

# Socio-economic transformations of Sardar Sarovar project-affected indigenous populations and post-colonial development state

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**Socio-economic transformations of Sardar Sarovar project-affected  
indigenous populations and post-colonial development state**

By Sutapa Chattopadhyay

**Maastricht Economic and social Research institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT)**

email: [info@merit.unu.edu](mailto:info@merit.unu.edu) | website: <http://www.merit.unu.edu>

**Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (MGSOG)**

email: [info-governance@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:info-governance@maastrichtuniversity.nl) | website: <http://mgsog.merit.unu.edu>

Keizer Karelplein 19, 6211 TC Maastricht, The Netherlands

Tel: (31) (43) 388 4400, Fax: (31) (43) 388 4499

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## **Socio-economic transformations of Sardar Sarovar project-affected indigenous populations and post-colonial development state**

Sutapa Chattopadhyay

Visiting Researcher UNU-Merit and Maastricht University

[sutapajacob@gmail.com](mailto:sutapajacob@gmail.com)

[s.chattopadhyay@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:s.chattopadhyay@maastrichtuniversity.nl)

[chattopadhyay@merit.unu.edu](mailto:chattopadhyay@merit.unu.edu)

### **Abstract**

The *Tadvi* Adivasi narratives succinctly underscore the imprudence and insanity of Indian federal and state governments in sanctioning the construction of large-scale development projects' such as the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP). Dam development is a part of a wider neoliberal project that create capitalist relations and technologies in different forms of economy and modes of livelihood contributing to the process of global primitive accumulation. The expansion of the creation of the global proletariat is facilitated by dismantling customary relations to land, forests, water. The fact that many dams are constructed where marginalized populations exist holding tenuous relations to the environment may not coincide. For capitalism to survive and expand, there not only has to be an increase in capital accumulation sometimes taking the form of technological infrastructure (large dams) but there also has to be 'free labor', a group of people who have no ties to any subsistence base and limited or no alternative to working for wages. An analysis of *Tadvi* stories and my field observations highlight the limited livelihood opportunities and the socio-political changes Adivasis' are experiencing, in their rehabilitated villages, which has an enormous impact on their everyday lives and future generations. In hindsight, the eminent dislocation and resettlement accentuate the post-colonial Indian state's ideological explanations towards the need for large-scale development, it's unwillingness to assume accountability, it's flimsy commitments to the environment, it's partial and limited interpretations of sustainability, and it's complete lack of responsibility towards excluding millions of populations from their livelihoods.

Keywords: post-colonial development state, accumulation, environmental sustainability, Adivasi populations, lifestyle changes

JEL Code- Q01, Q56, O15

### **Introduction**

One of the basic planks of development and environment discourses about dams is to arrive at general or global evaluations based on overall costs and benefits which seldom erases the fact that those who benefit from dams are rarely, if ever, those who bear the losses due to dislocation and submergence. They are almost always two very different groups of people, in terms of their prior economic, legal, cultural and political vulnerabilities, and these two categories of populations are 'incomparable entities' (Whitehead 2003).

The Sardar Sarovar multipurpose river valley project (SSP) is an archetype of post-colonial developmental politics that exhibits the blunders of planned development and state-legitimized atrocities against its Adivasi and low-caste non-Adivasi oustees. The social characteristics of those displaced by the SSP are not unique, neither to India nor the rest of the world. Out of 2.5 million people dislocated, 60 to 70 percent were Adivasis and the remaining 30 to 40 percent were relatively affluent upper-caste Patel farming communities of the Nimar plains (Bhaviskar 1995; Dwivedi 1999). Their numbers marginalized them. Their distinctive modes of production, relative geographic and social isolation, and cultural practices marked them as 'borderline' people, very distinct from the mainstream populations (Whitehead 2003). The fertile Narmada Valley houses Adivasi Bhils, Vasavas, Ratwas, Bhilalas, Pavras, and Tadvīs. Narmada itself is one of most scared rivers<sup>1</sup> for caste Hindus, as worshipped as the Ganges in the South. This river is now punctuated with 3,165 dams of which Sardar Sarovar is the largest. The construction of the Narmada valley projects have not only deteriorated the health of the river but also caused irreparable damage for the luxuriant ecosystem and destroyed the livelihood mechanisms of the ousted populations (Karan 1994).

My research on the Sardar Sarovar was based on the resettled Adivasis' narratives on their past histories and legends; resistance against SSP; current struggles, largely economic; and state- and village-level politics. The narratives, which succinctly underscore the imprudence of the Indian federal and state governments in sanctioning the construction of SSP, is a part of a wider neoliberal project (Engel-Di Mauro 2008). Large development projects are infrastructures for capital accumulation, not entirely produced by capitalists or the government or multi-lateral agencies but through the conversion of the marginalized populations, who are occupying the primary economic sector, into wage workers (Raju 2009). Marx's primitive accumulation, in its various phases, is more than a systematic program that details the establishment and consolidation of capitalism on a global scale because it more notably leads to, the enlargement of the scope for the private production of goods through the extension of markets in resources previously held in common, and through the creation of an institutional matrix in which capitalist exchange can flourish (Marx 1906).

The forces of neocolonialism and globalization are clearly part of the problem, which underscores the debates on whether post-colonialism is best employed only to designate the period after independence or if independence really meant the end of colonial (Western) control or merely its mutation. Some argue that post-colonialism is absolutely the only congruent with overt resistance and opposition and that independence has simply meant the installation of a neocolonial form of government by a 'comprador' class (Ashcroft *et. al.*, 1998) comprised of local elites/bourgeois, cartels and corporations. Post-colonial India is a classic example of the later classification. Although it cannot be ruled out that imperial dominance has weakened with the independence of its imperial dominions, it appears to have become more eminent and I substantiate this point by following the linkages of suprastatal organizations and large developmental corporations. The World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural

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<sup>1</sup> For the Hindus she is the river of bliss, born from the body of Shiva, she nourishes the people spiritually. Originating in the Amarkantak plateau, Madhya Pradesh (M.P), the river flows majestically through most of M.P and Gujarat and for a very small distance in Maharashtra.

Development (IFAD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Department of International Development (DFID) and others colluded with the large developmental projects, such as mining, infrastructural and river-valley projects, to serve their avaricious pursuit of profits and power (Refer to Lenin, 1916). A prime example is the mining corporations that form cartels, fix prices, and manage to get their refineries and smelters heavily subsidized, while carefully constructing another face of philanthropy and eco-concerns by funding international conservation and human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Alcoa Tennessee<sup>2</sup> funded the world Wildlife Fund (WWF), Sterlite<sup>3</sup> funded Action Aid, and DFID funded Ekta Parisad (for details refer Padel and Das, 2011). These large corporations also set up their own NGOs as part of their corporate social responsibility to counter their otherwise iniquitous images. The nexus of multi-lateral and bi-lateral financial institutions, global finance capital, mining industries, governments, donor agencies, and NGOs together form an intricate quagmire, which is often successful at serving the large industry capitalist/elitist lobby (Escobar 1995).

