it with my father and three families of my brothers. According to the resettlement policy (of Gujarat) we should be entitled to 20 acres of land. But the (M.P.) government is not talking about 20 acres. Instead it is offering cash compensation for 9 acres. Even if I get cash compensation for 20 acres I can still buy some land no matter how high the price is. The fact of compensating only 9 acres is nothing but just cheating us. We have no choice but to resist.

The marginalisation in holding that the Nimadi farmers face is evident from the dereliction of the M.P. government. The option of settling in M.P. - a legal right derived from the Tribunal Award - is curbed as the M.P. government policies are extremely inadequate. By maintaining sub-standard policies it has pushed Nimadi farmers to seek land in Gujarat. Some resourceful farmers from M.P. have managed to acquire quality land in Gujarat. For instance, in village Kukra-Rajghat approximately 20 land-owning households have accepted compensatory land and have settled in Gujarat. Others from the village however had to return as the costs of shifting were higher than its benefits. As one farmer in the village explained:

I had 13 hectares of land here but in Gujarat I got 18 hectares as compensation. From 1993, I tried cultivating for four seasons yet the land there was so severely water logged that the crop output was abysmal. I had even invested Rs 20000 on seeds. We were drowning here only during flood, but there one gets drowned immediately. If the land quality would have been good there was no reason for me to come back. Others have been lucky to get good quality land there. (group discussion, village Kukra-Rajghat, 28.2.96).

Two points of reference may be deduced. First, the Nimadi farmers' perceptions about the unfair compensation deal leads them to resist displacement. The support of these farmers to the NBA constitutes its mass-base (Baviskar 1995, Dreze et al 1997). Second, perceptions of a fair deal in compensation is not necessarily linked to its form - whether land-based or in cash. Rather the calculation is based on the extent to which the compensation can offset the risk of marginalisation.

In essence cash compensation violates the norms of the NWDT. The adverse impacts of this form of compensation is also well known. Yet today's Nimadi farmers function in a market economy, cultivate cash crops, transact deals in cash and may not be vulnerable to its ill effects. There appears to be even a willingness among some farmers to accept cash compensation as long as they perceive it to be fair. In some instances in M.P., farmers have accepted compensation in cash.²⁴ Used fairly, judiciously and as an additional option for the Nimadi farmer, it is probable that cash compensation can potentially offset the risk of marginalisation. However, the M.P. government has exercised this 'option' in manners that are questionable. Instead of any systematic, purposeful and participatory estimation of the value of land loss (and loss of other forms of capital) it has preferred to target specific households randomly in the Nimad valley to demonstrate the acceptance of cash compensation among people. Cash compensation has been paid to some people in upstream villages, whereas those in the lower basin - facing submergence first - have not received any compensation. This strategy will most likely

²⁴ In village Kukra-Rajghat few farmers have accepted compensation in cash (Mahindra Singh Solanki, village Kukra-Rajghat, personal communication, dt 26.2.97). Also during informal discussions, references were made to the long queue of farmers in the Narmada Valley Development Authority Office for cash compensation.

yield very little results. In game theory terms, some people might accept compensation while the majority resists as there may be strategic advantages to be derived from acceptance. But the dominant strategy - the best individual response regardless of other's strategy - for the Nimadi farmers will be to resist as long as they perceive unfairness in the compensation quantitatively and qualitatively.

The essential core of the Nimadi farmers resistance is related to the issue of land marginalisation. This may indeed be a tapered understanding of displacement risks. For example, one would expect Nimadi women's reactions to displacement to be more conservative considering their dependence on the one hand on established kinship and neighbourhood networks and immediate resource base on the other. The risk of social disarticulation may be perceived to be more crucial to them than land marginalisation.²⁵ While these issues are extremely important, they do not seem to filter through explicitly in people's resistance. This is not to argue that Nimadi women have not participated in the resistance. In fact, the NBA has mobilised women against the dam. What is being argued here is that women's perceptions of risks have not been politically constructed or cultured by the NBA as a major resistance factor. This is despite the fact that the leadership of NBA is predominantly with women.

Scholars of social movements have argued that resistance to nuclear plants, hydro-electric and irrigation dams in the world are often ignited by issues of land-ownership (see Beck 1995). If this argument is considered, the risk of land marginalisation of the Nimadi farmer becomes a base upon which different risks - related to displacement, environment, finance, technology - articulated by different interest groups can rest. Not only that, this arrangement could even suit the interest of a Nimadi farmer to ward off the risk of marginalisation. Consider the critique of the SSP by a farmer:

Look at the expenditure of the dam. First they said it would be Rs 4000 crore, then Rs 7000 crore, then Rs 9000 crore and today the government says it will be Rs 20000 crore. The command area in Gujarat will get water logged and water may not reach Kutch and Saurashtra. The officials say water will reach there in 25 years. In our view one can make immediate arrangements of the water needs there if we tap the rain water through small dams and check dams. The costs of the SSP is enormous and the benefits too little.

Improper cost-benefit analyses is only one in a range of issues that the Nimadi farmers express as reasons for resisting the SSP. The involvement in the NBA enables them to express a meaning of resistance that encompasses non-participatory development process, the plight of the adivasis who face displacement, the despoliation of nature and culture. As one respondent mentioned: 'prior to the NBA we did not understand what environment is. But now we know that the dam will pollute the water which will be unsuitable for drinking, generate disease such as malaria and land will get water-logged'. Some were more holistic: 'in the land of *Sant Mahatma* (referring to Mahatma Gandhi), the

²⁵ Following these risk perceptions to resettlement two additional points may be stated. First, cash compensation goes to men and puts decision-making power in their hands than that of the female members of a household. In land-based resettlement often land is given to male members. Maharashtra's policies on SSP mentioned earlier is an exception and should be followed as a rule. Second, in land-based compensation male farmers tend to give almost exclusive priority to land quality. Some of the respondents in this study mentioned that village-teams visiting resettlement sites in Gujarat consisted of men and did not bother to find out if water and fuel-wood were available in the vicinity of the sites. The specific risks to women does not imply their disentanglement from land. On the contrary, feminist scholarship has highlighted the important role of agricultural land to women's empowerment (see Agarwal 1994).

