Replacing home: Displacement and Resettlement in India's Narmada Valley Dam Project

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Abstract

This thesis concerns resettlement following displacement by large-scale development projects. Development-induced displacements now exceed those resulting from conflict situations and natural disasters. The displaced population usually suffers various forms of impoverishment including homelessness and social disarticulation. This thesis seeks to contribute to strategies for mitigating these negative impacts by improving resettlement policies.

The thesis asks what we can learn about resettlement and rehabilitation by assessing their impact on the home and its meaning to those facing displacement. The concept of 'home' can be usefully employed as an analytical tool to evaluate the success of resettlement. This approach addresses a gap in the literature informing resettlement policy and in particular the literature on the controversial Narmada Valley Dam Project, India. It examines the resettlement of Bhil tribal people following the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam in Gujarat. The primary data source for the thesis is the experience of the oustees recounted in their own words. Over 50 in-depth interviews and household economic appraisals as well as 103 household and 147 individual surveys were conducted at two resettlement sites (vasahats).

The research portrays a population entering a mainstream modern culture, moving from subsistence to a market economy. The study addressed the notion of home as dwelling and as the site of production/consumption and relations with family and friends. The thesis investigates the changing domestic economy and oustees' ability to feel 'at home' in their new environment. Moving beyond the purely economic, it examines both material and moral aspects of home as housing, as the site for daily life and as the locus of community social relations. 'Modern', market-oriented values colour all these understanding of home, such that the home has become a measure of the changes oustees are experiencing for better or for worse.
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### Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ARCH-Vahini</td>
<td>Action Research in Community Health and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSS</td>
<td>Centre for Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INC</td>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAF</td>
<td>Million acre-feet</td>
</tr>
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<td>NBA</td>
<td>Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NWDT</td>
<td>Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>Project Affected Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R &amp; R</td>
<td>Resettlement and Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSP</td>
<td>Sardar Sarovar Project</td>
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<td>SSPA</td>
<td>Sardar Sarovar Punavasahat Agency</td>
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1 Introduction

More of the world’s population is on the move than ever before. We live in an era, therefore, where ‘displacements are as important a feature of the human condition as places’ (Robinson 2002: 6). The thrust of social science research, whether carried out under the banner of geography, anthropology or cultural or development studies, is changing to reflect this phenomenon resulting in more work on flows, networks and hybrid identities, all symptomatic of displacement (Appadurai 1996, Clifford 1997). Less attention is correspondingly paid to territories, actors and bounded identities. This thesis, however, is concerned with both displacement and place, sharing the approach taken by Jenny Robinson (2002: 6) who believes ‘we need to explore and understand places as much as displacement’.

Particular kinds of place and displacement will be explored in this thesis. The focus is on forced displacement resulting from development, although involuntary movement can also be the result of war, conflict situations, and natural disasters. The statistics support this focus. During the 1990s the World Bank for the first time calculated the scale of development-induced forced displacements, finding that in that decade ‘about 10,000,000 people each year are displaced world-wide by infrastructural development programs’ (World Bank 1994/1996 cited in Cernea 1997b). The same report estimates that in the 1990s alone 90-100 million people would be displaced, perhaps surprisingly exceeding the total number of refugees from wars and natural disasters. The sheer number of people subjected to displacement, however, is not the only reason this phenomenon deserves our attention. Development-induced displacements have a track-record of leaving the uprooted people impoverished in multiple ways. Until relatively recently those challenging this state of affairs were mainly confined to people directly affected by displacement, some social scientists and a few activists. Increasingly, however, a wider spectrum of civil society the world over is concerned that projects undertaken in the name of development ironically cause massive impoverishment.
In terms of place, this thesis is concerned with the home, arguably the most intimate kind of place. The home is all too frequently overlooked in geographical research, perhaps because it is so close to each and every one of us that it is taken for granted. The research presented in this thesis examines the meaning of home for people who have experienced development-induced displacement and resettlement. In doing so, it combines study of both place and displacement, as Robinson (2002: 9) suggests:

[...] to be dis-placed, a person logically has some relationship to a place or places – usually that person is no longer there, but they are assumed to have some (intrinsic or prior) connection to it. Furthermore, the particular meaning that we ascribe to displacement – often as a traumatic or problematic condition – rests on a very particular view of ‘place’, as somewhere to belong, or where life is settled and, therefore, better.

After displacement and resettlement can (the home-) place be experienced again? Home and displacement are explored in this thesis through a case-study of displacement and resettlement, carried out as a result of a dam project currently under construction in India, where dam building has been popular. Chapter 2 establishes the context of dam building on the Indian sub-continent and places displacement in its wider context of development. The social construction of the ‘third world’ gave rise to the notion that, in order to progress, ‘third world’ countries had to embark on a process of modernisation (Escobar 1995). Development discourse emphasised the use of mega-projects to realise national objectives. The manipulation of natural resources, part of the post-independence development plan, included the damming of India’s largest rivers to provide irrigation for modern agricultural practices, drinking water and electric power generation to support industrialisation. The large dam epitomises an ideology combining modernisation, development and mega-projects that was encapsulated in Prime Minister Nehru’s 1950s description of dams as the ‘modern temples of India’.

Such developments cause massive displacement and frequently the impoverishment of those moved (Fernandes, Das and Rao 1989 cited in Cemea 1999; Mahapatra 1999). Furthermore, those displaced are often already the most marginalised in society. Despite the flourishing of opposition to these forms of development project, the government is still intent on pursuing development along the same lines. So it seems that, at least for the time being, India will witness ‘more of the same’. The sheer scale of displacement and India’s poor track record of rehabilitating oustees
justifies a focus on Indian resettlement. This chapter introduces the Sardar Sarovar Dam project in Gujarat — a significant part of the Narmada Valley Development Project. It seems an appropriate case of displacement and resettlement on which to focus in the light of recent decisions to harness the untapped potential of waters in the Himalayas, heralding more displacement as the result of dam construction.

Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical ideas underpinning this work. The meanings of home based on research in western and non-western countries are used as a springboard for posing some key questions about its meaning for people displaced by India’s Narmada Project. Do oustees emphasise some meanings over others? Do they feel a sense of place at the resettlement sites, a sense of home where they feel they belong? Belonging and identity, which evoke borders and boundaries, are recurrent themes in the literature on the home place, whereas development hardly features, perhaps suggesting that staying at home is antithetical to development. According to some people, movement, comprising a willingness to break free from the restrictions of home, enables progress and development. Has displacement brought disaster or opportunity to people forced to relocate from their home?

To explore these questions I have sought to learn from people displaced by the Sardar Sarovar Dam. According to official figures the number of people displaced will be in excess of 200,000, from three states: Gujarat, Maharastra and Madhya Pradesh. Chapter 4 explains the research strategy adopted to select an ethnic group/community and case-study resettlement sites. After a process of methodical elimination I chose to study Bhil tribal people displaced from the most isolated and interior submergence villages in the Narmada Valley in Gujarat. After relocation they are mostly concentrated in three areas in the plains. Two resettlement sites (Kandewal and Vadaj) were selected from two of these three areas as case studies. Sixty-nine registered project affected families reside in Kandewal and 66 in Vadaj (22 in Vadaj-1 and 44 in Vadaj-2).

A range of methodological techniques was employed. Household level surveys, questionnaires targeted at individuals, in-depth interviews, participant observation and informal discussions were all used to gather information. This process was not straightforward (if any research ever is). First, the politics surrounding the Narmada
Valley Project penetrates at every level and influences any encounter with oustees. Second, I communicated with the oustees in Gujarati with the help of an interpreter. For Bhil tribal people Gujarati is their second language. Third, the significance of the power relations between the researcher and the researched are heightened when working with tribal people as they are amongst the most marginalised in India.

The term tribal (*adivasi*) people is used deliberately rather than ‘indigenous’ people, because their residence in India does not necessarily predate that of other communities [although the word *adivasi* in Sanskrit actually means first settlers]. They do, however, share similarities with the indigenous people of America, Australia and New Zealand:

Relative isolation, largely self-sufficient lifestyle with minimum specialization of functions, social system with no hierarchy and strong sense of belonging to their habitat are main social and economic features that define tribal communities. [...] It is on the basis of these socio economic features that one can regard tribal people of India similar to the indigenous people in other parts of the world, not necessarily due to their chronological precedence (Patwardhan 2000: 2).

Some perceive *adivasis* as distinct from mainstream Hindus who are organised by the caste system. Others like Ghurye (1963) see them merely as ‘backward Hindus’. Bailey (1961 cited in Deliege 1985) contends that there is a continuum between tribe, through the process of hierarchisation, to the development of a group into a caste. The tribe-caste continuum involves the construction of a ‘pure’ tribe category (in which he sees hill *adivasi* belonging) while at the other end of the spectrum are Hindu communities whose lives are regulated by notions of purity and pollution. Deliege (1985) argues that there is no such thing as a pure tribe, but that all the tribal sub-groups are placed somewhere along the continuum. The perception of *adivasi* people is important insofar as it influences debates about their ‘development’. For instance, those who believe *adivasis* are ‘backward Hindus’ have fewer qualms about development projects that displace them from isolated regions and resettle them in rural villages amongst mainstream society. Such developments became common place after Independence despite government policies designed to help *adivasis* ‘develop along the lines of their own genius’ (Nehru 1960 cited in Patwardhan 2000: 3). According to Patwardhan (2000: 3) ‘tribal communities have been progressively
alienated from their traditional rights over natural resources like land, forest, river and that has eroded the very basis of their existence'.

That existence, however, is not uniform nor it is it static. For example, the Bhil population in India, numbering almost 4 million (Morse and Berger 1992), is spread across four contiguous states where the physical and cultural landscapes vary. Thus, although belonging to the same ethnic group, Bhils are desert hunters in Rajasthan, settled agriculturalists in the plains of southern and eastern Gujarat, hunter-gatherers cum cultivators in the forested hills of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and even urban dwellers. In the 11th century Bhils dominated over the entire Narmada region until Rajputs – fleeing the Mughal invasion of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Malwa – superseded their rule, so that by the medieval period they only ruled in the Vindhya and Satpura hills (Baviskar 1996). Nevertheless, Bhils lived in conjunction with Rajputs across the region. It was not until the Marathas came to carve out an empire for themselves, ravaging the land with their bloody infighting, and drought led to famine in 1803-4 that many Bhils took to the hills where generations have lived since.

Displacement by the Sardar Sarovar dam has certainly removed *adivasis* from their forefathers' land, forest and river. In this case oustees received agricultural land in the plains. Despite the land-for-land policy, resettlement from the hills to the plains entails a significant change to the domestic economy, as production and consumption is now market-based. Chapter 5 attempts to assess whether or not oustees are better off after resettlement and compares this with their reported levels of satisfaction with economic changes. The chapter demonstrates that whilst the restoration of livelihoods lies at the heart of rehabilitation, satisfaction cannot be explained purely in material/economic terms. This is because one of the meanings of home relates to feelings about the way the wider environment provided their sustenance, quite unlike western meanings, which are usually 'house-bound' i.e. primarily limited to home as housing.

Such a 'house-bound' perspective is adopted in Chapter 6, which includes an account of housing changes and of oustees' satisfaction with different house types. The chapter considers the role of housing in determining satisfaction with resettlement
and in reflecting broader cultural changes. The stimulus for this research on housing, indeed for the entire thesis, came from the work of resettlement analysts such as Fahim (1983) who observed that oustees often do not identify with new built environments created for them. The work of these analysts complemented the literature on sense of place by humanistic geographers in the 1970s (Tuan, 1974; Relph, 1976). One of my primary interests in this chapter, therefore, is to consider whether changes in housing and the spatial organisation of dwellings leads to a feeling of placelessness of the kind described by earlier authors.