The failure of dominant development and its promised freedoms bear testimony to a lack of concern for social and ecological justice (Kovel 2010; Engel-Di Mauro 2010). In response to the neglect of communities across India, operationalized frameworks for sustainability have developed that link economic and ecological wellbeing. At least in the short run, not all dams are profitable and large dams have proved to be highly unsustainable (Dharmadikary 1993). Only 57 per cent of dams studied by the WCD had internal rates of return of 10 percent or more. Half of the dam projects funded by the World Bank were judged as unprofitable in economic terms, with internal rates of return of less than 10 per cent. More than three quarters of the World Bank's dam projects returned less than expected at appraisal. The list of 'failed' dam projects abounds and debates about dam development continue, indicating that there is a development discourse at work, in which the rules of enunciation and disciplinary procedures determine the boundaries within which discussion occurs, thus excluding crucial questions (Ferguson 1990).

Since the 1950s, out of millions displaced due to the construction of development projects, only 25 percent of those were rehabilitated (Fernandes and Raj 1992; Parasuraman, 1997). In addition, the most conservative estimates showed that the displacees were often Adivasis or low-caste non-Adivasis. Despite the fact that Adivasi populations consisted only seven percent of the total Indian population, the proportions of Adivasis displaced by development projects were as high as 40 percent (Fernandes

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<sup>2</sup> One of the largest aluminum companies of America

<sup>3</sup> Sterlite Industries India Ltd. (SLT) is a subsidiary Vedanta a British diversified and integrated metals and mining group. Vedanta wants mineral from the Niyamgiri range is rich in bauxite, from which aluminium is derived. Critics say mining the hills may cause severe environmental damage, and could disrupt the Dongria's way of life. Less than 8000 Dongri Adivasis have lived in the Niyamgiri hills, in a remote part of eastern India's Orissa state for centuries. They survive by gathering fruit, growing small crops of millet and selling jungle plants in the towns at the foot of the hills. The modern world has yet to reach Golgola, the village where they live - there's no electricity, no school, no television, no telephones (last accessed September 19, 2010. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7486252.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7486252.stm)). The environment ministry has ordered Vedanta to "maintain the status quo" and undertake "no further construction activity". However illegal mining activity is still going on (last accessed September 19, 2010. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11596080>).

1994). Resettlement and rehabilitation<sup>i</sup> (R&R) of the displaced is often a sham, if it happens at all. And, R&R falls far short of recouping the dislocation losses and causes future socio-economic and political adversities for the ousted populations. In this article, this is exactly what my analysis on the resettled Tadvis would establish.

This research analyzes how post-colonial principles connect with state-capitalist development agendas, how post-colonial approaches can be reformulated to undertake de-colonized development research, and the potential that a post-colonial perspective can offer in social sciences (see Raghuran and Madge 2006). This research affirms that post-colonial research should, most importantly, problematize power hierarchies; address power relations effectively (Mohan 1999; Nagar and Ali 2003; Chambers 2005); and make ethical participatory research sensitive to participants' previous histories, social-situatedness, positionality and class (England 1994; Gilbert 1994; Nagar 1997; Chattopadhyay forthcoming). Critical geographers<sup>4</sup> contribute towards this method through a de-construction of the western notions on reflexivity (Katz 1994; Kobayashi 1994; Rose 1997; Chattopadhyay forthcoming), representation (Radcliff 1994; Cline-Cole 1999; Tevera 1999) and ethics of international field research (Staheli and Lawson 1994; Raghuram 2007; Sultana 2007).

The mutually constitutive role of a variety of theoretical traditions in informing deliberations about a post-colonial method must be acknowledged (Radcliff 1994; Yeoh 2003) and, most importantly, it should be highlighted that the amount of discourse on post-colonial research still does not represent the everyday challenges of those who 'are researched', and therefore bears little relation to the 'real world'. This presupposes that academics are outside reality, that conversations in universities and conference halls are some how 'unreal' (Dreze 2002) and underestimate the manifold challenges of post-colonial marginalized, sexed and gendered populations. What is needed is an expansion of the notion of the 'real world' to include the 'reality' of the academy so that the academic work can be reshaped to acknowledge and be accountable to wider historical, social and political formations, which can then open up spaces for the academic activists to challenge the material inequalities and injustices (Kitchen and Hubbard 1999; Massey 2000; Raghuram and Madge 2006). As a scholar from the south, I feel a responsibility to problematize the core concept of 'development' following the western modernist discursive formulations that suggest monotonous changes in state and global power relations to control nature, science and technology (Peet and Watts 1993). The transformations of Adivasi Tadvis project the post-colonial Indian state's ideological explanations on the need for large-scale development, its unwillingness to assume accountability, its flimsy commitments to the environment, its partial and limited interpretations of sustainability, and its complete lack of responsibility towards excluding millions of populations from their livelihoods.

### **Exploring the *Tadvi* villages**

When conducting my preliminary surveys, I visited some rehabilitated villages with the help of a leading NGO (NBA) and the state R&R officials, separately. Both of

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<sup>4</sup> My research only focuses on structural, feminist and post-structural epistemologies and methodologies.

these interest groups showed villages, which projected either, a total lack of amenities and discrepancies in compensation or a total success in terms of economic rehabilitation. I located the first survey village through a research institution<sup>5</sup> and then followed my selection criteria, based on my research objectives to select three more villages.

Malawi village, which consisted of Adivasi Tadvis, was one of the first villages rehabilitated in the early 1980s. The villagers of Malawi resisted state rehabilitation efforts with the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), one of the leading NGOs in the valley. Sardar Sarovar is a contested terrain. The state governments, especially Gujarat, were successful in gaining the support of the media, various academic institutions, NGOs and the federal government emphasizing on the project benefits. One of the objectives behind the construction of the SSP was to provide drinking water and irrigate the drought-prone areas in western India. I note, following Lyla Metha (2008, 9) and my study's participant narratives, that 'scarcity', earlier accepted as a fact of life and part of a frugal environment that affected everyone more or less equally. Scarcity is the focal point of strenuous interventions that exacerbated social differences through construction of development projects. Adivasi oustees were in the state-defined abstract spaces [or] rehabilitated spaces, where they had to maximize the production of cash crops to sustain their families. The fortunes of the poorer Adivasi households, especially the households headed by women, declined faster, and those who could not sustain the legal tangles of the market and credit suffered. According to Lefebvre (1991, 77) "social space is produced and reproduced in connection with the forces of production (and with the relations of production)". For Lefebvre, there is a parallel development between the hegemony of capitalism in the modern West and the production of 'abstract space' (Lefebvre 1991).

My narrative analysis raises key questions on community access to public resources, rights to livelihood, and equal share of development gains, as well as the responsibility of the post-colonial Indian state to its marginalized rural communities following the Adivasi socio-economic changes in their rehabilitated spaces. Defending these rights asserts the role of self-determination in local economies that confront the invasion of the state (and global) capitalism. Producing knowledge through generative methods offers insights into social processes and prompts contested narratives that make the voices of the socially excluded Adivasi communities relevant and visible<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, I intersperse my own narratives with the narratives of the displaced Adivasi communities because knowledge should be legitimized, co-produced and shaped through collective agency (Chatterji 2001).