SSP will submerge *dharma* (justice), *prakriti* (nature) and *sanskriti* (culture)' (Shobha Ram Jat, village Bagud interview dt 25.3.96).

Whether these wide-ranging reasons of resistance centre around land marginalisation or whether they transcend the latter can become a fertile ground for research to understand resistance politics in Nimad if proper compensation is given to the Nimadi farmers. It would be possible then to examine whether the resistance results from what Beck calls 'narrow-minded property interests' of the farmer or whether farmers' perceptions of risks and resistance indeed have broadened with their involvement in NBA politics. However, the M.P. government's approach to resettlement prevents such a challenging situation from being created. In the meantime one can advance the thesis that the Nimadi farmers' resistance to SSP is more because of their having been given a raw compensation deal and less because of their conviction of the espoused causes of the NBA. The NBA leadership has in the past expressed worry over the fact that in pre-elections meetings to which contesting candidates of various political parties have been called to express their opinion on the SSP in Nimad, discussion revolves around compensation package and rehabilitation demands. To expect the Nimadi farmer to think beyond issues of fair compensation is to place the burden of fighting the 'development dystopia' on a people whose interests appear more immediate and who actually are beneficiaries of this development.

Landless Agricultural Labourers: At Risks, Perceiving Gains?

The inclusion of landless labourers in the compensation policy was a major achievement of action groups in the valley. The credit agreements between World Bank and India in 1985 and the 1987 Gujarat R&R policies included landless labourers as project affected people. In 1992 and 1993 more concrete proposals for their inclusion and exclusion and the nature of compensation were formulated.²⁶ The Action Plan of 1992 of the Gujarat and MP governments also observed that while the landed class has been resisting the resettlement plans, it is the landless category who have made use of the benefits of the compensation package.

The Independent Review Commission had in its 1992 report considered landless labourers (along with encroachers) as 'groups most at risks' (IRC 1992: 196). The IRC notes, 'many of them told us they...feel strongly attached to the social structure that supports them' (ibid: 177) and that 'peoples lives are not guided, especially in the tribal and scheduled caste communities (the landless labourers come from these communities), by an attachment to *profit* rather than to place' (ibid: 182, parenthesis added). This was the group 'who expressed the most poignant fears...', to the IRC (ibid:196). However Baviskar in her study, noted that the landless labourers in Nimad maintain a distance from the NBA and protest activities even though they lose their livelihood and community too (1995:220). How then should one view these rather contrasting findings?

²⁶ For instance, non-agriculture base landless people from M.P are not entitled for land based compensation either in Gujarat or in M.P. M.P offers them compensation package of Rs 25000 (their major sons are also eligible for the same amount). In case of landless agricultural labourers, both the Gujarat and the M.P government hold the view (as per the Action Plan of 1992) that since many Nimadi landlessness agricultural labourers are from marginally affected villages they will be entitled for R&R in Gujarat only if (i) their house was submerged and (ii) land on which they were working was to be acquired by the SSP.

Landless labourers in Nimad like the landed class have their choices constricted. To offset loss of jobs, the security of the village economy and dependence on common property resources, they have to move to Gujarat for 2 ha of land. As landless labourers their powerlessness makes them vulnerable to complex processes of negotiating with the Gujarat administration for adequate and quality land of their choice, proper housing and other amenities that they are legally entitled. The M.P government has so far offered cash compensation which is inadequate. More than the inadequacy, landless labourers - mostly poor *dalits* and *adivasis* - can be extremely vulnerable to well-known adverse effects - alcoholism, cheating, unproductive spending, indebtedness - of this form of compensation.

For some landless labourers however resettlement in Gujarat has been a risk worth-taking. Consider the case of Magan Onkar who has settled in the Khanda resettlement site with 40 other 'landless' households since 1993. Magan along with his brother received 4 ha of land. The land is of average quality and the water quality, good, available both for human beings and cattle. The initial allowance of Rs 5000 that each brother received for 2 pairs of bullocks was pooled. Half of it was used to buy proper agricultural implements as those provided by the rehabilitation authorities were of substandard quality. The household now grows cotton, maize, sorghum and pulses. People in Khanda pointed out that the first transition year was very difficult; most households had to survive on a grants-in-aid of Rs 3000 each. Some households could only cultivate sorghum during that year. 'But that phase is now a thing of the past. We are happy here.' stated a woman respondent.²⁷ Other households who risked resettlement, preferred to return to their village having leased their allotted land to the farmers of the host community. The preference for an assured income both from land lease and from wage employment in Nimad than trying out farming in the compensation land highlights implementation failures that do not offset risks of resettlement as land allotment is necessary but not sufficient to resettle the landless labourers as farmers.

Yet the expectation of owning a plot of land among the landless people who face displacement can be sensed in the Nimad valley although their position vis-a-vis the landed class may prevent them from unequivocally expressing this interest. An extract (see Box-1) from an informal group discussion with landless labourers ('monitored' by a local activist and the land-owner), taking time out from harvesting work in village Kadmal under indicates the use of a 'hidden transcript'.

Box-1

A Hidden Transcript of the Landless in Village Kadmal

(Q) What do you think of the dam? (A) The dam is being built, what else!

(Q) Has any one of you accepted resettlement so far? (A) (By the local activist) No. No one from Kadmal and Kaparkheda.

(Q) Why not? (A) Because the government has not invited us.

(Q) Will you go if the government invites you? (A) Yes. When every body goes we will go.

(Q) Have you been participating in rallies and demonstrations? (A) (By the local activist) Yes, they have gone to Bhopal and to Delhi.

(Q) Why did you participate in the rallies and what issues did you raise? (A) We are illiterate people. We remembered when we went there and forgot when we came back.

²⁷ Khanda even has a properly functioning primary school with regular teachers.

In the feigning of ignorance and amnesia and the self-deprecation, there appears a careful concealment of interest in compensation and an indifference to the struggle against the SSP. If the unequal power relationships and conflicting interests that exist between the landed and the landless in Nimad²⁸ is considered then the use of a hidden transcript is perhaps warranted.