One of the most intractable problems arising from displacement and resettlement is social impoverishment caused by the unravelling of social networks. Chapter 7 examines the importance of social relations in the rehabilitation process and questions the extent to which social impoverishment is a feature of the Sardar Sarovar case. The anti-dam organisations assert that the removal of adivasi people from the socio-cultural environment in the hills decontextualises them, leading to a destruction of their community [although we must again remember tribal communities do live in other physical and cultural landscapes]. They have also been extremely critical of a resettlement process which has scattered the population of 19 submergence villages across 117 resettlement sites (vasahats). Has this undermined oustees’ ability to feel at home at the vasahats because of an inability to achieve a sense of belonging?

Chapter 8, the final empirical chapter, takes stock of where oustees see themselves in the process of change. It details oustees’ pre-occupations, their concerns or fears and their hopes for the future. These issues return us to debates about the meaning of development. Thus the chapter explores the extent to which resettlement is perceived as an opportunity or a disaster.

In conclusion, Chapter 9 emphasises the meanings of home revealed by the fieldwork and considers them in relation to the thesis hypotheses, that proper resettlement is not possible without a full understanding of home. This assertion is reassessed in the light of the evidence presented in the substantive chapters. The relevance of this research for public policy is indicated followed by an evaluation of the use of home in resettlement studies.
Recent news (Indian Express, 14/04/2003) indicates that the Narmada Bachao Andolan, the NGO spearheading the anti-dam campaign, is taking its case to the United Nations to request that its Commission on Human Rights intervenes on the grounds that the Indian government is contravening the UN covenants it signed. The activists argue that the government should cease further construction on the Sardar Sarovar dam until all 40,000 affected families are resettled. This example of development-induced displacement has certainly attracted much international attention. I first heard about the Narmada project from reading a newspaper article in the Guardian during my final year as an undergraduate at Manchester University. At the time I was studying the work of the architect Hassan Fathy (1973) who championed the need for socially and culturally appropriate house and settlement design when the Egyptian government resettled 7,000 Gournis people in the 1940s. I was also inspired by the work of Aysan and Oliver (1987) on sensitive housing reconstruction following disaster in Gediz, Turkey. These case-studies prompted my desire to learn of the predicament of tribal people displaced by the Sardar Sarovar Dam. I was particularly interested to know whether, decades after Fathy designed a culturally appropriate resettlement site, home is given due consideration in development-induced displacement and resettlement.
Dams, displacement and development

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the debate surrounding Development-Induced Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR). Beginning with an introduction to the debate about large dams globally, it goes on to examine how these large infrastructure projects became part of India’s development ideology. The experience of large dams in India is then described, with a special focus on the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project in the Narmada Valley – the most contested development project in the country. Whilst pro- and anti-dam activists in India and elsewhere argue over whether large dams can be an equitable and sustainable form of development, dams continue to be built displacing large numbers of people. Thus whilst seeking to minimise displacement is always essential, the search for ways to improve the resettlement and rehabilitation outcomes is always necessary. The chapter ends by looking at the latest positive thinking on DIDR.

2.2 Large dams – the original promise and the subsequent global critique

Large dams serve as testimony to the ambitious nature of humankind. Although dams have been built for centuries – for example, the Dujiang irrigation project which supplied 80,000 hectares in China as early as 2,200 years ago (WCD 2000) – it was only with the advent of modern technology and construction methods that the erection of large dams could take off.1 The twentieth century saw large dams emerge as a pivotal component in the management of water resources to enable irrigation, energy generation, flood control, navigation and the supply of water for domestic, industrial and urban use. A report by the World Commission on Dams (2000) indicates that roughly one-third of all dams are multi-purpose, although there are considerable variations by region as to their functions. The majority of dams in Africa and Asia are for irrigation, whereas single-purpose water supply projects make up a higher proportion in Australasia. It is estimated that 30-40 per cent of the 268 million hectares of irrigated
land in the world is attributable to dams and they contribute to 12-16 per cent of total worldwide food production. In addition to enhancing food security, dams sustain many cities that rely on water supply for urban and industrial needs. Globally, about 12 per cent of large dams are designated as water supply dams. Hydropower provides 19 per cent of world’s total electricity supply with 24 countries depending on it for more than 90 per cent of their supply.

A growing population combined with rising levels of economic activity increase human demand for water, water-related services and energy. Dams are promoted as an important way to meet these demands and support economic development. To date 45,000 large dams in 140 countries have been built (WCD 2000), yet large dams promise much more than a means of supplying water and energy. They are also a means of bringing modernity to society.²

In spite of their many benefits large dams have attracted mounting criticism. Opposition to individual dams has a history as long as dams themselves, but resistance was initially mostly confined to those directly affected. It was not until the 1950s, when conservationists in the United States determined to preserve wilderness areas voiced their objections, that the impact of dams became a more prominent issue (see Sims 2001 on issue salience relating to dams). The conservationists led successful campaigns that stopped the construction of a number of dams such as the Echo Park dam in the Colorado basin (McCully 1996). As knowledge of the environmental impacts of dams grew, concern about the destruction of natural beauty gave way to concern about the adverse affects on ecosystems wherever large dams were built.³ The impact of dams on the environment is well documented (see Roggeri, 1985 and the seminal work by Goldsmith and Hildyard – then editors of The Ecologist – whose publication of The Social and Environmental Effects of Large Dams in 1984, helped launch the international anti-dam movement. The impacts include the reduction of terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity, loss of forests, emission of greenhouse gases from rotting vegetation in reservoirs, loss of nutrient rich silt to downstream soils of the floodplain, loss of downstream fisheries and salinisation of some command areas.
The environmental movement of the United States took off in the 1970s encouraged by the signing of the National Environmental Policy Act in 1970 and the Endangered Species Act in 1973. US based organizations such as the Environmental Defense Fund came out in opposition to the construction of large dams on the Earth’s river systems. Sims (2001) observes that whilst a critique of dams in the United States was mounted primarily on costs to the environment, elsewhere their social and human costs were increasingly coming into view. It is now acknowledged that displacement i.e. involuntary and forced relocation, is among the most significant negative impacts of large water resource development projects such as dams.