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<sup>5</sup> I was provided help by the Center for Social Sciences (CSS) in South Gujarat during my surveys. This institution, unfortunately support the capitalist-state development agendas that largely imitated western-style of development.

<sup>6</sup> Such frameworks of research and production of knowledge were influenced by neo-Marxist and human rights activism in post-colonial Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka in Asia, and by liberation theology in Colombia and other areas of Latin America (Chatterji 2001).

### Post-colonial development state

India's proximate colonial past and the presence of powerful elites led to the germination of a complex set of socio-spatial relationships of exploitation and domination of resource-poor populations who are usually geographically situated in the interior resource-rich locations (refer to the example of Vedanta, footnote 3). The subjected populations are (1) exploited principally by mechanisms, which may not be 'capitalist proper' and (2) institutionally dominated, both politically and culturally. Their access to resources is restricted and overwhelmingly exploited by local elites to produce goods for profit for the metropolitan markets. At present, the state agencies, development organizations and industrial sector have degraded forests<sup>7</sup> to generate capital<sup>8</sup> at the cost of the economic wellbeing of subordinate populations. This has been a trend since pre-colonial times, when rulers and monarchs rapaciously felled trees of commercial importance (Stebbing 1922; Singh 1986; Rangarajan 1994). Unwritten arrangements for common property management were not recognized by dominant elements in the British administrative hierarchy best exemplified in the Land Acquisition Act VII (1894) (Washbrook 1981). Contemporary forest legislation did not share this implementation or interpretation of eminent domain but chose to rely upon different principles of jurisprudence. The notion of administrative expediency identified by the state institutions as rational, progressive, most sustainable for forests and better serve public interest (Sivaramakrishnan 1995). While Blackstone accepted the general proposition that the institution of (common) property is a natural right, he argued that it was, at the same time, a product of civil government and its laws (taken from Embree 1969). This paternalistic approach, a powerful mix of conviction and coercion, undermined traditional structures of authority<sup>9</sup>. Post-colonial Indian cartels (and the capitalist-state) have efficiently honed these colonial strategies of exploitation and exclusion of the native forest dwellers through appropriation of their rights to land, water, forests under the banner of supportive and sustainable infrastructure for national growth (Saron 1999). Here, I recall Lenin:

Capitalism has been transformed into imperialism. Cartels come to an agreement on the conditions of sale, terms of payment, etc. They divide the markets among

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<sup>7</sup> Forested lands in India are nationalized under the legal and managerial jurisdiction of state agencies, such as the forest or revenue departments. The exclusion of the Adivasis and non Adivasis, who are the primary holders of the forest, is mandated by the state.

<sup>8</sup> As Marx says in Capital vol.3 capital is not a thing, it is rather a definite social relation of production between owners of means of production and labor, which simply takes the form of a thing. Means of production are no more capital in themselves than gold as money. They become capital under the relation between capital and labor. Capitalism is a form of society where the capital-as-money (investing money as capital to make more money) becomes the dominant relation and more specifically when the third form of capital becomes (tendentially) the dominant form of capital relation.

<sup>9</sup> When the European colonizers, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, used the dichotomy between private and common land tenure and ownership. The persistence of the opposition between private and 'common property regimes' indicates that, in international and most national legal systems, historical and customary rights of possession, sovereignty and use of land, forests, forest products and rivers of indigenous people are strongly recognized until 1957 in the International Labor Convention 107 on International and on Indigenous and Tribal Populations, which was expanded in 1989 in a revised Convention 169. These rights include the rights to participate in the management and use of resources.

themselves. They fix the quantity of goods to be produced. They fix prices. They divide the profits among the various enterprises, etc. (Lenin 1916, 21).

The pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial state's custodianship and policing of forests has vitiated human-nature interactions. According to Raju and Chilvers (2009), this is 'internal colonialism'. The concept of internal colonialism has been applied to a variety of geopolitical contexts. In some instances, populations are colonized by an entire state, of which they are a constituent part, through a comprador class (see p. 2). What is generally accepted is the explication of internal colonialism as a coherent concept – incorporating both the 'economic' dimensions of regional exploitation and the 'political' aspects of social group domination. The principal components that led to the transformation of post-colonial India are restructuring economic dependency, state-capitalist and capitalist development of urban sectors, transition from semi-feudal agriculture to capitalist farming, and democratization of a largely authoritarian society. The roots of the current crisis of the post-colonial (independent) Indian development state can be traced to Nehru's zeal for basic industries and "scaling the commanding heights of the economy" through the condescension and shabby implementation of agricultural development and completely neglecting industrial, defense and urban infrastructures. India's dependence on foreign food supplies and the chaotic urban life followed directly from these policies and trends. The growing state sector eventually did scale the commanding heights of the economy but it tended to become inefficient by being sheltered from both domestic and international competition. It also concentrated enormous bureaucratic and political power and economic resources in the hands of the state elites and fettered the initiative and drive of the private sector. Today, the elitist mentality and wasteful lifestyles have created enormous elite-mass gap (for details see Singh 1990).

According to Philip (2009), development projects in the early years of Indian independence were marked by infrastructural development and therefore were ideologically committed to the poor. While more recent investments in development are responding to the needs of the information technology (IT) sector, in the belief that what is good for IT is good for the nation. Here, I argue that even the infrastructural development projects are not to the benefit of the poor, although they are portrayed as such by the media and state policies. The idea that development would bring a specific 'good' that would benefit the members of a community puts Nehru's speech into perspective, as he acclaims the villagers who were to be displaced by the Hirakud Dam by saying that "If you are to suffer, you should suffer in the interest of the country". This rhetoric of development is destructive because the lived social relations of people whose lands are being submerged and those who benefit from increased irrigation and electrification are displaced onto an overall balance-sheet that is an abstraction from the relations of production and exchange within which people inevitably find themselves enmeshed.

I often questioned myself during my surveys and after if India asks for more tolerance toward the destruction caused by development projects. Although projects, like SSP, are still seen as the panacea, 'a magical solution' to all the problems of Indian development state (Dharmadikary 1993), these views are negatively sanctioned worldwide by the constituency of academics, scientists and members of voluntary

agencies who have highlighted the problems of resettlement and environmental damage due to large dams (Goldsmith and Hilyard 1992; McCully 1996). For example, the World Commission of Dams (WCD), in addition to stating that dams have made a considerable contribution to human development, also argues that often water and energy needs can be met through alternative solutions that would fare better than dams on the grounds of equity (WCD 2000). Unfortunately, the governments, in the south, counter these views.