How does one compare this with an 'open transcript'? If the opinion expressed by some landless labourers who have successfully resettled in Gujarat is considered, it gives a fair indication of how the landless in their risk calculation consider the benefits of a ruptured social fabric. 'What did we get there (in Nimad)?' asked a woman respondent, '... humiliation and a wage of Rs 15 per day.' The hostility towards the landed peasantry in Nimad was expressed in the following terms:

The Nimadi farmers kept declaring that their land is infertile. On a number of occasions they got their area declared as drought affected, so as to wrest all kinds of concessions and relief from the government. Now they are paying the price of perpetuating such blatant lies. In 1979, when Morarji Desai (the then Prime Minister) gave clearance to the SSP he was under the impression that the land in Nimad was infertile. Now, no matter how much you scream that the land produces diamond and gold, no one is going to listen to you (Group interview, Khanda resettlement site, dt.20.3.96).

On this basis it is plausible to advance a hypothesis that resistance politics does not represent the interest of the landless in Nimad or, the expectation of compensatory land counters any interest to resist displacement by the landless labourers despite loss of livelihood. The sensitive nature of the conflicting interests is realised by none other than the Nimadi farmers who strive to keep the landless as allies. 'The labourers are with us in the struggle. They have participated in rallies and demonstrations. In any case they are an integral part of a settled village, therefore they also feel alienated to go and settle in a strange setting. In Nimad villages we live as brothers (sic)' one respondent explained. Others alluded to the certainty of income from agricultural labour and the uncertainties of income from land. 'Don't be surprised if you find more silver ornaments and buffaloes in the house of my farm labourer than in my house', one was told during an informal discussion.²⁹

For the NBA leadership the perceived interest of the landless labourers in compensatory land poses problems of representation. In constructing coalitions of interest groups balancing different interests is critical. When interests are not just different but conflicting, often movements tend to privilege certain interests over that of others (see Dhanagare 1995). In NBA politics, interest conflicts do not appear obvious. In claiming representation of all the affected groups - in the reservoir and command areas, downstream and in the catchment treatment areas - its leadership has stayed clear from representing particular interest groups. Furthermore as long as the government resettlement policies, packages and

²⁸ For the landless labourers while the irrigated farming in Nimad assures them regular employment, the wages they receive are (not surprisingly) low. The minimum wage for agricultural labour is Rs 25 in M.P. whereas the wages they actually receive range from Rs 12 to Rs 18. This is a well known fact and has also been highlighted by Baviskar (1995).

²⁹ Farm income in Nimad is subject to production uncertainties. As one farmer explained, 'per acre yield of a given crop could fluctuate anywhere between 8 to 28 ha'. Fluctuations in crop prices also make crop choices a speculative venture

implementation continue to remain inadequate and insensitive, the problem of class contradictions in the valley pose no immediate problem for the NBA.³⁰ Yet, when among landless labourers interest in land compensation is perceived, a question does arise whether activism could be directed at ensuring proper and just compensation for landless labourers.

5. Adivasi Villages: Risks and Responses

An understanding of perceptions of displacement risks in the adivasi villages in the reservoir area needs to be contextualised in the unique life world of the adivasi.³¹ The legacy of long drawn struggles over forests and land resources amidst systemic appropriation of these resources by state, industries and non-adivasis implies that, for adivasis, displacement has been historically pervasive and continuous and so has resistance to it. The displacement from SSP, in this context is an addition. However, while the displacement impact of SSP is more caustic, the policies and promises of resettlement somewhat temper risk perceptions.

The weighing of resettlement risks with displacement effects among the adivasis gets influenced by their experience of powerlessness vis-a-vis the state (notwithstanding their struggles against it), the differentiation and relative power within the adivasi villages and the role and orientation of their 'allies' in struggles. The last factor is particularly evident in the SSP as the three action groups - all claiming to represent adivasi interests - reflect different orientations, an aspect that is dealt in the next section.

Loss of Nevad Land

Unlike in Nimad, uncertainty was acute in the adivasi villages. Aside from the lack of information on the displacement impact, which was referred to earlier (in section 3), what compounded the uncertainties was the threat of displacement from the *nevad* economy, crucial to the adivasis' survival portfolio: in the affected adivasi villages, households tend to cultivate anywhere between 5 to 30 hectares of *nevad* land (see Baviskar 1995:149). In some households, the *nevad* land may be larger than the revenue land by a factor of between 20 and 80 per cent (IRC 1992:177). Amidst population pressures, the *nevad* economy offers security as new 'forest' land can be brought under cultivation.

Nevad land has been a contested terrain in almost all the states in India (see Guha 1989). The state labels this practice as 'encroachment': this is followed up by officials of the forest department and the

³⁰ To some of the landless it is perturbing to see that the NBA has discouraged them from moving out as it weakens the movement: those who have moved out are isolated and are left on their own to negotiate with government authorities for their entitlements. And those who have managed successfully to resettle - despite all odds - are 'invited' to return to their original villages. Said one respondent 'Medha Behn (the leader of NBA) had come to us here at the resettlement site. Her purpose was to convince us to go back to our villages in the valley. She said, "When you come there, we will ensure that you get a formal welcome in Chhoti Kasravat." If we decide to go back we will be welcomed and even garlanded by the activists in the welcome meeting. But after the meeting, when Medha Behn and the leaders leave, we will be told, "bloody mother fuckers, you are back"' (Magan Onkar, interview, dt 20.3.96).

³¹ This is not to argue that the adivasi world is homogenous. Economic and social-cultural differentiation exist between and within ethnic groups and within villages

police with threats of eviction, fines, harassment and bribery. Adivasi access to forests resources are also curtailed in the name of conservation and protection.³² In Alirajpur tehsil (one of the worst affected by SSP) the KMCS leads the struggle over *nevad*. In the politics of the KMCS, *nevad* is seen as 'both an assertion of customary ownership of the community and an economic compulsion' (Baviskar 1995:178). For KMCS activists, the issue of *nevad* land serves as an instrument of politicisation and mobilisation through which awareness develops among the adivasi people about the structures of exploitation that surround them:

The knowledge of the modern, alien systems (courts, police, forest department, etc.) overarching and governing the adivasi life world is extremely essential for adivasi survival and struggles. The Sangath's task is to give information on the working of the system, so that it can be effectively resisted (Rahul Banerjee, KMCS, interview dt. 24.2.1996).