According to McCully (1996: 74) sixty million people have been displaced worldwide due to the reservoirs created by large dams. The World Commission on Dams puts the figure as anything between 40 to 80 million.\(^4\) The enormous scale of displacement is of serious concern, since it is now acknowledged (WCD 2000) that there is an inverse correlation between the number of people displaced and the chances of successful resettlement and rehabilitation. The main outrage of development-induced displacement is that, far from being beneficiaries of ‘development’, those displaced have historically been left impoverished. This situation was allowed to develop by governments round the world by applying the Benthamite principle of ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number’. It was considered regrettable but necessary (and by implication unavoidable) that some people would have to sacrifice for ‘the greater common good’ as highlighted by Roy (1999) in her essay of the same title.

National governments typically have justified these projects [such as dams] by invoking large goals of national growth and development. They appear to have believed that the greater good could justify losses among a small segment of the population (Koeing 2001:3).

This attitude is demonstrated in law, which protects the interests of the state and developers with legislation such as land acquisition acts, whereby land can be purchased compulsorily for development projects in the name of the public interest. Yet there is an absence of countervailing laws to ensure proper reparation for those affected by
development projects. The lack of commitment to restoring the lives of people affected by these projects left them at high risk of enduring economic and social impoverishment.

Whilst governments offered nothing more than ‘a compassionate shrug of the shoulders’ (Cernea 1996: 1517), it became apparent over the years that the burden of development fell overwhelmingly on the shoulders of those already most marginalised in society including indigenous people, tribal people and ethnic minorities. These people ‘happen to’ occupy the environments that are submerged by dam reservoirs, but large dam critics have argued that the sanctioning of large-scale projects of this kind are far from neutral decisions (see for example Hemadri et al. 2000). They argue that development projects which displace such great numbers are only conceivable in places occupied by marginalised communities. Furthermore,

Due to neglect and lack of capacity to secure justice because of structural inequalities, cultural dissonance, discrimination and economic and political marginalisation, indigenous and tribal peoples have suffered disproportionately from the negative impacts of large dams, while often being excluded from their benefits (WCD 2000: 110).

It is also appropriate to include women and children amongst those disproportionately affected by ‘development projects’, as highlighted in development and displacement literature. Recent work also highlights the plight of young displaced men who often lose out ‘being neither children, nor heads of households, nor recognized as gendered actors’ (Brun 2002: 10), excluded from targeted support and benefits.

Past experience shows that funding of resettlement and rehabilitation following large-scale displacement has typically been inadequate. Any resources that have been set aside have been used to carry out resettlement as a salvage and welfare operation instead of one that pursues development objectives (Cernea 1988). Koeing (2001) identifies the dominant themes in the displacement literature as: a) lack of proper information about the project, b) lack of good base-line information that aid the development of appropriate resettlement plans, c) traumatic and delayed relocation (including a discontinuation of investment and development in places earmarked for submergence in the interim period), d) problems at resettlement sites (including infrastructure and
problems with the host communities), and e) failure to compensate all those affected (for example, people adversely affected downstream of a dam).

In short it has been the case that 'any costs occasioned by infra-structural and productive development have been externalised, to be absorbed either by the environment in terms of resource exploitation and waste processing or by the general [vulnerable] population when social, cultural and economic disadvantages occur' (Oliver-Smith 2001: 6).

Although many governments require environmental impact studies to be carried out with large-scale development projects, the full costs to the environment and the displaced are rarely factored into the cost-benefit analyses that form the basis on which projects are approved. To some extent this is due to the difficulty in assigning a value to that which is not (yet) monetarised. For instance, what is the cost of submerging a burial ground?

Many large-dam critics point to the deliberate bias that ignores or grossly understates the social, human and environmental costs in the planning of large dam projects whilst exaggerating the expected benefits (Goldsmith and Hildyard, 1984; Paranjype, 1990). A survey of 125 dams by the World Commission on Dams (2000) revealed that almost half of the 52 dams in their sub-sample fell short of the planned target for irrigation. Most have not recovered their costs and have been less profitable than was expected. Although dams built to provide hydropower perform better they too fail to match the targets on which investment in the project was initially justified.

The failures and adverse consequences of large dams are regarded as symptomatic of projects premised on the western model of development, prioritising economic growth over social and environmental impacts. Opposition to large dams may therefore be situated within the challenge to the dominant development model, including a critique of the state as an implementor of 'big development' using top-down centralized planning as its tool (Koeing 2001). The disputed model is characterized by Oliver-Smith (2001) as the process through which the productive forces of economies and supporting infrastructures are improved through either public and/or private investment. The expansion of infrastructure (such as dams, roads, irrigation systems, pipelines and
energy sources) aimed at supporting both agricultural and industrial growth, and with them increased national and per capita incomes, is 'considered virtually coterminous with development' (Oliver-Smith 2001: 6). During this transformation people and places come under the purview of the state and the market. What is left out, or only partially within the threshold of these institutions, is considered under- or un-developed. The flip side of the coin is that this form of development involves 'a transformation of people through the reduction of an enormous diversity of lifeways into a significantly reduced set of social, cultural and economic relationships that are compatible with the industrialized forms of production' (Oliver-Smith 2001: 6). Although this transformation is sometimes embraced, there have been challenges based on class conflict. However, the debate has hitherto taken place among elites, both for and against. Recently the class-based challenge has diversified (coming from a broader-base) and metamorphosed into one combining ethical and environmental considerations in the discourses of human rights (particular with reference to indigenous groups) and environmental sustainability. Those who see the 'axe of development' (Dhagamwar 1997) hanging over themselves or others oppose the 'loss of resource base, culture, identity, and autonomy' (Oliver-Smith 2001: 6), articulating the threat as potential violations of rights. Objectors have used word-association to highlight their point:

In the Philippines, development projects that convert the lands on which people live and work into dam created reservoirs, irrigation schemes, mining operations, plantations, recreation areas and other large scale forms of use favoring national or global interests have been referred to as "development aggression" by impacted communities and the non-governmental organizations working with them (Heijmans 2001 cited in Oliver-Smith 2001: 3).