The idea of constructing the SSP dates back to 19<sup>th</sup> century British India. In 1961, the foundation stone was laid by Nehru, at Navagam, Gujarat. From the beginning the SSP has been mired in controversy over its height and over the costs and benefits of the riparian states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh (M.P) and Maharashtra. One of the major concerns was Adivasi populations<sup>10</sup> from these three states having diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds being relocated mostly in Gujarat and Maharashtra because M.P had no land available (NBA, 2000). In order to settle the inter-state disputes, the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award (NWDTA) was formed in 1969, which came into effect in 1979 after reviewing the environmental damages and social and economic impacts on the affected communities. The SSP received funding from the World Bank. However severe criticisms and persistent resistance from locals and activist groups (such as, NBA) forced the Bank to undertake independent surveys to evaluate the sustainability of the SSP and finally withdraw its funding in 1993 due to policy flaws, inter-state disputes and issues of environmental unsustainability. At the national level, the NBA used the existing legal avenues to file public interest litigation at the Supreme Court and the dam height was stalled at 90 meters for some period. Later, with the Supreme Court's approval, the height was raised to 121.82 meters on the condition that effective R&R will be provided by the state governments. At present, the state governments are waiting for a decree from Narmada Control Authority (NCA) to increase the dam height to 138 meters (from Chattopadhyay 2009).

The government anticipates the dam will irrigate 1.8 million hectares of agricultural land and provide water to the drought-prone areas of Kutch and Saurashtra, Gujarat. The skeptics, however, believe that the benefits are grossly overstated. In fact, Narmada water may never reach Kutch. Kutch has been a victim of political propaganda and expediency, claiming that business and political interests in Gujarat's rich agro-industrial belt are being prioritized over those of the poor in drought-prone areas (Mehta, 2001). Despite this evidence, why is there still so much belief in the ostensible bounty of the SSP? In the current model of development, economic growth has come to mean growth with increasing consumption of energy (and other resources), energy with electricity, and electricity with centralized large-scale generation, grid transmission and distribution (or alternatively, with fossil fuels). In this set-up, the energy consumed by a society itself becomes an indicator of its development. It is precisely this paradigm that is used by Narmada Control Authority (NCA) to justify the need for hydropower development:

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<sup>10</sup> The Adivasi identity do not define a fixed profile of traits, but explicate the composition of differences, multiple intersections, and incommensurabilities that are historically, politically, culturally, and contextually situated and shaped, which are constantly transformed in the continuous plays of history, culture, and power (Nagar, 1997, p. 204).

...in per capita consumption of electricity which is regarded as one of the indices of measurement of development, we (India) are far behind the per capita consumption of the developed countries (NCA 1990).

India's obsession with per capita energy consumption, the resultant blind drive to increase energy production is another characteristic feature of today's development paradigm and of the power sector in India. The moot question is, do we really want to achieve the same level of consumption as most western developed nations? If so, then we need to have an installed capacity of about 2,200,000 MW (at today's population), which require an investment of Rs. 6 million in the power sector alone, that is more than 14 years of income for the entire nation. SSP, with its promised 1,450 MW, would go a long way in solving the problem of power shortages and hydropower, being thought of as cheap and clean source, makes SSP an attractive proposal.

Forced migrants can be classified as development-induced oustees, political and environmental refugees, who have 'no realistic choice' over their imminent displacement (Boyle *et al.*, 1998; Li and Rees 2000). The Tadvi narratives confirmed variations in their willingness to dislocate, which was based on their economic conditions, risks of relocation, and lack of choice over the destination<sup>11</sup>. They were neither evading persecution nor escaping from natural disasters, like the political and environmental refugees, but were making way for a state development project (Cernea, 1990) – then the state should bear responsibility to restore their lost assets or re-coup their previous socio-economic status. The inability of the state to re-stabilize the oustees economically produces secondary migration of oustees largely seeking stable jobs as they seek to escape the refugee-like conditions and deteriorating economic standards (Li and Rees 2000). In addition, community and family bonds are affected and many suffer from physical and mental instabilities. One of my participants', from Malawi village, yearned to be relocated far from her parents and siblings. Her relatives were close to the past village but far from the current location. Yeoh (*et al* 2002) and Piper (2006) detail that the common pattern of displaced families is to live under split conditions where non-migrating family members of their previous locations are 'left-behind'. In the case of transnational migration, migrants tend to interact with fellow workers at the destination. Contrarily, the internally displaced migrants face difficulties in assimilating or integrating with host families. I found no significant mutual collaboration or social interaction among relocated Tadvis and Tadvi host communities.

### **Legends and classification of the Tadvis**

The term Tadvi is derived from the word tatvi where 'tat' means riverbank. The Tadvis were originally Bhils, who migrated and settled along the banks of Narmada and Tapi to avoid a devastating famine. There are different legends about the migration of Tadvis and the famine. The first tale is purely mythological. The second story explains that this famine was the result of colonial oppression, dominance and control of agriculture. The British enforced sedentary agriculture in place of shifting cultivation, and forced the

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<sup>11</sup> Refer to Oliver-Smith (1996), Bhaviskar (1995), Dwivedi (1999) for similar analysis on other Adivasis of SSP.

Adivasi populations to grow cash and plantation crops. Fertile lands were expropriated from cultivators. Those Adivasi peasants who defied the colonial orders were pushed to forests and to areas with inferior soil. Later on, state forestry laws were imposed to further control the commercially valuable forests and completely restrict Adivasi rights to forests, such as prevent them from selling minor forest products and *toddy* (locally made alcohol). The colonial revenue exactions, depletion of natural resources and supervision over Adivasi lands and livelihood systems made survival even more precarious. Famine stalked the lands in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, which forced the Bhils to migrate to the banks of Narmada and Tapti in Gujarat and M.P (Das 1982).

The Tadvis are divided into two subgroups, Dhankas and Tetariyas. Both groups claimed to be caste Hindus with Rajput origins. I was exposed through Tadvis narratives to a more popular classification of them as Bhagats (reformed) and non-Bhagats (traditional). The Hinduization of the Adivasis started through religious reform movements in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Das 1982; Joshi, 1983). The Adivasis in the Narmada valley have recently begun to negotiate with Hindu nationalism after a wave of Hinduization by Guru Vishwanath when several Adivasi hamlets were transformed into Bhagats (literally meaning devotees) joining Hindu sects, worshipping gods from Hindu pantheon, establishing ties with Hindu city people, renouncing Adivasi practices, and ostracizing non-Bhagat Adivasis. However, from the observations of Bhaviskar (2005), Adivasis along the Narmada river who stayed aloof from Hinduization, are now simultaneously practicing Bhilala rituals and worshipping with incense sticks like caste Hindus. The unusual syncretism makes it hard to classify Adivasis from caste Hindus. The religious differentiation of Adivasis into Bhagat and non-Bhagat, those who claim to be Hindu and those who do not, is not a uni-linear historical trend.