Of the 90 KMCS member-villages in M.P, 26 villages get affected by the SSP. For the KMCS 'the SSP is an issue through which one can explain how local party politicians respond, how industry agents and big farmers react, how contractors are powerful. People clearly see for themselves the operation of these forces; hence the SSP is important for awareness raising among the people in the long-term' (Amit Bhatnagar and Jayshree, KMCS, interview dt. 7.3.96). It is this understanding that has led the KMCS to join the NBA in resisting the SSP. Their struggles over displacement around the SSP manifest broader struggles over resources:

Big projects, big science and big technology should be opposed. Local adivasis cannot benefit out of them. They increase our despair. We will oppose this science and technology manifested in dams, mines, forestry and even conservation. The direction of development has been one where resources have been siphoned out of our areas. What we need is a science that backs local use patterns and knowledge. Whether it is mine, water or electricity, local people should be the ones to derive benefits. (Shankar Tadwal, ex-president, KMCS interview dt. 4.3.96).

Resettlement Risks

In Gujarat, 'encroachers' were entitled to 2 ha of irrigated land. The Vahini's approach to interest representation was therefore different. It focused on resettlement risks after adivasis in the 19 Gujarat villages began moving to resettlement sites. The complex processes of resettlement involved identifying PAPs, arranging suitable land of the PAP's choice, availing it (through purchase) and transferring it to the PAP's name, ensuring infrastructure amenities in resettlement sites - housing, water, power, access roads, schools and other service inputs - grants in aid, agricultural implements, grazing land etc. Anticipating serious deficiencies in the transition process the Vahini involved itself to minimise risks of non-implementation.³³

³²The digging of cattle prevention trenches (CPT) by the forest department around protected areas are the most recent manifestation of this exclusionist regime. While the rationale of such activities are derived from income generating (adivasis gain employment from digging CPT), as well as conservation objectives they limit access to forest resources (including land).

³³ It has since identified 300 project affected people who have been allotted sub-standard compensatory land and has also voiced concern over the non-available and sub-standard civic amenities in the resettlement sites (Anil Patel, ARCH-Vahini, interview, dt.14.3.96). The Vahini has also demanded the denotification of Shoolpaneswar Sanctuary in Gujarat, considering it an infringement on the usufructory of local Vasavas who live in about 100

The trend of shifting to resettlement sites is more noticeable in Gujarat and Maharashtra than in M.P. and is to be viewed in the context of policy changes of the former two states, land availability, agency mediation and representation and the immediacy of threat of submergence compared to M.P. villages. Gujarat adivasis face first submergence, a comparatively favourable policy package and activist groups like the Vahini oriented towards resettlement. Resettlement figures of the Gujarat government indicate that 4572 PAPs (about 95% of the total in Gujarat) have been allotted 8549 ha of compensatory land in Gujarat (GOI 1995: 199). In Maharashtra, where opposition to displacement led by the NBA was extremely strong, the trend for accepting resettlement increased after 1993. In September 1992, the Maharashtra government recognised an entitlement of 1 ha of agricultural land for major sons, major unmarried daughters and landless project affected people, indirectly including encroachers within these categories. 'The level of conflict subsided dramatically as a consequence, and more families accepted resettlement in a span of three months (between October and December 1992) than had accepted resettlement in the previous two years' (Gill 1993: 237). Government figures indicate that of an estimated 3113 PAPs,³⁴ approximately 1800 of Maharashtra PAPs have been allotted land in Maharashtra and Gujarat. The Maharashtra government has claimed that land required for all the PAPs willing to resettle in Maharashtra has already been acquired. So far, 690 Maharashtra PAPs have received 1380 ha of land in Gujarat and 1090 PAPs have received 1702 ha of land in Maharashtra (GOI 1995: 206-10).

The trend of accepting resettlement in Gujarat and Maharashtra cannot be simply construed as evidence of favourable perceptions among the adivasis for resettlement. Policy changes can only be important one-time pull-factor. People may show a proclivity to accept resettlement because of continued feeling of uncertainty about displacement itself and/or after developing resistance fatigue (because of state violence). Resistance fatigue and/or policy changes may split united villages into those who want resettlement and others who would prefer to fight. Internal differentiation among the adivasis is an equally important factor shaping perceptions. Marginal adivasi peasants may be more favourably inclined for accepting resettlement with the hope of securing private land ending the uncertainty of cultivating small plots of *nevad* amidst threat of eviction. Better-off adivasi peasants may find more favourable opportunity structures. Favourable inclination may also develop if action groups mediate in resettlement risks. However, it is only when adivasis perceive that their major losses - *nevad* land, cultural identity, labour and other social networks, forest resources such as bamboo, ropes, gum, fodder, fuel wood and timber, river resources such as drinking water and fishing - have been offset or minimised that one can attribute some success to the resettlement process. To that extent, perceptions of benefits and costs of resettlement will depend on resources that adivasi households command in the resettlement area.

villages in and around the area. The sanctuary has been proposed to ward off criticisms of the environmental impact of the SSP, particularly on wild-life. The Shoolpaneswar sanctuary (600 sq km) is in effect an extension of the 150 sq km Dhomkal Sloth Bear Sanctuary to the reservoir shore line of the SSP. The local Vasavas have protested this move and have formed the Gujarat Vanavasi Sangathana to resist this project (for details on this struggle see Dwivedi 1996).

³⁴ Belonging to Tadvi, Vasava, Bhil and Pawra communities.

For adivasi peasants who have received quality resources for compensation life in the new environment is 'comfortable'.³⁵ Consider the family of Jam Singh Ugrania from village Jalsindhi in M.P. Together with his father, 5 brothers and 2 sons, the household has received 18 ha of land in the resettlement site of Golagamdi, Gujarat, in 1991. Ugrania compared life in both worlds:

In Jalsindhi, life was extremely difficult. When rains failed we did not get food for 12 months despite cultivating 16 ha of land. If you go there you will know how difficult life is. People go to Gujarat to toil in the fields of Patels when crops fail. Here we cultivate cotton, pulses and sorghum. In 1995, sale of cotton alone fetched us Rs 25000. This place has electricity, school, street lights, good access road, and bus connection. Drinking water is available. The hand pump had been installed even before we were here. In the initial years of shifting we did face some hardship. We cultivated both lands for sometime. The only problem here is fodder which was there in plenty in Jalsindhi (Jam Singh Ugrania, interview dt 12. 3. 96).