Although 'development aggression' refers to the whole gamut of development projects for which the state tenaciously wields its power to displace or reconfigure those in the way, large dams have been singled out for attention.

Dams, in effect, have become one of the core issues in the entire debate over human rights and the environment in development. In some sense, dams and the anti-dam movement play an emblematic role for the entire resettlement problem, much as the rain forest has for the environmental movement (Oliver-Smith 2001: 10).
Faced with opposition that cannot be ignored, the dubious economics of dam building and the dearth of good sites that remain undammed, the whole dam building industry is grinding to a halt in the country that was its birth-place – the United States (McCully 1996). Furthermore as the maintenance costs escalate for hydro-dams that are 25-35 years old and their productive life-span diminishes as a result of siltation in the reservoir, US attention is now turning to the decommissioning of dams.\(^5\)

Nonetheless, the enthusiasm of policy-makers in non-western countries for large dams remains unabated despite the large body of evidence that illustrates development projects of this kind are poor value for money, unsustainable and inequitable. Their stance is that it is all very well to talk of decommissioning of dams after having reaped their benefits. Should the poor South ‘stop developing dams because some armchair critics in rich countries want to do whitewater rafting or salmon fishing, while profiting from the lifestyle enabled by decades of dam construction in their part of the world’ (Robbroeck 1999 cited in Rangachari et al. 2000: 13)? Drawing on the argument made by Verghese (1999), Rangachari et al. (2000: 14) argue that ‘whilst dams displace, so does acute deprivation, but to a far greater degree’. In other words the present anti-dam fervor has caused us to forget the original reasons large dam projects were conceived.

These are certainly the points made by policy-makers in India who since Independence have sanctioned no less than 3,991 large dams.\(^6\) In the next section I examine how large dams became part of Indian development ideology enshrined in the drive for modernity along with a critique of this approach.

2.3 Large dams as part of Indian development ideology and its critique

The Indian approach to development is rooted in the project to modernise by incorporating ‘reason’ into the practices of the state (emphasising western notions of development and liberal democracy). The strategy adopted was one of a number available. To understand how this particular strategy became hegemonic we need to analyse the nationalist discourse that emerged prior to Independence.
2.3.1 The characteristics of Indian nationalism and modernity

The brand of nationalism that led India to Independence would see the new leadership – like the colonial rulers – directing a programme of development on behalf of the people rather than fostering development by the people. The goal of this top-down development programme – resulting in projects such as large dams – was to further modernise India. Large dams were to become the hallmark of Indian modernity, famously described by the nation’s first Prime Minister as ‘the new temples of India’ (Nehru cited in Mehta 1992: 35).

That development should be pursued on behalf of the nation comes as no surprise to Chatterjee (1993) who, with the benefit of hindsight, argues that it is the product of elitist nationalism which became hegemonic before and after Indians took power.

Well before the battle for Independence began, the Indian middle classes had embarked on a process of reform of traditional institutions. They felt that so long as their inner, spiritual, domain (in which they professed superiority to the West) remained intact, then the material, ‘outer’, domain could be fashioned along Western lines. The idea was to replicate features of Western modern nation-states such as liberal democratic politics and economic institutions, so that when the time came the nationalists could claim that Indian society was now being constrained by imperial rule. The only way to complete the project of modernity was for India to be a self-governing nation-state. For example, they argued that the colonial ‘rule of difference’, whereby English-educated Indians were allowed to take administrative jobs in the colonial regime but prevented from climbing to decision-making jobs, ran contrary to the doctrine of liberal democracy (Chatterjee 1993).

After the 1947 transfer of power Nehru and the younger generation of Indian National Congress leaders continued to practice secular and democratic politics. Their view of the Indian nation – centralist and state-orientated (Sathyamurthy 1997: 717) – was postulated on behalf of the people and largely accepted for over two decades.\(^7\)
This form of nationalism became hegemonic at the expense of alternative nationalisms, often advocated by members of the Congress party itself. For example, Gandhi advocated the formation of a looser Indian nation held together voluntarily rather than by a centralised power that erased difference. The crux of Gandhi’s proposition was that ‘swaraj [freedom/liberation] began not with the state at the summit of political echelons, but rather at the base of society – the individual, the community, the village, the region etc’ (Sathyamurthy 1997: 719).

Unfortunately for Gandhi and his supporters this plural nationalism is easily undermined. Most Congress members concentrated on creating an integrated, centralist and secular nation-state using all the powers of the state at their disposal. Thus, this ‘normalising’ discourse gained precedence and in doing so, critics argue, betrayed the very people it claimed to emancipate. So seductive are the claims of modernity that the new Indian leaders failed to recognise this supposed ‘betrayal’.

Inden (1995) describes the modernists’ claim as the ability to bring about humanity’s emancipation from a dark, medieval past, where life wishes can only be truly realised in paradise, to a utopian existence on earth, made possible by making reason manifest in daily lives. The use of reason, according to modernists, creates material utopia from which the people can benefit:

> The claim implicit in discourses about world order authored by Western Europeans and American leaders and their organic intellectuals since at least the middle of the twentieth century is that their countries have already to a large extent attained to an emergent utopia (Inden 1995: 248).

By embodying reason Western nations had liberated themselves from the conditions of scarcity, poverty, oppression and unrest and India could do the same.

