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**WHOSE NATION? WHOSE
DEVELOPMENT?
RESISTING ORIENTALISM IN THE
NARMADA VALLEY**



October-
2011-
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In Jobat,
Alirajpur
district,
Madhya
Pradesh.



How can we accept that what the government says in the name of your **development** is for our development, when our lands have been submerged and we are not even compensated for that?We are left out in every part of the action of the state. If we ask for rehabilitation we get jails and lathis, what kind of state and what kind of rule of law is this? **They don't see that we are equal citizens in this country.**

Surbhan from Kakrana



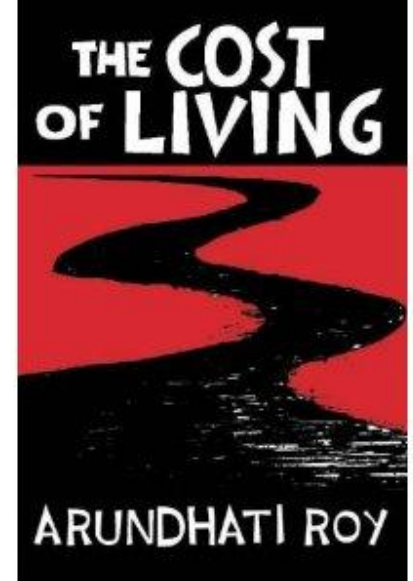
The context

The construction of the Sardar Sarovar, a megadam at the border between Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat.



Since the 80s , the Narmada Valley was theatre of ongoing demonstrations and protests by the NBA (Save the Narmada Movement), local groups of village people and *adivasis*.

Writing and marching



- June 1999 : Publication of **'The Greater Common Good'**
“I felt compelled to set aside Joyce and Nabokov...”
- July-August 1999: “Rally for the Valley”

Another country, another world?

- A huge percentage of the displaced are adivasis (57.6 per cent in the case of the Sardar Sarovar dam). Include Dalits and the figure becomes obscene. ... The ethnic otherness of their victims takes some of the pressure off the nation builders. It's like having an expense account. Someone else pays the bills. People from another country. Another world. India's poorest people are subsidizing the lifestyle of the richest. Did I hear someone say something about the world's biggest democracy?

Arundhati Roy, *The Greater Common Good*, 1998, p. 19

The legal framework

- Land Acquisition Act (1894) and the Forest Acts (1927-)
- The forest dwellers of India became poor in the first place because the British destroyed their claims to customary occupancy rights and took away their resources, and because the Indian state has continued to do so.

Chhatrapati Singh, *Common Property and Common Poverty: India's Forests, Forest Dwellers, and the Law*, 1986, p. 46

Orientalisms...

- The “Adivasis” find their name everywhere in the development register... but they are only present as a lacking other, as lifeless figures of pathology out of sync with the modern capitalist economy that the discourse of development has set as the norm(al)

Dhar and Chkrabarty, *Dislocation and Resettlement in Development*, 2010, p. 44.