The comfort of the Ugrania household can be considered as an exception than rule. The fact that Ugrania Senior was the *patel* (traditional village head) of village Jalsindhi, had six sons and two adult grandsons (each treated as separate PAP) and was allotted consolidated plots are major factors to be considered. *Patel* households and their immediate kin groups in some of the adivasi villages in M.P. have shown a favourable predisposition for compensation.³⁶ Targeted by the state to influence community opinion on resettlement, these households received adequate resettlement facilities that offset the risks of displacement.

Among adivasi commoners the situation has been rather mixed. Some PAPs command better resources than others: land quality, irrigation facilities, brick houses, water supply are unevenly distributed.³⁷ Consider the case of Hari Singh Rathwa from village Jhandana who has moved to the Tarswa resettlement site. Of the 6 ha of land allotted to him 2 ha are absolutely useless as wild grass (locally called *dab*) grows in it.

The *dab* sucks all the fertilisers and virtually nothing grows in that plot. We hired tractor for Rs 2000 to remove the grass yet it made no difference. Our expenses last year was so much that we could not break even. This year we have already spent Rs 9000. We had petitioned to the Development Minister who had come here for changing that plot but nothing has happened so far (Hari Singh Rathwa, interview dt 15.3.96).

In Tarswa site, where few PAPs from villages Jhandana and Kakrana have settled almost 20 ha of land is of extremely inferior quality. About 8 households who received this type of land returned to

³⁵ In her ethnography on the Vasavas in Gujarat, Hakim (1996) shows how Vasavas demonstrate adaptation in the resettlement sites seeking new identity and cultural ways, distinct from their original villages in the hills.

³⁶ One respondent, active in the NBA, named some of the villages from which the *patels* have accepted compensation: 'Akadia's *patel* is gone, Jalsindhi's *patel* has gone, Chilakda's new *patel* is going (the old *patel* who refused to go has since died). In Sakarja and Kakadsila the *patels* have taken land and houses in the resettlement sites but are still living in their villages.' (Bava Mahalia, village Jalsindhi, interview dt. 1.3.96)

³⁷ During a survey conducted by KMCS in some of the resettlement sites, women respondents reported having good crops that season. The Khadgotra resettlement site now has irrigation facilities and adivasi peasants grow sunflower, wheat and maize (Vania Bhoura, President, KMCS, personal communication).

their villages. Infrastructure in Tarswa is poor. The tin-sheds (a common sight in the resettlement sites) are virtually not liveable; in the rainy season water seeps in, summer makes them unbearably hot and winter extremely cold. Despite four hand-pumps, PAPs complain about water shortages for animals. In many adjacent sites drinking water has to be supplied by tankers, often irregularly. The primary school had to close after running for the first two months as there were only five students.

Resistance Risks?

The experiencing of differential resettlement risks by those who have shifted highlights severe deficiencies in the implementation process. However, only the Vahini³⁸ has played a mediating role addressing resettlement risks. The NBA leadership has highlighted adverse conditions of PAPs in resettlement site but more as vindication of its political stand (i.e. resettlement is not possible), rather than as systematically identifying areas of reworking. In fact, some local NBA activists brand PAPs seeking resettlement as *dalals* (stooges) of the government. The state governments have indeed operated through middle-‘men’ (use intended) who are called *poonarvasat sathis* (resettlement friends); the *sathis* receive monthly allowances from the resettlement agencies and seek to motivate and encourage people to accept compensation. However, for adivasis who risked resettlement, the epithet ‘*dalal*’ seems to hide more than it reveals. Consider the following response of Hari Singh Rathwa:

Since the last three years, I have left the NBA. I have no relationship with the local NBA leaders in the village and they blame me for splitting the village on this issue. I had been to Bombay and Delhi in the rallies of NBA. In the early days of the movement we did raise the issues of information and participation, and the destruction of our ancient homes. But it became clear that the government will go ahead of with the project. The dam is a reality. Realising this, people also began to move. I moved here when I saw that people in Suryaguda who had settled there for two years had got excellent land and were happy. The fact that I have been cheated is a different story (interview dt.15.3.96).³⁹

It is possible to interpret Rathwa’s words as expressing a fear of displacement on the one hand and resistance fatigue on the other. What is clearly evident is that the success of few households managing resettlement generates interest in resettlement among others. Given these perceptions, a probable scenario in which political activism could be more forcefully directed at minimising resettlement risks for the adivasis cannot but be imagined.

More forceful criticism of the NBA’s non-representation of the adivasis seeking resettlement has been noted. Gill cites the change in response of people in village Dhankhedi in Maharashtra where initial resistance was so strong that it was impossible for government officials to gain entry into the area.

³⁸ There are other NGOs in Gujarat apparently involved in the resettlement process whose impact seem at best negligible at worst invincible. Of two prominent NGOs, Rajpipla Social Service Society - one of the first NGOs to demand better compensation deal for Gujarat adivasis - supports the no dam stand and the Anand Niketan Ashram at Rangpur that took an active interest in resettlement is currently besieged in controversies over activities in the Ashram.

³⁹ During the interview Rathwa revealed that he and others interested in resettlement have sought the help from the Vahini.

According to Gill, by December 1991 residents of Dhankhedi had stated their intention not to oppose resettlement (Fisher 1993). The explanation given by local leader Uday Singh Bonda was as follows:

We have realised that we are expected to fight against the dam, remain naked and keep performing our traditional dances. We are being deliberately encouraged to remain like this, so that our photographs can convince the world to halt the dam. We don't care if the dam is built or not. We want a good deal for our children. We have fought for the activists for years, but have got nothing in return. We are with you only if we get everything that is listed in the resettlement policy as our right. Until you give us what is rightfully ours, not even one person from this village will move.⁴⁰

The sharpness of the response - recorded by a bureaucrat involved in the resettlement process - does not necessarily warrant its dismissal as a constructed 'pro-SSP' viewpoint. Even among the most ardent supporters of NBA, underlying their resistance is an expectation of better compensation:

We do not recognise paper-work. The government has to give us good quality land and proper information about it: whether it is forest land, if people are already residing in it and about other facilities we are entitled to. Instead it is giving us assurances in paper which is useless (Bava Mohalia, village Jalsindhi, interview dt. 1.3.96).