During my surveys, I felt the lifestyles of Bhagats are a close match to the Hindu Brahmins. They practice vegetarianism, total abstinence from alcohol, cleanliness, and daily worship while the non-Bhagats uphold their traditional habits and maintain non-vegetarian diets and drink alcohol. Although this is not a caste division, Bhagats hold a superior position over non-Bhagats. I frequently came across a common experience of power and influence wielded by Bhagats which was contoured during the reform movements. For instance, my Adivasi field assistant, Sunil who was a Bhagat, pointed at his neighbor announcing brazenly “he is a Bhagat too but when he scoffs meat, he hangs his sacred thread on a tree branch”. Sunil’s sarcasm seemed to allege that his neighbor is a fake Bhagat because he does not maintain the ‘higher quality of life’ following a strict vegetarian diet and Hindu rituals. I also observed that most of the children attended schools, and youths traveled to towns or cities for higher education. Educated in government schools, fluent in Hindi, and dressed in western outfits, part of the younger generations were assimilated with the urban cultures. There were significant cultural differences among same Adivasi groups across the villages. For example, the Tadvis in host villages followed separate customs than the Tadvis of resettled villages and for sure there were unique differences across the Adivasi groups like the Bhils, Bhilalas, Ratwas and Tadvis, now disappearing. Now, almost every other family has one member working in the city either in government or private jobs and all my participants aspired to send at least one of their sons to the city for employment.

These phenomena can have one more explanation which links to the precarious survival conditions for resettled Tadvis as they are totally dependent on cash crops. A failure in reaching the targeted productivity means borrowing monies for production of crops in the next season, for sustenance and unable to pay the loans push some in heavy debts and penury. The inequality in distribution of compensation created spaces of hostility and contestation. Many villagers who received land were incapable of making connections with markets, speculating market gains and gradually entering into considerable debt (Dhagamwar *et al.*, 1995). Collectively, all these factors created differences among community members. Incidences of rape, feuds, boycotting of cultural events (marriages) between groups are prevalent. (Chattopadhyay 2009).

Here, the analysis of social capital is useful. The idea that social capital constituted by social relations is practical (Woolcock 1998) but social relations, as per social-capital experts, are class relations that emphasize the moral economy or mutual assistance across social and economic division (World Bank 2001; Putnam 1993), which are assumed to benefit society as a whole. I question this argument, from my observations because the above can only hold true if there are no class and other conflicts of interest in a society (Levi 1996; after Raju 2006). According to Raju (2006), the traditional and western discourses of social capital disengage the working class from the ownership of land, control of resources, means of production, making the main source of income the sale of labor power. The social resources of the working class and its networks and connections tend to be indeed socially and spatially limited and, without resources, informal rules of sharing in a place (neighborhood) are difficult to sustain for long (in their active form). The production of working class social capital is also enabled and constrained by class processes<sup>12</sup>.

Coming back to the Hinduization of Adivasis, a greater fluency in city (*bazaaria*) culture (Bhaviskar 1995) among some Adivasis coincides with this moment of Hinduization. The articulation between an urban, commercial culture dominated by upper caste Hindus and the culture of political Hinduism needs to be situated within an older discourse of indigeneity in India. Ideologies of Hindutva fervently subscribe to the idea of Hindus as indigenous people, historically marginalized by Muslim invaders and rulers, two hundred years of British rule, and through the promotion of Christianity. From the Hindutva perspective, Hinduism is the only original religion of the Indian subcontinent; all others are foreign and corrupt (Bhaviskar 2003). According to Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) or national patriotic organization popularly known as Sangha<sup>13</sup>, only for Hindus do the boundaries of the nation *rastrabhoomi* coincide with

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<sup>12</sup> Here the concept of organicity of classes is crucial, as it refers to 'primordial relations', the particular class-specific ways of life and culture, the common outlook and the interpersonal ties within which the working class is embedded (Bodeman and Spohn 1986) (although primordial relations can also create disunity in the working class).

<sup>13</sup> RSS is a right wing Hindhu Nationalist voluntary, paramilitary, allegedly militant organization. These characteristics of RSS are denied by its members and some others as a political conspiracy. RSS was banned by the British, and trice by the Indian government after independence, first in 1948 when Nathuram Godse a former member, who left the party later, assassinated Mahatma Gandhi, then during emergency (1975–1978) and after the demolition of Babri Masjid, a mosque built in the birthplace of Rama, the epic hero, in 1992.

the motherland *matribhoomi* and scared land *punjabhoomi*. In claiming indigeneity<sup>14</sup> exclusively for Hindus, the Sangh erases centuries of Muslim presence, completely ignores the historical fact that Aryans<sup>15</sup> who are the forbearers of upper-caste Hindus were also of foreign origin. This RSS ideology informs the production of a particular discourse on Hinduism, generating a specific kind of knowledge, showing that knowledge cannot be presupposed or constituted without power relations (Foucault 1977, 27-28). To grasp this, I quote Bhaviskar (2005):

Facism, nationalism and religiosity combine with Hindutva ideology, the criteria of imputed origins and purity determining patterns of inclusion and exclusion .... Is nearly conflated with religious identity, such that religious affiliation becomes primary criterion for recognition as legitimate citizens. To be fully Indian and indigenous is to be Hindus (Bhaviskar 2005, 5107).

The question of Adivasi affiliation has only been intermittently a focal point over the years, coming into prominence when there have been reports of them converting to Christianity (Xaxa 2009). Hindu fundamentalists<sup>16</sup> have generally assumed that Adivasis are default Hindus. The contemporary cultural politics of being Adivasi is contentious in novel ways, with religious identity taking on an entirely new significance in novel ways, in opposition to Muslims and Christians.

Since the 1990s, Hinduization's current wave has been manifested in the mushrooming of roadside temples all over the Narmada valley. The tall saffron painted brick and cement structures, usually dedicated to Hanuman and built with donations from local Hindu traders, announce the shared faith of Adivasis and caste Hindus and the intrusion of Sangh parivar (parivar meaning family) to integrate Bhagats as Hindus. Sangh parivar, also run village schools where Adivasi children are tutored in Hindu nationalism (Sundar 2004; Benei 2000). The Bhagat families are assisted to perform pilgrimages to important Hindu temples in Gujarat. Campaigns to incorporate Adivasis into the Hindu narrative of awakening *jagruti*, righteous assertion against the encroachment of Muslims and Christian foreign invaders, contain echoes of older struggles with very different meanings and ends<sup>17</sup>. Scholars also commit that the struggle for Adivasi rights sees the participation of Adivasis in the anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat as a conceptual challenge. The standard explanation, according to Lancy Lobo, seeks to deny the agency of Adivasis, claiming that they were incited by outsiders:

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<sup>14</sup> Muslims look to Mecca, Christians to Vatican and Sikhs and Buddhists are considered to be lapsed Hindus and thus not a problem. These primordial loyalties determine patriotism and the politics of belongingness.

<sup>15</sup> RSS has funded archeological studies to 'prove' that Aryans did not migrate from central Asia 4000 years ago but were native to the subcontinent (Witzel and Farmer 2000).

<sup>16</sup> They are supported by the Indian state classification of scheduled tribes as Hindus unless explicitly claimed otherwise. This classification is also political because, in colonial times, religion of the scheduled tribes were recorded as 'animist' to distinguish them from peasant communities who were largely caste Hindus. After independence, nationalist Antropologists argued against attributing a distinctive religious identity to the Adivasis by claiming them as 'backward' Hindus (Ghurya 1959).