Thus, the project of nationalist modernity determined India’s development ideology. This ideology sought to recreate what existed in the West: capitalist economic development.
Capitalist development was to be achieved via the appropriation of resources, accumulation of capital and industrialisation. This strategy was endorsed by Nehru and other Congress members. Gandhi offered an alternative vision which involved revising the village economy as the basis of development. ‘The Gandhian approach has always talked about the voluntary limitation of wants, the need for having self reproducing village communities, and about issues bearing on a better balance between man and nature’ (Chakravarty 1987: 8). Baviskar’s (1997) interpretation of this vision of liberation is that it not only promised economic independence but also offered an assurance that the cultural traditions of Indian peasantry would gain the ascendancy. Gandhi’s nationalist arguments were based on the need to do away with the exploitation characterising industrial capitalist development. In India and elsewhere:

The attempt to achieve modern industrial growth has been based on two interrelated processes: one, the unchecked use of the earth’s natural resources; and two, the transformation of people, often against their will, into a dispossessed working class (Baviskar 1997: 35).

Nehru, however, believed the removal of foreign rulers would free the nation to pursue non-exploitative capitalism along socialist lines influenced by the Soviet model. In constructing a strategy for development, ‘Nehru … projected “his” future India as both a democratic polity along Anglo-American lines, and a socialist polity, along Soviet lines’ (Inden 1995: 263). Yet accumulation was still the primary objective and state powers would be used to disassociate the means of production from the people. As Chakravarty (1987: 8) points out, socialism and capitalism may differ on who should bear the cost of accumulation, but both share common ground: ‘What constitutes a “good life” seems to be not significantly different between socialists and capitalist modernisers’.8

India’s development ideology therefore consisted of catching up with the modern West: ‘We are trying to catch up, as far as we can, with the Industrial Revolution that occurred long ago in Western countries’ (Nehru 1954, cited in Singh 1997: 60). To do this the following course of action was needed:

We must rebuild our economic system by utilising the resources of our land, harnessing the energy of our rivers … conquering the barriers of distance and above all, we must mould anew the nature of man in both individual and social
aspects, so that a richer, more harmonious and happier race may live in this great

Keen to show the world that they were at the forefront of the march of progress, leading
the ‘third world’ towards modernist development, Indian leaders promoted showcase
projects. Thus the desire to make a statement was as much a reason for placing projects
like large dams high on the agenda as their role in promoting economic development.
Roy (2000: 56) aptly describes large dams as ‘huge, wet, cement flags’ – India’s pride
and joy.

Economic development and modernity would not, however, come about of their own
accord – a tool needed to be employed. ‘The practice that Nehru and others argued was
crucial to this vision of economic development ... was central or national planning’
(Inden 1995: 265)

2.3.2 Planning - implementing the development ideology

Chakravarty (1987) observes there has been a clearly identifiable ‘Indian approach’ to
development planning and that Indian development became synonymous with planning
(until the 1980s, when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi began to loose the economy from
what he perceived as a straitjacket).

As early as 1938 the INC set up the National Planning Commission to act as an advisory
body on economic development. Headed by Nehru, the commission was composed of
economists and scientists, revealing the INC’s intention to favour ‘rational’ planning
over ‘irrational’ politics. Reason was the very essence of planning: ‘economic planning
means no more than the pooling of available resources and utilising them in a rational
rationality’ to create a welfare state founded on democratic socialism. Planning to create
a welfare state was all very well, but a crucial factor was missing: wealth. India had to
generate capital. To do this Nehru and his followers turned to development economics.
On independence the National Planning Commission was to start producing five-year development plans. The rise of development economics in the 1950s coincided with the formulation of India's first three plans. Inden (1995) likens these plans to milestones along the march to modernity. The most famous was the Second Five Year Plan (1956-61), the single most significant document in India's post-colonial development strategy. It proposed a capital-intensive industrial sector under public finance and control, a private industrial sector in light consumer goods and a private agricultural sector (Chatterjee 1993). Agricultural and industrial systems were to be geared towards production and appropriation. The motive force for industrialisation would be investment by the state but after a time the public sector was to become self-sufficient (Mozoomdar 1994: 75).

All these ideas were contrary to Gandhi's argument that in a country where capital was scarce, the state should concentrate on development of people. The notion that industrialism was the root cause of poverty was, however, seen by most INC leaders as ideological baggage to be dumped.

Economists usually distinguish two distinctive phases in India's development strategy: the first, from 1950 to 1965, and the second, 1965 to the 1980s.

**PHASE ONE: 1950 to 1965** Bardhan (1984) notes that although India was one of the poorest countries in the world, the optimism created by the transfer of power led to India's development prospects being rated as good, both inside and outside the country. Initially the Second Five Year Plan fared well, but the optimism of the initial period was short lived. In the mid 1960s the Indian economy hit a crisis point, which according to Lipton's contested thesis (Byres 1979) was the result of planners' failure to see the urban bias in their plans. After suffering a number of setbacks, India designed a New Agricultural Strategy (NAS) but did not abandon industrialisation. On the contrary, the strategy was all about injecting industrialism into agriculture, through its commercialisation and increased monetarisation. The Green Revolution was seen as a way of enhancing agricultural production without undertaking radical land reforms. This policy stimulated agro-industry and helped sectors, such as the steel industry, needed for
the construction of large irrigation projects. The new High Yielding Variety seeds
needed timed irrigation and more pesticides and fertilisers.

The Green Revolution encouraged the expansion of large-scale canal irrigation,
particularly through the construction of large dams. The USA helped to create a system
that provided a subsidy and credit package to ‘progressive’ farmers, who turned out to
be those who owned big farms. These policies reflected the government’s belief in the
‘trickle down’ theory of development.