Baviskar notices the gap between the aspirations of activists to frame the problem of displacement within a wider development dystopia and the perceptions of 'people in the valley, both adivasis and non-adivasis, who understand the issue of displacement in a much more particularistic way' (1995: 222). How does this particularistic way manifests itself, what tensions could this create in interest construction and representation and whether people's perceptions can be ignored (as false consciousness?) or form the basis of reworking the 'displacement-rehabilitation problem' are hard questions that need to be considered.

On a sombre note, it is plausible to attribute the (poor) adivasi peasant's 'particularistic ways' of understanding displacement to the uncertainties that characterise her/his life-world where risk-averse or safety-first behaviour is compulsively adopted to negotiate between two realities - survival and deprivation. Most evident in production decisions - eg. the preference for diversification of plots and mixed cropping - the adivasi peasant's 'survival algorithm', to borrow Lipton's phrase, drives her/him to seek security. To the extent, resistance is deemed to fulfil this aspiration - so as to be secure either in the original village without displacement or in the resettlement site after displacement - the adivasi people can be expected to be part of it. If the resistance project does not yield these results or appears to be fulfilling purposes other than this interest a disengagement with it is probable. In this act of disengagement, uncertainties of resistance may be overcome (by accepting resettlement) but the risks of impoverishment remain in the absence of policy and implementation improvements and activist group mediation. For some (like the Ugrania household) the risks can be offset totally and for others it will remain high. The worries of a KMCS activist is worth noting:

⁴⁰ As quoted in Gill (1993:253-4). Gill was the additional collector in Dhule at that time and notes that several other villages in Maharashtra which initially resisted resettlement later on accepted it. According to him, the resistance was directly related to the earlier experiences of those resettled and was an important factor in effecting R&R policy modifications in 1992. Latest available official figures (1993 data) on Dhankhedi show that out of a total of 97 PAPs (22 landowners, 40 landless and 35 major sons), 89 PAPs had shifted and 72 PAPs had been allotted land in the R&R sites of Simamli and Choupadva in Gujarat.

As far as the dam is concerned perception gained ground among the local people that it cannot be stopped. So they started moving out. They realised that the movement was no longer in their interest... Instead of attempting to broaden our mass-base, we have concentrated on a mobilisation strategy that seems to exclude local people. Our rallies have more of the so-called prominent citizens than local people (Rahul Banerjee, KMCS, interview dt. 24.2.96).

The problems of a debilitating mass-base in the adivasi area notwithstanding, people in some of the adivasi villages in Maharashtra and M.P. have remained strongly associated with the resistance movement. And what have been the benefits of resisting displacement? 'Without the NBA you would not have seen a single adivasi in this place' one respondent stated. Biharilal Dawar of village Kakrana was more elaborate:

We were told that we will be displaced in 1990. It is 1996 now and we are still here. In these six years the World Bank was thrown out, our problem was known all over the country and the case is being heard in the Supreme Court. It is because of this struggle that some people have got quality land as compensation. And because of the struggle we expect a better compensation deal (interview, dt. 29.2.96).

6. Risks and Resistance: Perspectives and Strategies of Action Groups

The discussion in section three showed the diversities in mediation strategies of activist groups to the displacement-resettlement problem in SSP. A fuller mapping of the different meaning of risks of the NBA, KMCS and Vahini, their convergence and divergence and the implications of their approaches to the displacement-resettlement problem is attempted below in Table-1.

The cursory mapping indicates points of divergence⁴¹ of the activist groups - their nature, meanings of risks and strategic preferences - implying different methods of reworking the displacement-resettlement problem. The NBA's current position considers the problem to be 'unworkable'; considered together with all other problems with the SSP the solution lies in the dam not being built. However, its tacit support to the lowering of dam height suggests that the displacement can be minimised in magnitude as that would reduce submergence.⁴² In NBA's politics, the resettlement terrain is one that highlights the problems of displacement; the need for strategic reworking however is given a very low priority. Politically, resistance and resettlement are viewed as opposite poles and the perceived gap between them seems to pose a dilemma before NBA. To bridge this gap would take

⁴¹ The points of divergence also bid for possible interconnections: For instance, KMCS transcends its locality via the NBA, whereas the NBA manages a base in the adivasi area because of the KMCS; the Vahini and KMCS strongly highlight the adivasi dependency and rights on forest resources and their vulnerability despite different approaches to displacement and resettlement: the NBA focuses on the displacement risks, the Vahini takes over from there focusing on resettlement risks; the middle-class leadership of the NBA fosters national and international networks, the local leadership of the KMCS fosters mass-base (For details on the politics of the action groups, particularly the NBA see Dwivedi 1997).

⁴² Although opinion is divided over the extent to which the dam height should be reduced, a reduction by 19 ft. (from 455 to 436 ft.) will not be contested. However the extent to which submergence lessens if the dam height is lowered by 19 ft. is greatly contested between the government of Gujarat and M.P. For details on this see FMG (1995).

it a step closer to development and developmental resettlement. To widen the gap would take it a step closer to the struggles for alternative development.