<sup>17</sup> The seeds of Hindutva bore fruits in late 1990s. There had been an earlier incident in 1988, where four Catholic nuns were raped by a mob of Adivasis who broke into their church in Jhabua district, north of Narmada valley. In 1997-99, Christian Adivasis were attacked, their churches were set on fire in south Gujarat and MP, priests were stripped and beaten. Christian Adivasis were forcibly administered *sughukaran* (purification rite) to reclaim their souls (Xaxa 2000, 23).

In the tribal areas..., there has been a history of economic exploitation between Bohra Muslim traders and tribal people. This has been exploited by the Hindutva brigade, who gave it a communal color. In many places tribal people had been instigated to loot. The Bhil people in this area are extremely poor. This district has suffered drought conditions. The politicians and Hindutvavadis with complicity of government bureaucracy carried out the entire operation of using Adivasis to loot and arson (Lobo 2002, 4846-47).

Adivasis in western India have experienced a generational shift too. The children of those who resisted against the SSP for rights to forest, land, common property resources, seeks other political futures as they inhabit the world differently from their parents and forefathers. They learn to rebel and move on at the expense of Adivasi Christians or non-Bhagats (not reformed or traditional Adivasis) who continue to practice the religious forms specific to them.

### **Gambodi and Malawi**

Gambodi has no recorded history. It was a village inhabited by the Tadvis with 250 households and a total population of approximately 1,500 people. Gambodi was located in the Nandod taluka, Vadodara district of Gujarat. The hilly parts of the village were interrupted by steep slopes and occasional monadnocks. This ruggedness in the terrain divided the village into clusters. In the early 1920s, Gambodi had two broad settlement clusters, Upla (upper) and Nichla (lower) based on the geographic terrain. The settlement clusters consisted of less than ten houses. By the 1980s the number of settlements increased to 200, distributed in small clusters, dispersed across the village, owing to the nucleation of extended families (Das 1982; Joshi 1983).

The villagers' economic wellbeing depended on forest products, cattle, and cultivated crops. The forest resources and cultivation provided a variety in their diets. They obtained sufficient quantities of edible leaves, fruits, nuts, roots and vegetables. Their dependence on cash was limited; they needed money only for buying medicines and clothes. Malawi, on the other hand, is a planned village in which 80 households are relocated from Gambodi. It is situated in the Daboi Taluka, Vadodara District of Gujarat. According to Ram Bhai, village sarpanj (head), many families from Gambodi are resettled in different villages, as the entire village could not be relocated in one village. This led to a detachment of connections which villagers had with their family and friends. The Malawi rehabilitated village is now divided into many small settlement clusters. Each cluster consists of four to five houses with dirt roads separating them. The entire village is connected with a tarred road, which leads to cities and towns. Buses and different kinds of conveyance are available throughout the day.

All the oustees (who were 18 years or older) received house plots (502 square meters), a pair of draught animals (or Rs. 4,500), and two hectares of irrigable land. The villagers always saved some house plot to grow vegetables or food crops. And, many of them preferred to stay as extended families and build their houses combining the house

plots to optimize the use of land. All the villagers have their cultivatable lands within a distance of zero to three miles from their house plots. Influential villagers like village chiefs and large landowners, received cultivatable lands close to their houses. The R&R officials bribed these villagers with better farmlands to influence the opinion of the entire village on resettlement. I observed this pattern repeating in other rehabilitated villages. The distribution of land therefore highlighted the ability of some villagers to acquire better and convenient plots.

The center of the village has a school, a playground, and a community center. At three points, the village has potable water spigots. The village also has a small grocery store where spices, oil, grains, packed snacks, soaps, detergents and other household necessities are available, upon which the villagers are reliant. Their current dependence on markets for subsistence and readymade everyday consumption goods, such as spices, cooking oil, medicines, soaps, worry many of them. In their past villages, they used to depend on the forests for most of these items, like the mahua bark was pressed for a delicious cooking oil, various medicinal herbs and leaves were of great importance (refer to p. 16 for the variety of ways forests were used). The following narrative relates one villager's concern over their increased expenditure:

Government officials and urban dwellers keep telling us that rehabilitated villages are better because they provide access to many consumer goods, public amenities and better connections to cities. But they often ignore the fact that we will need money to access these resources and facilities. In the cities, one incurs water and electricity costs. We are already paying for electricity but I doubt that our people will make enough money to buy water and all other utilities. If we do not get a good harvest in one season, we cannot hire tractors or power-driven pumps or buy seeds and fertilizers. This brings down the productivity level drastically in the subsequent seasons and forces us to take loans to offset the losses (Subadra Bhen, female respondent, age 52, Malawi Village, Interview with author, May 23, 2004).

The severity of the drought is felt more acutely than in the past (Falkenmark *et al.*, 1990). The Tadvis narratives emphasized that the intensity of drought has increased (Murishwar and Fernandes 1988) (interviews with villagers in Mehta 2001). Based on the narratives and my observations, I understand that there are several human-induced factors that are at play the increase of water scarcity and droughts. Over the last five decades, de-vegetation has certainly taken place due to an increase in commercial logging activities in the region. After 1948, institutional restrictions ceased to exist and there was a boom in unchecked logging. Trees were cut down and smuggled. This had serious repercussions on the vegetal cover of the entire region (Kutch, Gujarat, Saurashtra) (stated in interviews with Ecologists in Mehta 2001). At present, the Tadvis are cutting down existing shrubs and bushes for firewood. Yet, since small trees and shrubs are rapidly disappearing, they are equally concerned, as the environmentalists, for de-vegetation, although for very different reasons.

Tadvis are now trying to grow shrubs in the rim areas of their agricultural fields and make use of straws from cotton, tuvar, etc. for cooking fuel. The resettled Tadvis preferred to defecate in open spaces, like they did in their past villages, but due to the

reduction of bushes and the denial of the Patels from letting the Adivasis use their plots for defecation many Adivasis are considering to construct toilets. Due to lack of grazing lands, cattle can no longer be the primary source of wealth. Also, the wild growth of *prosopis juliflora* has led to loss of grass cover. *Prosopis juliflora* (popularly known as ganda bawal, literally wild or mad Acacia)<sup>18</sup> neither attracts rain nor gives moisture to the soil even though it might conserve water within its own system. Tadvi cultivators and pastoralists have lost cattle that fed on this specie in the resettled village and further experienced difficulties in getting safe and plentiful yields of fodder and forage.

At Gambodi, villagers owned large herds of goats, 20 to 30 cows and buffalos, and countless hens. Men sold goats or hens if they required money for household expenses or for other small expenditures. The women earned some cash selling cow's milk for small household purchases. Prior to resettlement, cattle were a primary source of wealth and were tended as household pets. Sudden relocation reduced their access to grazing areas and fodder. Villagers' narratives and R&R discourses claim that the biggest crisis faced in rehabilitated sites is the income from the cattle (for similar discussions on farm productivity crisis follow Hakim 1997; Hakim 2000).

