

Narmada Bachao Andolan :

Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) is an Indian **social movement** spearheaded by native tribals (*adivasis*), **farmers**, **environmentalists** and **human rights activists** against a number of large dam projects across river **Narmada**, which flows through the states of **Gujarat**, **Madhya Pradesh** and **Maharashtra**. **Sardar Sarovar Dam** in Gujarat is one of the biggest dams on the river and was one of the first focal points of the movement. It is part of the Narmada Dam Project, whose main aim is to provide irrigation and electricity to people of the above states.

The mode of campaign under NBA includes court actions, **hunger strikes**, rallies and gathering support from notable film and art personalities. The Narmada Bachao Andolan, with its leading spokespersons **Medha Patkar** and **Baba Amte**, have received the **Right Livelihood Award** in 1991

After India's independence in 1947, under the newly formed government headed by **Jawaharlal Nehru**, investigations were carried out to evaluate mechanisms for using water from the **Narmada River**,^[2] which flows into the **Arabian Sea** after passing through the states of **Madhya Pradesh**, **Gujarat**. The formation of the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal was triggered by interstate differences in implementing schemes and sharing of water by the **Government of India** on 6 October 1969 to adjudicate over the disputes.^[3] The tribunal investigated the matters referred to it and responded after more than 10 years. The Narmada Tribunal aimed to set out conditions regarding the resettlement and rehabilitation of those displaced by the dams.^[4] On 12 December 1979, after ten years of investigation, the decision as given by the tribunal, with all the parties at dispute binding to it, was released by the Indian government.^[3]

As per the tribunal's decision, 30 major, 135 medium, and 3000 small dams, were granted approval for construction, including raising the height of the **Sardar Sarovar dam**.^[3] This decision was motivated by the assumption that it would provide water to around forty million people, irrigation, and electricity to people in the region.^[5] Thus, the construction began.

In 1985, after hearing about the Sardar Sarovar dam, Medha Patkar and her colleagues visited the project site and noticed that project work being checked due to an order by the **Ministry of Environment and Forests**, Government of India. The reasons for this was cited as "non-fulfillment of basic environmental conditions and the lack of completion of crucial studies and plans".^[6] The people who were going to be affected by the construction of the dam were given no information but the offer for rehabilitation.^[7] Villagers weren't consulted and weren't asked for a feedback on the assessment that had taken place. Furthermore, the officials related to the project had not even checked the land records and updated them.^[7] While **World Bank**, the financing agency for this project, came into the picture, Patkar approached the Ministry of Environment to seek clarifications. She realized, after seeking answers from the ministry, that the project was not sanctioned at all and wondered as to how funds were even sanctioned by the World Bank. After several studies, they realized that the officials had overlooked the post project problems.^[8]

Through Patkar's channel of communication between the government and the residents, she provided critiques to the project authorities and the governments involved. At the same time, her group realized that all those displaced were given compensation only for the immediate standing crop and not for displacement and rehabilitation