The spread of large dams in India is documented in a WCD Case Study by Rangachari et
al. (2000), outlined in section 2.4.1. Singh (1997) argues that the post-British irrigation
policy has its roots in colonial policies. A legacy of the British was a professional group
of Indian civil-engineers. The interests of this group combined with those of the big
farmers to ensure the continuation of this irrigation technology: in the first Five Year
Plan one fifth of public sector expenditure went on medium- and large-scale projects.
The establishment thus equated irrigation with the construction of dams and canals

Dam construction was given a major boost in 1964 when the method of evaluating
project proposals became less stringent, removing the need to demonstrate that projects
would make a profit. The profit of a given year had been calculated as the difference
between the receipts from irrigation projects and the annual cost of the project. The
project could only be given the go-ahead if this profit was above a specified rate (6%).
Experience showed however that profits from dam irrigation projects were low or non­
existent. In a move reflecting the obsession with large dams, the government jettisoned
the profitability test, replacing it with cost-benefit analysis. The shift made it possible for
planners to continue to argue for large irrigation projects, in spite of the fact that the
economic performance of large projects was not satisfactory. So long as the economic
benefits (including higher agricultural production and the value of power generated)
were at least one and half times the cost of the project (excluding wider costs such as
those to the environment), it was felt that project approval was justified (Rangachari et
al. 2000).
With this less restrictive approach for sanctioning irrigation projects displacement became a common occurrence. The corresponding industrial growth needed to absorb the displaced labour did not, however, materialise. There was not enough growth for anything to trickle down. To compound the situation a period of deceleration in industrial growth rate followed (Bardhan 1984).

**PHASE TWO: 1965-1980** To explain the deceleration and continuing economic stagnation, Bardhan (1984) points the finger at the close relationship between the state and the dominant classes: the industrial capitalists, rich farmers and professionals (bureaucrats). In mediating between these groups the state ought to have some room to manoeuvre, but in India the pressure from the dominant classes led the state to pander to all three groups. This involved offering subsidies and other enticements to rich farmers (a traditional ally of the INC) resulting in severe mismanagement of the economy. For example, water rates for irrigation users were kept artificially low, mostly benefiting the richer farmers who take the lion’s share of irrigation. Another reason for poor growth in relation to state investment is suggested by Pant (1979 cited in Singh 1997: 171). On evaluating the Kosi-Dam Project, he found that only 40 per cent of the allocated money was spent on the project; the rest was siphoned off through corrupt practices by contractors and politicians.

Rather than re-think its investment decisions, the state, arguably ‘threw good money after bad’ to keep the dominant classes satisfied and stick to their development objectives of industrialisation and agricultural commercialisation, leading to a disproportionate cutting back on welfare programmes. This contraction was not met by any huge discontent from the poorest factions of society due to their highly fragmented political organisation. Thus, the parasitism on the state of the dominant classes and the inability of the masses to mobilise themselves into popular movements demanding public accountability was a factor in the continued prevalence of poverty.
BEYOND PHASE TWO (1980 – Present) The subsequent Five Year Plans (1980-1985 and 1985-1990) were characterised by renewed government interest in reducing poverty under the slogan of ‘Redistribution with Growth’. However, the focus in the 1990s again turned to economic growth and the liberalisation of the Indian economy, leading Drèze and Sen (1997) to argue that the government of India has yet again missed the point with its narrow focus on the economy. They are highly critical of the government, accusing it of perceiving economic development as the primary goal rather than a means to an end. Without the expansion of social and educational opportunities for the masses, for example, the developmental opportunities that market-based economic growth can bring is severely limited.

The extent to which succeeding plans address these concerns is debatable. The Ninth plan (1997-2002) acknowledges that higher growth rates following liberalisation did not reduce poverty as much as it should have and seeks to tackle this, but still maintains a focus on the economy, this time referring to ‘Growth with Social Justice and Equity’. The Tenth Five Year Plan aims to achieve eight per cent average GDP growth for the plan period 2002-2007, although for the first time there are also specific targets for improvements in social justice.

Prominent Indian development analysts have called for the government not to give up on planning but to give it a new context (Chakravarty 1987). There is clearly a need for some form of state intervention and for the state to use its coffers to support welfare schemes. Nehru (1958 cited in Inden 1995: 265) claimed that ‘we have to carry hundreds of millions of people with us. It is not an individual’s journey or a journey of a few persons, but the march of a great population.’ However, many social scientists and NGOs believe the brand of development pursued by the Indian Government between 1950 and the present day does not carry the masses; instead it leaves them by the wayside, watching the expansion of wealth of the urban consumer.

Thus contrary to the claims of the nationalists the poorer social groups have not found independence entirely emancipatory. The story of Indian nationalism and its extension
in the form of development planning and subsequent economic liberalisation implemented on behalf of the nation is regarded by many as a history of betrayal. Critics of Indian development have nominated the large dam as the lead character in this story. Therefore I now move from a general critique of Indian development to describing in the next section the debate about large dams that has arisen in the Indian context of large dams, which has contributed significantly to international debates.

2.4 Large dams in India – critique and resistance

In this section I examine India’s experience of large dams. I detail how India has been caught up in the growing international debate about dams. There was no chance of India escaping the controversy, since, in addition to its having the third highest number of dams in the world, India is also home to one of the fiercest dam disputes in history: the Sardar Sarovar Dam.

2.4.1 The spread of dams in India

Although India receives an average annual precipitation of around 4000 billion cubic meters (BCM), 75 per cent of that occurs between June to September. Over three-quarters of annual river runoff is concentrated during these brief monsoon months. Dams in India are therefore regarded an appropriate tool in water resource management in that they can store the surplus monsoon runoff. The first large dam to be built in India using high head hydraulic technology was the Periyar dam, built in 1897. This was a 48m high and 378m long concrete dam intended to divert the waters of Periyar river eastwards to drought-prone areas in Madras (Rangachari et al. 2000). This was a pioneering inter-basin transfer to a water-deficient area. Thereafter dam building began in earnest after Independence as shown in Table 2.1. Forty per cent of all dam construction worldwide now takes place in India (Roy 2000: 56).
The distribution of dams by state is highly uneven, primarily due to differences in topography and climate. The top three states are Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat with 1529, 1093 and 537 (completed or under construction) dams respectively (source: Rangachari et al. 2000). Together these states account for three-quarters of the large dams in India. The majority of these dams were built to provide irrigation and even those classified as multi-purpose projects had the provision of irrigation as a major aim. Some were built primarily for the generation of hydropower and a few to provide water for industrial and domestic purposes.