No doubt, bad water management practices have also led to a decline in vegetational growth. Damming of rivers has reduced the natural fertilization process through the silt brought by rivers. What were traditionally grasslands are now dependent only on their rejuvenation (Ferroukhi 1994, 41). Small shrubs are removed for firewood. Almost every open space is used for cultivating crops for capital or subsistence. All Tadvis practice cultivation; diverse livelihoods practiced in their former villages are totally absent due to the lack of resources and the ardent need to generate profits from agriculture. Mehta (2001) argues that under these circumstances, it is unlikely that only de-vegetation lead to changes in precipitation rates (Gornitz 1987; Gornitz 1987; Water management Forum 1987), de-vegetation can reduce soil moisture (Falkenmark *et al.*, 1990, 30), de-vegetation can lead to denudation due to greater run-off which can inhibit the resupply of underground aquifers. The later can be a plausible explanation for why farmers and pastoralists complain about the difficulties in getting plentiful yields and a reduction in grass coverage. I observed similar problems faced by Adivasis in the submerging villages. In addition, cultivation of commercial crops; heavy reliance on pesticides, fertilizers, and high yielding, rain-fed crop varieties; and the usage of farm machineries such as tractors can also contribute to a decline in the groundwater table, de-vegetation and degradation of soil.

All together, these factors must have effect on climate change, which again obfuscates the real problem (Olsen 1987). The term 'dwindling rainfall'<sup>19</sup>, according to Mehta (2001), is a handy way to express several phenomena that, at face value, seem

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<sup>18</sup> Even though *prosopis juliflora* is a coppicing and hardy plant that has a high tolerance for salinity, it has spread in an uncontrolled fashion all over Kutch. This is due to the fact that its seeds are germinated in animal faeces (Bharara 1993, 3). The spread of *prosopis juliflora* has both undermined Kutch's biodiversity and has caused a host of problems for pastoralists rearing small ruminants and cattle. Save buffaloes, livestock cannot ruminate its pods, resulting in loss of appetite, paralysis or even death.

<sup>19</sup> Lyla Mehta (2001) details similar finding in her research on Kutch where she superimposes the rainfall data with villagers' and environmentalists' narratives to establish that although the volume of rainfall has not changed when viewed longitudinally, de-vegetation and changes in soil moisture have led to tangible problems for people in rural Kutch.

unrelated. It also helps to blur and obscure the popular discourse of the anthropogenic dimension of water scarcity. The Tadvu dietary patterns have shifted with changes in environment, landscape, choice of crops produced and no access to commonly used resources.

### **Economic conditions**

The Malawi villagers need a stable income for agricultural and household expenses. Moreover, the villagers' economic conditions depend upon their efficiency in producing generous amounts of food and cash crops. It is critical for them to reap a good harvest in one season to have the needed money for the next cropping season. Villagers who are inexpert in using modern farming methods are falling behind those who are obtaining higher crop yields. Subsequently, those who received infertile and uneven lands are falling in the debt trap. Abnormal monsoons and repeated crop failures have worsened existing conditions of many villagers. Difficulties in cultivating lands were also prevalent in Gambodi but availability of cattle, forests, rivers, and different livelihoods allowed them to maintain an average economic condition even during the non-cropping seasons or at the times of crop failures. Moreover, their dependence on cash was low. In the past, the villagers did not experience the enormous pressure they face now to make profits from the sale of their harvest.

During colonial times, forests were categorized into three classes: class I forests were totally closed for their protection; class II forests provided certain rights of pasturage and timber to the villagers; and class III forests were exclusively used by peasants. The villagers were confused about the legal status of the class III forests, as it was not clear who held the actual proprietary right—the state or them. The caveat was that they were not allowed to barter or sell any of the forest produce. Thus their rights to the forests were superficial because the colonial state would not give up its monopoly on timber trade. Under this confused state of control over class III forests, the villagers opted to take more from the forests than they did when they had absolute control over the forests. The Adivasis evaded the forest laws on a daily basis as a protest to the covert policies (Gadgil and Guha 1992).

In Gambodi, Adivasis cultivated some land. Only a few of them worked in other villages as temporary laborers. The Adivasis used the forests, paying taxes in some areas while they encroached upon the forested lands and lived on the encroached land for generations in other areas. Again in the latter case, the Adivasis thought the lands were theirs as they had used them for many generations. Some Adivasis did not completely understand revenue terms like *patta*, *parampok*, *kharij katha* (parcel of land, dues). They did not prioritize legalizing their property. But at the time of displacement and compensation distribution, those who did have legal documents to prove the ownership of the lands were easily labeled as 'encroachers' by the state apparatuses. The R&R policies were improved, thanks to NBA protests. Today, all Adivasi oustees irrespective of their previous holdings have received some cultivable lands, house plots, draught animals and other amenities. Although the current policy is not free from discrepancies, it nevertheless salvaged many oustees from sheer marginalization and landlessness.

In Gambodi, agriculture was primarily rain-dependent. Irrigation mechanisms were unknown so all growing fields were along the river. The villagers either practiced mono-cropping or double-cropping. The first cropping cycle lasted from 120 to 135 days during monsoons. The second cycle consisted of growing winter crops along the well-watered river valley. The soil was grainy so crops grown were coarse.

Different varieties of food crops cultivated were *jowar* (sorghum bicolor), *bajri* (*pennisetum typhoides*), *gahum* (wheat), *makhai* (maize), *dangar* (inferior rice, rice) and cash crops like *kapas* (cotton) and *makfali* (groundnut). The two pulses commonly grown were *tuvar* (arhar) and *urad* (*phaseolus mungo*). The acreage dedicated to cotton and groundnut was low. According to the villagers, growing cotton was dicey, as it required heavy investment but unpredictable returns. Only a few wealthy farmers with large holdings devoted some land for cotton. They also grew different kinds of vegetables like *divela*, *arinda*, *badri*, *bhinda* (*abelmoschus esculentus*), *bunti* (*echinocloa crus*), *chowli* (*vigna unguiculata*), *kodra* (*paspalum scrobiculatum*), *dhudi* (water gourd) in the forest rim areas. Forest products included berries, roots, tubers, and leaves. A variety of leaves (*timbru ka pan*, *asitra*, *gundar*, *kanka pan*, *sag ka pan* and *achidraka pan* – pan generally means leaf) were used for making plates, house roofs, roof frames, fences, and as medicinal herbs. The villagers rolled one type of leaf to make local cigarettes, called *bidi*. Some leaves (like betel leaves) were chewed, and some were used to add flavor to cooked food. Different kinds of trees like bamboo and mahuda were grown for making houses, fences, and roof frames. Mahuda bark was pressed for extremely scrummy oil, and the mahuda dhooli (flower) was fermented into a local alcohol. Other forest products were honey and grass. Villagers earned some cash from forest produces on a daily basis. Some bartered palm liquor and other products with grains, clothes, medicines, salt and oil. The importance of forests and the villagers' access to forest resources waned with dislocation.

