

AGITATIONS OF WARANA DAM AFFECTED PEOPLE: MAJOR EVENTS

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The researcher collected the data about the Warana dam affected peoples' agitations from the local leaders in rehabilitated colonies in Kolhapur and Sangli districts. Also the information in the form of news items was collected from local newspapers such as Daily Sakal, Pudhari, Lokmat, Kesari and Maharashtra times, the data is in between 1976 to 2006 and still there is no remarkable progress in the situation of oustees.

In 1976, dam construction was started and along with that displacement of people was also started. So in the beginning agitations were started by the villagers of Chandoli Budruk in 1976, with the demand of 'First rehabilitation then dam. It was only the beginning but people started gathering and gossiping and decided to oppose the dam construction strongly. On 1st Jan, 1994, local leaders organized a great 'Melawa', at 'Sonawade' village in Shirala Taluka with the demand of rehabilitation of 14 remote wadies. As a result, government announced that oustees will get piece of land for Gaothan and civic amenities will be provided.

But piece of land and civic amenities were still on the paper only. So on 1st March 2000, a Morcha was held at the office of the Executive Engineer, Kolhapur with the demands such as compensation for land, providing 13 civic amenities, grant of Rs. 10,000 for house construction, and maintenance allowance of Rs. 600 per month.

In March 2000, dam oustees from Sangli and Kolhapur districts held a 'Morcha' on Sangli Collector Office and Kolhapur Collector Office respectively, and stressed on the earlier demands. This time their demands were sanctioned on the spot by the District Collector and ordered the authorities to implement the orders immediately. So the work of allotting land plots and providing civic amenities got momentum.

In May 2000, dam oustees started Thiyya Andolan in front of District Collector Office, Sangli for 7 days, with the demands such as maintenance allowance and grant for house construction. On 3rd June 2000, the demands of oustees were sanctioned.

Again oustees had to struggle for getting the grant for house construction and maintenance allowance. So they held ‘Morcha’ and ‘Thiyya Andolan’ at District Collector Office, in August 2000. Till then, they could not get grant of Rs. 10,000 for house construction. Therefore, 500 oustees sat on the wall of dam, and threatened the government to jump straight into the water. As a result, grant of Rs. 4000 for house construction was sanctioned.

The oustees followed the same idea again in 2001, for getting basic civic amenities in the rehabilitated colonies. Nearly 1000 oustees gathered on the wall of the dam. This andolan is known as ‘Jalbudi’ andolan’.

In 2003, from 1st Jan to 6th Jan. ‘Thiyya Andolan’ was held by Warana Dharangrasta Sangram Sanghtana in front of District Collector Office at Rajwada Chowk, Sangli for 100% Rehabilitation of Warana dam oustees. (News item: Tarun Bharat, 7th Jan. 2003).

On 6th May 2003, ‘Thiyya Andolan’ was held by Maharashtra Rajya Dharangrasta and Prakaalpgrastha Shetakari Parishad in front of District Collector Office, Kolhapur for revised demands. For example, ‘Drinking Water supply for Sonarli, Durgewadi and Karade Colonies, family pension facility for dam oustees, 100% rehabilitation of Kodoli No. 1 and 2 colonies (News Item: Pudhari, 6th May 2003).

“Fulfil the demands within two months otherwise Government Offices will be locked” was the slogan of the Morcha held by the oustees on 15th October, 2003, in front of District Collector Office, Sangli. With the demand for progressive rehabilitation which is pending for last 20 years, ‘Rasta Roko’ was also held for two hours (News Item: Pudhari, 16th Oct. 2003).

In a similar vein, a 'Thiyya Andolan' was held for the demand of 5% reservation in Government Services for the Warana dam oustees. After collector's promises, Thiyya Andolan was taken back. (News Item: Tarun Bharat: 15th Dec. 2003).

'Melawa' was held in Chavare-Karade Vasahat by Maharashtra Dharangrasta and Prkalpgrasta Parishad, for revised civic amenities in the colonies and compensation of trees. (News Items : Sakal, 6th August, 2004).

The recent 'Thiyya Andolan' was held in front of District Collector Office, Kolhapur on 12th Jan. 2006 to 28th Jan. 2006, with the demands of 5% reservation in Government Services, 100% progressive rehabilitation of project affected people (Dam, Sanctuary, Canal affected). Human chain 'Rasta Roko', 'Ringan' all these forms of agitation were used by the oustees.

As a result of all these agitations, Government of Maharashtra declared on 26th January 2006 that, a fund of Rs. 2 crores will be made available for the rehabilitation of project affected people (Sakal: 28th Jan. 2006).

In this way the agitations of project affected people are still going on and oustees are yet waiting for what they call 'Progressive' rehabilitation.