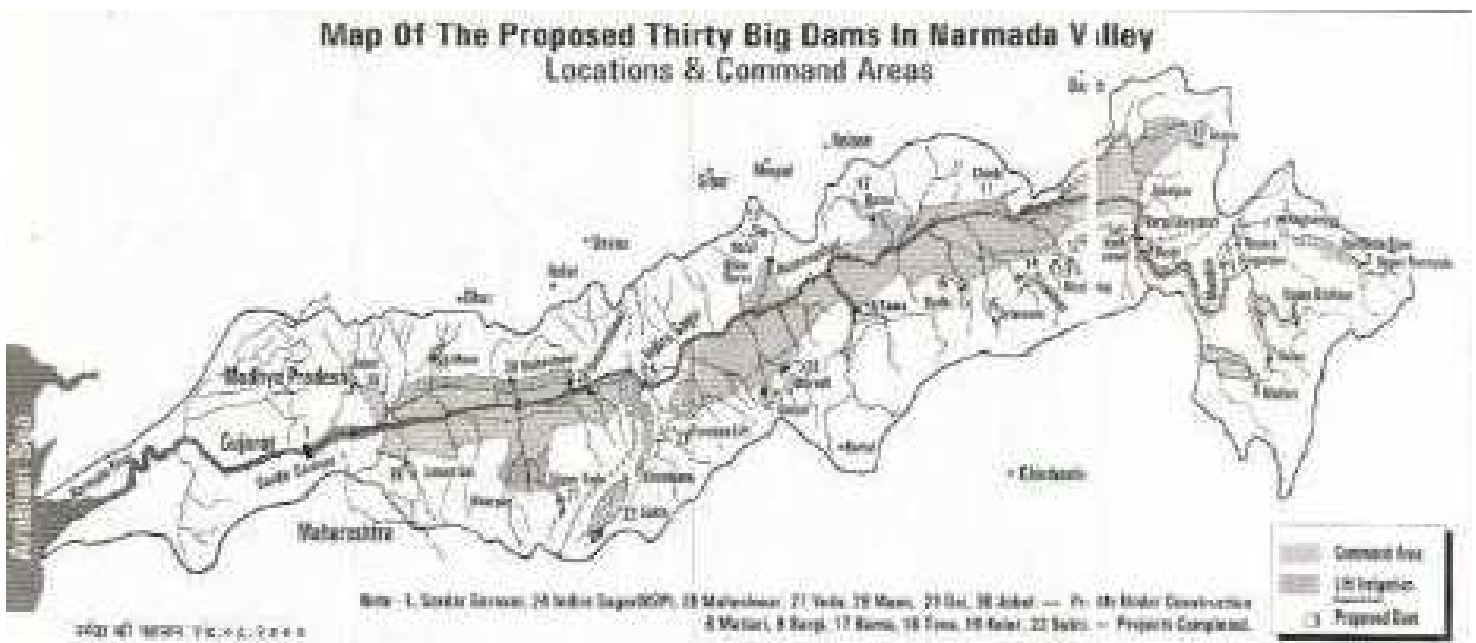


Narmada River Project

The Narmada River is 1057m above sea level, in the Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh. It is 1312km long, and flows through three states Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Most of the river is in Madhya Pradesh but some of it is in Gujarat. It only flows for a very brief stretch in Maharashtra.

The Narmada River is very important to the people of India because its banks are dotted with temples, myths and folklore, these are all living symbols of a timeless Indian tradition. The Narmada River has also supported a large variety of people and different cultures.