Table-1

Risks and Resistance: Action Groups' Orientation on Displacement⁴³

Action Groups	Risk Definitions	Representation of Interest Groups	Strategic Positions on Displacement	Observations and Implications
NBA: Network of individuals and organisations inside and outside the valley; Outside Middle-class leadership.	SSP related Displacement risks; Financial risks; Project risks; Technological uncertainties and risks; Environmental risks;	Diffused: All affected by the SSP - reservoir, canal, downstream, catchment area, compensatory afforestation programmes, secondary displacements.	No dam position. Successful resettlement not possible. Supports the demand for lowering the dam height Close association with the M.P government on this issue.	Outside support (national and global) more than the submergence area. Mass-base stronger in Nimad than in adivasi villages. Building networks on displacement and alternative development in the country and abroad.
KMCS: Organisation with mass-base in Jhabua district (M.P); Operations both inside and outside the submergence area; Local adivasi leadership.	Adivasi related Displacement risks of SSP; <i>Nevad</i> risks; Impoverishment risks of adivasis outside the submergence area.	Specific: Adivasi oustees in M.P; Adivasis in Jhabua District. Diffused: Support to the NBA on SSP	No dam position. Critical Support to NBA. Felt need to work with displaced adivasis who would move up the hills instead of going to resettlement sites after submergence.	Strong local mass-base. Small in size. Broadening struggles to include risks to adivasis outside the submergence area. Building networks among adivasis; Articulating demand for a separate adivasi state.
ARCH-Vahini: NGO in Gujarat; Operations both inside and outside the resettlement area; Facilitates community organisations among adivasis.	SSP related Adivasi related Resettlement risks; Bureaucratic risks of non implementation.	Specific: Adivasi oustees of Gujarat. Also some adivasi oustees from M.P. Displacement threats to adivasis in Shoolpaneswar Sanctuary.	Close association with the Gujarat government in the resettlement process. Critical support to the dam 'as a necessary evil.'	Vulnerable to government mechanisation. Has recently articulated dissatisfaction with the Gujarat government.

A reduction in the dam height, would reduce displacement risks for some in the reservoir area (and downstream of the dam). The displacement-resettlement problem will however remain for all the adivasi villages and some villages in Nimad (and even those affected by the canal network). Furthermore in seeking dam height reduction, the NBA seems to indicate the importance of displacement risks in its all-encompassing definition of risks as all other non-displacement risks would remain even if the dam height is reduced. This shrink in the meaning of risks of the SSP brings the NBA closer to a position of reworking the displacement-resettlement problem.

⁴³ The information is based on informal discussions and interviews with activists as well as published material of these organisations - newsletters, petitions, correspondence.

The Vahini on its part supports the SSP although recently it has publicly expressed disenchantment with 'resettlement reworking' in Gujarat deeming its involvement in the resettlement process 'a mistake' (Anil Patel, ARCH-Vahini interview dt.14.3.96). Despite the admittance of the 'mistake', the Vahini holds the view that displacement risks reincarnate as resettlement risks if gains in policies are not followed in the implementation phase. Vahini activists argue that the priority of action groups in M.P should have been on seeking policy modifications and reducing implementation risks rather than on opposing the SSP on wide-ranging grounds. Whether through this strategy more could have been achieved for the affected people is debatable. On the one hand, it can be forcefully argued that the NBA's total opposition to the SSP has placed the displacement problem in the national agenda.⁴⁴ In a similar vein, the recently expressed disenchantment of the Vahini of its close involvement in the process shows the limits and problems of strategic co-operation with governments. But on the other hand, development-induced displacement will remain a reality (until the visions of alternative development are realised) and resettlement a challenge in social engineering. The need for reworking the displacement-resettlement problem can hardly be ignored both in the context of SSP and outside it. The close association of the Vahini with the state administration in Gujarat may not place it on a high ethical ground to articulate this viewpoint; however the viewpoint itself can hardly be ignored.

The KMCS, no doubt considers the SSP as an archetype of 'destructive development'; its activists support broader struggles for resisting such projects. However, reworking the displacement-resettlement problem is not viewed as a stumbling block for the goals and vision of 'alternative development'. The grassroots nature of this organisation burdens it with the responsibility of addressing the pervasive uncertainties and risks adivasis confront in their daily lives. Perhaps, this rootedness (and an adivasi leadership) explains why the organisation appears more reflexive on the displacement-resettlement problem than others in the NBA network. In strategic terms, the reflexivity is manifested in the debates the KMCS has initiated within the NBA to incorporate risks of those adivasis outside the reservoir area. In this regard, radical KMCS activists appear to be critical of the NBA for its single-minded campaign to stop the SSP. The problem of adivasis risking resettlement - despite policy and implementation inadequacies - is deemed as the failure of a resistance movement to appropriately perceive and adequately represent peoples' interests.

7. Conclusions: Rethinking the Arena, Reworking the Problem

In this paper, the analytical framework to the displacement-resettlement problem in the empirical context of the Sardar Sarovar involved inter-locking the following factors - the impact of displacement on project affected people, formulation and implementation of resettlement policies and visions and

⁴⁴ The total opposition to the SSP has yielded rich dividends. The damning indictment of the resettlement and environmental aspects of the SSP by the Morse Committee was a direct result of NBA mobilisation efforts in the valley and outside. The World Bank was removed from the project (although 'officially' the Indian government requested for loan cancellation); since 1995 January construction work on the dam has stopped by the orders of the Supreme Court of India which is currently deliberating on a petition filed by the NBA questioning the construction of the dam. Besides the SSP, the NBA has forged networks on displacement in India a major achievement of which has been the major impetus for the debating of a national resettlement policy (see Sen 1996, Fernandes and Chatterji 1994). The NBA has also been an integral part of international networks opposing large dams. Recently, with the formation of the World Commission on Large Dams, the World Bank (the single largest funding agent) has yielded to pressures from these networks for reviewing impact (benefits and costs) of major dams in the world (for details on this see IRN 1997).

strategies of action groups. The approach to the problem was to first situate people in their different political-economic and other existential conditions and then to look at how the inter-locking of factors affect people's risk perceptions and actions. It was noted that these factors between them characteristically reflect differences and divergence. At one level, resettlement policy and action group mediations influence different perceptions of and actions over these risks. At another level, the politics of resistance leads to shifts and changes in policy focus and action group orientation. These shifts and changes in turn have a direct bearing on people's perceptions and actions.