The resettled villagers muse on the variety of vegetables and edible leaves they used to get from the forests in Gambodi, which they do not get in Malawi. Everything they need for consumption has to be either grown or bought from the market. Some food and cash crops are grown at Malawi but larger quantities are saved for sale. Unlike in the past, now the major emphasis is on acquiring higher productivity for cash crops (cotton and groundnut). Currently, cotton is the main cash crop. In between cotton crops, food crops such as *tuvar*, *urad*, maize, wheat, *bajri*, and *jowar* are grown. While rice was commonly grown in Gambodi, very little rice is grown in Malawi. Food crops are hoarded for annual household consumption. The chaffs of cotton, wheat, *jowar*, and *bajri* are used to make fire for cooking food, and to make fences, or to thatch roofs. Kuber bhai described the same in his narrative:

Food crops are grown between cash crops. Vegetables are grown in the boundaries of cultivable lands. The food grains produced in our backyard are used entirely for household consumption. Small trees and dry plants are grown, for a variety of purposes, in the rim areas of main agricultural land or in the house plot. We think of these alternatives because we do not have the forests any more (Kuber bhai, male respondent, age 37, Malawi Village, Interview with author, June 23, 2004).

Since the number of cattle has declined, the non-Bhagats have to purchase meat and fish. Hence consumption of these items is rare and expensive in Malawi. Rotis, rice (rarely), and dal are staples. They buy many vegetables to diversify their diet. Most of the village buy cooking oil and spices (turmeric and chili powder) for preparing food. Their dependence on readymade food and spices has increased with their steady linkages with markets and cities. Consuming tea without milk is common as they sell milk for cash.

Villagers are constricted to a very specific occupational niche – agriculture. The entire village practices farming; Malawi cannot support other forms of livelihoods. Therefore, those who did not receive fertile lands, or any compensated land are at an unsteady condition. A year before my surveys, most of the village faced crop failure that is explained here:

In last year's rain tuvar and then jowar were spoiled. Since these are coarser varieties, water is needed while sowing, then minimal water is required when the crop grows. I used fertilizers and pests affected pesticides after my crops but I was ignorant about the right proportions and accurate timing. Moreover, spending money on them made no difference. I took loans to cultivate for the next season and to meet household consumption needs. The crop failure has put me under a heavy debt. Many villagers lost good acreage of cotton and food crops, in its entirety, by rain and disease (Kuber bhai, male respondent, age 37, Malawi Village, Interview with author, June 23, 2004).

In Malawi, a few wealthy cultivators own tractors, winnowers, and water pumps which are hired by the rest of the village. Resettled Tadvīs are still learning to effectively use fertilizers, pesticides and varieties of hybrid seeds.

### **Conclusion**

Primitive accumulation of previously held resources is not simply an enabler of commercialization to facilitate market expansion, the creation of wealth markets and increased wealth creation. It also includes a process of differentiation, which occurs between the owners of capital and those who sell their labor power. The creation of the first involves the concentration of capital and "the growth of the international character of the capitalist economy". The second involves divorcing the "producers from the means of production". According to Marx the promotion of capitalism does not require just the accumulation of physical assets because capital is not only property but also a social relation (Raju 2009). It therefore requires the "annihilation of self-earned property, i.e., the expropriation of the laborer": of their own means of production/subsistence (Marx 1976, 846).

In other words, for capitalism to survive and grow, there not only has to be an increase in capital accumulation, which can occur in the form of technological infrastructure such as large dams, but there also has to be 'free labor', in the sense that a group of people has to exist which has no ties to a subsistence base and this can only be

possible if there no alternative to working for wages for someone else. Viewed from this angle, the disjuncture becomes apparent between positive appraisals of dams as increasing wealth through raising the forces of production in agriculture and the reality that perhaps 80 million people worldwide have been displaced fits into a 'familiar neoliberal jigsaw' (Whitehead 2003, 4227). Marx once described this as "the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market; its principle object being to deliver an exploitable global proletariat into the hands of capital" (Marx 1906).

Often viewed as a negative 'side-effect' of large dam construction, the displacement of subsistence-oriented populations, tied to land and forest resources in various customary ways, can instead be seen as a necessary part of capital accumulation. And, the 'enclosure of resources', including water, is not a hidden cost but an integral feature of large dam projects. Their very technology, with submergence areas flooding entire territories of ethnic groups, make them one the most robust means of breaking common property regimes in land forests and water 'resources'. Their high initial capital investment with the average in 2001 of \$3 billion, ensures that powerful interests will work to ensure dam completion once the project has received approval from national and multilateral agencies. Finally, their enclosure of water guarantees that control over rivers is divested from the communities that formerly lived on or near its banks and placed in the hands of powerful governments and increasingly multinational corporations (refer to Whitehead 2003).

Over centuries, Adivasi communities have been constantly fighting unequal battles against the Marthas, the Mughals, the British and now the national government. The Adivasis have experienced an erosion of their tradition, culture, value systems, autonomy and material base. At present, their lives are constantly controlled by various state development agendas, which benefit the urbanites in far-off towns and cities. In the name of development, the Adivasi communities along the banks of the River Narmada are once again detached from their forests, river, lands, and all the resources they subsisted on for decades. A complete restoration of the lives of the project-affected displacees has never been possible. Changes that are not seen as a resettlement problem are changing dressing patterns and dialects, along with the nature of work. Another vital change is that now villagers aspire for higher education and city jobs. Though some of these changes can be argued as being positive, they have increased the household expenditure and, as a result, many Adivasi families are in debt. Villagers are befuddled over the various spatial transformations from R&R.

The resettlement-linked changes are loss of food security, infertility of land, crop failure, increasing expenditure, dependence on cash, diminishing open spaces and a lack of common spaces like rivers, forests, and grazing lands. Apart from these, several other growing concerns at the community level are the increase in hostility and animosity due to economic differences. Civic amenities are provided but not maintained by the state R&R apparatus, and the villagers are not trained to maintain them. The drinking water pumps are unusable. The village women have to walk more than two to three miles to fetch potable water from neighboring villages. School buildings are constructed but they only have a few teachers to handle large sections of students. Mobile health vans are visiting twice a week but once R&R is complete, they will be discontinued. Even when the mobile health vans are functional, people prefer the more

expensive city hospitals, due to the van's inefficiency in providing adequate health care. If such problems appear after ten years of displacement, then how will be their living conditions in a few decades from now?

These perplexities of life cause anxiety for many villagers, and they appeared to be fundamental to me as a human geographer. The present generation of Tadvīs have already adapted to the mainstream urban culture, which is causing a rapid erosion of their previous cultural linkages and subsistence needs. The Tadvīs of Malawi neither resemble the uniqueness of culture of their previous generations nor assimilate with the bazaarias. So, the question still lingers: What benefits has SSP promised and at what costs (financial, social, human, environmental)? What impact will it have on the long-term resolution of variegated problems faced by the oustees and the environment? Are there any better alternatives that can bring similar benefits?

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