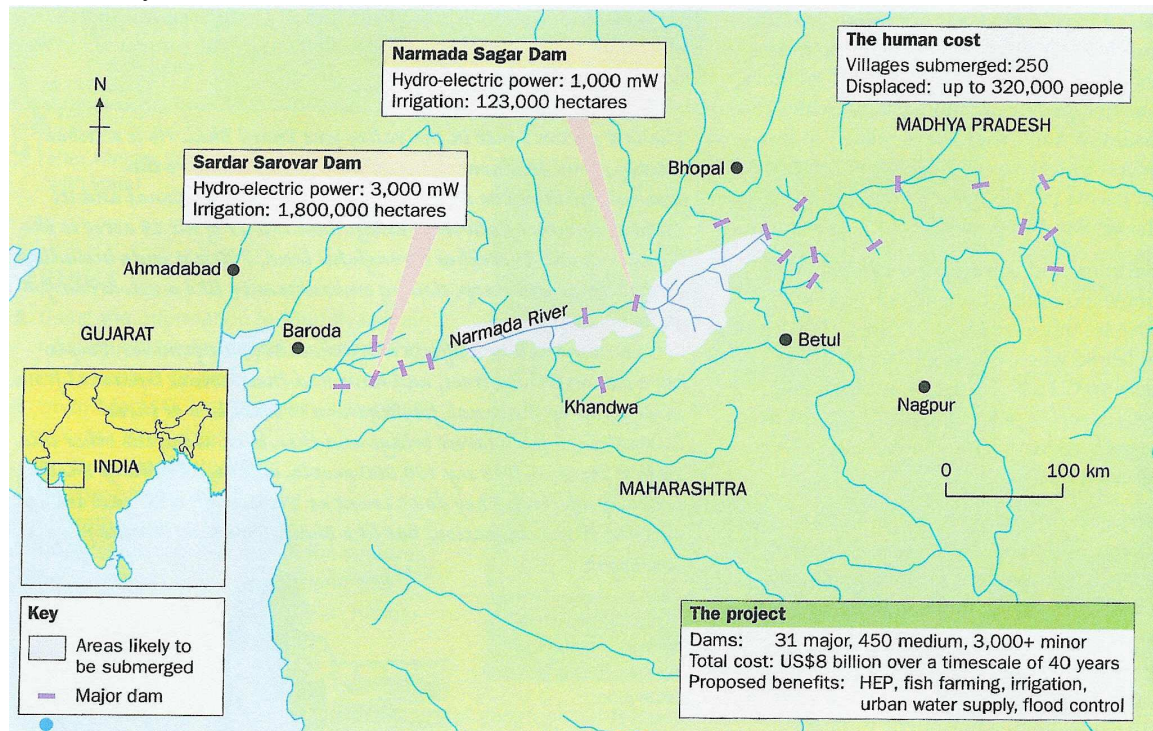
The main reason for the Narmada River project was that one billion people had no access to clean water, so therefore the equivalent of 12 jumbo jets full of children die every day from diseases from unclean water. With no access to water, people will die within three to four days. If they drank dirty water there is a very high chance that they would die of disease, so survival rates without clean water are very low. In our country, we take water for granted as it pours wastefully out of our taps in every home whereas people in India have a hard and tiring trek to a well to collect water. When there is a water shortage we think that the problem is only temporary so therefore we do not worry. In India water does not flow as freely as it does in this country so something needed to be done.



This is a map of the proposed 30 dams to be built on the Narmada River. The proposed plan was invented by the Narmada Valley Development Plan (NVDP).

India's population reached 1000 million in 2001 and continues to rise 15% every year. Agricultural production in India must increase by nearly 4% per year to support this population growth. Recent improvements in agriculture have centred on high-yielding varieties of grain, these require large amounts of water. The traditional method of supplying farms with water through ditches or canals is not enough.

Billions of dollars has been spent of building dams on the Narmada River trying to control floods, create a source of power and secure a clean water supply for the surrounding area. The dams have aroused a lot of controversy and they have rarely met their expected benefits. Instead they have caused millions of people to move elsewhere and destroyed fisheries and forests.



This map shows the location of the Narmada River in India, Southern Asia.

In Britain attempts to solve water shortages have concentrated on increasing supply to meet rising demand. Now they are trying to manage the demand for water, particularly trying to reduce the amount of wasteful misuse of water. Here are just a few methods Britain has used to reduce the wastage of water. Water metering, this proved successful for people who are charged for how much water they use as they are more careful when the amount of water is related to how much they have to pay. Education and information campaigns were used to urge the public to use less water. These were effective in times of drought but were ignored when there was no shortage. Increasing prices, this was used to try and make people use less water, but some users would resist to playing a higher price. Rationing has been tried during water shortages; this is done by turning on the water for only two hours a day. This is not possible for every day circumstances.

The Narmada River project will involve building 31 major, 450 medium size and 3000 smaller dams over 40 years. The largest dam, the Sardar Sarovar dam will provide 3000mW of much needed electricity, provide clean water for growing towns and cities and will attract tourists, providing jobs for the local people. But the dam will submerge 1,800,000 hectares of land. The project will also make 320,000 people move out as their villages are flooded. 100,000 hectares of agricultural and forest will be lost, and even worse, Earthquakes could be triggered, as the weight of the water in the reservoir puts stress on the valley slopes.