Figure-1 is an attempt at establishing interconnections of these factors. The mapping though based on data from the Sardar Sarovar can have wider conceptual relevance. It offers a way of conceptualising displacement and resettlement as components in a complex and dynamic arena and hence is a step beyond thinking of their relationships in binary terms. Binary thinking may be reflected among both policy-makers and action groups. Consider the statement good resettlement offsets displacement risks. Resettlement here, is the binary opposite of displacement and cancels out the latter. This may be termed, the 'optimistic managerial' view. Consider another statement: displacement risks are extremely high and cannot be mitigated by resettlement. Here the scale of displacement cancels out the possibility of resettlement. Call it the 'pessimistic movement' view. Although the statements reflect opposite positions on the displacement-resettlement problem, they are both binary conceptions. To both the optimist-manager and the pessimist-activist displacement risks mean one-time high losses - e.g. landlessness, joblessness etc. - that people incur when displaced and that can or cannot be offset by resettlement.

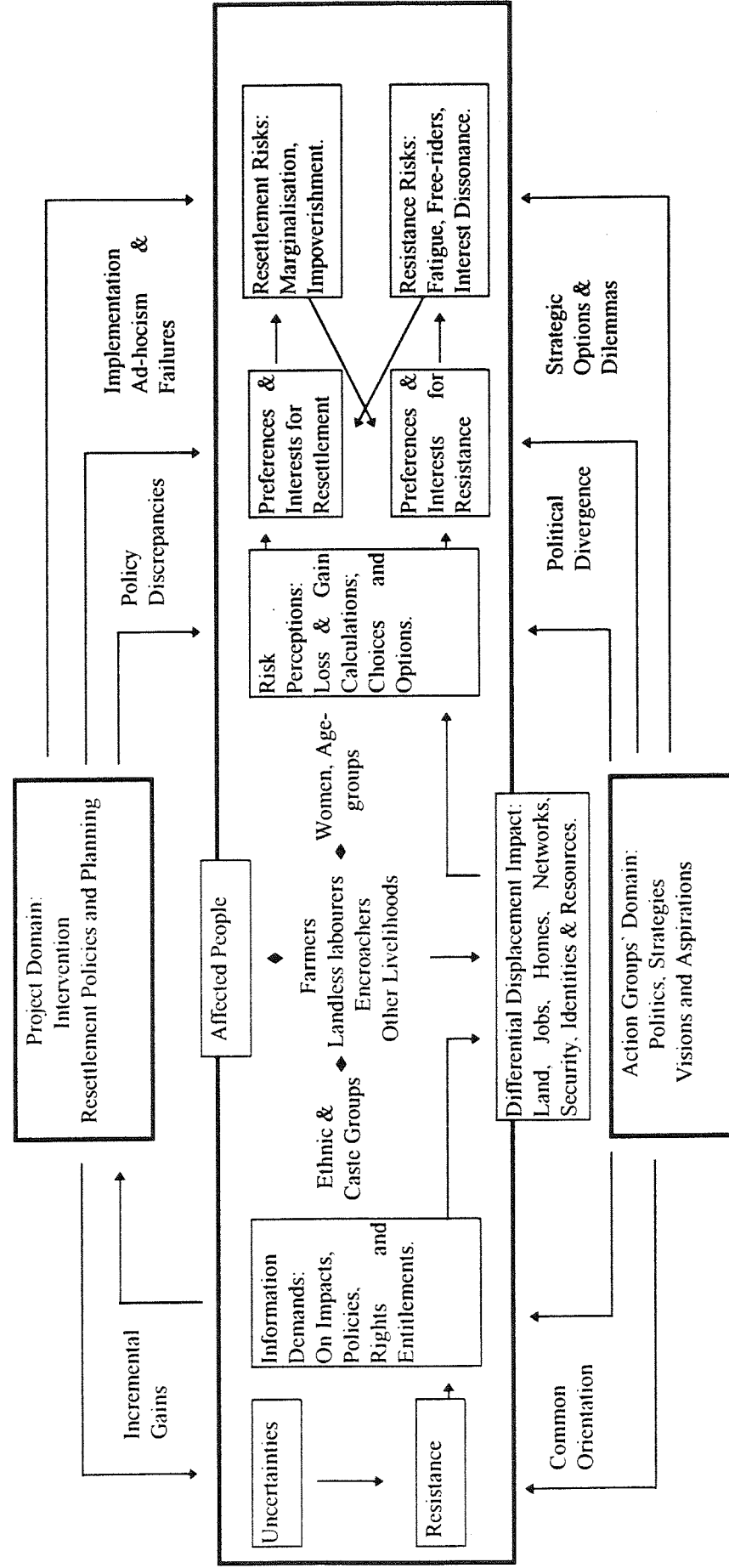
Binary conceptions can be inadequate for understand people's experiences of displacement-resettlement problem. People confront displacement and resettlement as simultaneous and shifting realities and as the mapping in Figure-1 shows, risks from them do not appear as one time loss but spread across the arena, manifest at different times, take different forms and have multiple meanings. Risks pervade in information, displacement, resistance and resettlement and affect people differently.

Any reworking agenda therefore may need to demonstrate sensitivity to the differentials that characterise people's domain, the risks and opportunities they perceive and how best these interests can be represented. Secondly, there will have to be a clear adherence to the principle that losers must not lose while gainers may gain. The assumption that some people will have to bear the cost for greater good fails to convince and will simply have to be abandoned. In the specific context of Sardar Sarovar, discrepancies pervade the resettlement policy domain, dissonance the domain of action groups and differentiation the people's domain. The reworking of the displacement-resettlement problem may begin in any or all of the three domains. Policy modifications (particularly that of the M.P government) and improvement in resettlement planning and implementation of all the three governments are minimal requirements for any reworking agenda. Fresh surveys in the Narmada valley to ascertain risks to different categories of people could indicate the forms and nature of compensation people prefer. In M.P., where the problem of data inadequacy is most evident it may be desirable for the M.P government and the NBA to come together on a reworking agenda. Their collaboration on the displacement-resettlement problem in the Bargi project has yielded fruitful results not to mention the gains of collaboration of Arch Vahini and Gujarat government. It has been mentioned in the paper that the M.P government in demanding a low dam is fighting a very old battle

with Gujarat. The NBA may find this battle strategically useful. However, the challenge of reworking the existential risks of the vulnerable in the valley also need to be addressed. The battleground of KMCS - *nevad* land, landlessness, adivasi identity - when supported by other action groups can make the reworking agenda forceful as these issues have close links to the problem of displacement.

Figure-1

The Displacement-Resettlement Arena - A Dynamic Environment



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