By 1995 India had created a live storage capacity of 177 BCM, with another 75 BCM of storage under construction. This left 132 BCM, about one-third of the storage potential of the country to be developed. The Planning Commission have directed that this remainder should be utilisable by 2025 AD, signalling more dam-building ahead. However many have questioned the wisdom of adhering to this ‘more of the same’ strategy without proper evaluation on the projects already completed (Dharmadhikary 1997). The most radical anti-dam activists have called for a moratorium on all further large dams until those currently under-utilised are used to their full potential and their performance is assessed.
2.4.2 Technical and economic performance

If asked ‘what have large dams done for India?’ the supporters of large dams would immediately point to their role in ensuring food security for the population by increasing productivity. Large dams increase both the area of irrigated land and cropping intensity, as yields are generally twice as high as they are for rainfed agriculture (Planning Commission of India 1999 cited in Rangachari et al. 2000). At Independence India was an importer of food grains, but the country now has a production surplus with total production at approximately 200 million tons per year.

Although irrigation does increase agricultural productivity critics question how much large dams have actually contributed to generating higher yields. Rangachari et al. (2000) report that major and medium irrigation projects (within which large dams are included) are responsible for less than 10 per cent of the increase. Most is attributable to productivity increasing measures such as the introduction of HYV seeds in the mid-1960s and the use of fertilisers and other factors, which, contrary to popular belief, do not have to be supported by canal irrigation.

Not all dams have, in any case, met their targets, which many critics believe is endemic in big dam projects. For instance, the irrigation intensity in the command area of the Mahi Kadana Dam Project was only 55 per cent in 1980-81, against 131 per cent promised by the Gujarat Government (Paranjype 1990). The Bargi dam on the Narmada ‘irrigates only as much land as it submerged in the first place’ (Roy 1999: 43), only 3 per cent of the original planned area (McCully 1996). Worse, after construction of the Tawa Dam in Madhya Pradesh, yields actually fell for all crops due to waterlogging.

The failure to meet these technical or physical targets in turn results in the failure to meet economic targets, whereby gains to the economy promised from the project, for example increased crop sales from higher yields, are less than expected. To summarise, the more comprehensive India case study prepared for the World Commission on Dams shows, first, that major and medium projects irrigate far less than the projected area and the gap between actual and planned area seems to be rising. Second, actual yield often
falls well short of anticipated yields. Third, cropping patterns differ from that envisaged, whereby the proportion of high value crops that will be grown is inflated on paper. Finally, over-optimistic price assumptions are made, whereby the actual benefits from irrigation, as measured through market sales, are far lower than the projected direct benefits from irrigation (Banerji 2000). Thus, many analysts firmly believe that providing irrigation from large dams is not the most cost-effective way of supplying water to fields.

Hydropower dam projects have performed better in terms of meeting their technical and economic targets. Hydroelectric projects are often recognised as providing the most economic, least polluting and preferred source of electricity by comparison of India’s primary commercial energy sources: coal, oil, natural gas and nuclear fuel [anti-dam activists such as Dharmadhikary (1997) argue that gas-based power generation is relatively clean considering the environmental costs associated with large dams]. Due to the high price of power, the hydropower element of multi-purpose large dam projects offers the most financial returns. Thus, large dam projects built for irrigation purposes often include hydropower generation as an objective. Although only 4.2 per cent of large dams in India have power generation as one of the objectives (Rangachari et al. 2000) the capacity to generate hydro-electricity will be expanded to address the fact that the country has to meet ‘nearly 25 per cent of its total energy needs through imports’ (Rangachari et al. 2000: 177) and forecasts of increased power shortages unless urgent steps are taken to rectify the situation. But again, critics of India’s big dam approach, such as Dharmadhikary (1997) argue that instead of responding to severe shortfalls of power by planning more large-scale capacity additions, the government ought to focus on more cost-effective efficiency measures. These include maximising the performance of installed dams and preventing leakage in the power distribution network.

On the one hand therefore, is a shortfall of economic returns due to the failure to achieve planned targets in the command areas of most irrigation dam projects and to a lesser degree in some hydropower projects, whilst the capital outlay – the construction cost of these schemes – is sizable. This situation is particularly problematic given that the
projects rarely keep within their projected costs. The result: substantial losses are incurred.

The incredible financial losses from major and medium sized dam projects are of great (public) concern. The Expert Committee on Rise in Costs of Irrigation and Multipurpose Projects (cited Rangachari et al. 2000) blames faulty planning for the escalation of costs and delays in project completion – on average by 160 per cent (Singh 1997: 130). Indian examples, extracted from McCully’s global study on cost overruns, are shown in Table 2.2. The WCD confirms the large overruns on Indian dams, averaging 235 per cent.

Table 2.2 Cost and time overruns for Indian dam projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Estimated cost in Rs [year of estimate]</th>
<th>Actual cost in Rs (latest estimate) [year of latest estimate]</th>
<th>Cost overrun, not adjusted for inflation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bargi</td>
<td>640m [1968]</td>
<td>5.7bn [1991]</td>
<td>784%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selaulim</td>
<td>96m [1972]</td>
<td>730m [1985]</td>
<td>660%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srirama-sagar</td>
<td>640m [1964]</td>
<td>5bn [1987]</td>
<td>694%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srisailam</td>
<td>385m</td>
<td>2.6bn [1979]</td>
<td>575%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tawa</td>
<td>139m [1956]</td>
<td>(914m) [1972]</td>
<td>557%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tehri</td>
<td>2bn [1969]</td>
<td>(60bn) [1994]</td>
<td>2900%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted from McCully 1996: 297-300

Despite the resulting drain on public coffers and persistent failure to achieve planned performance, large dams continue to be sanctioned by India’s Planning Commission. One reason is that the projected cost-benefit ratios (according to critics, are made to) look good on paper.13 Paranjype (1990: 85) condemns the Planning Commission for its failure to satisfy all norms of public accountability, and for continuing to make huge public investments on, what he describes as, empirically untested assumptions regarding costs and benefits. Also there is no requirement to monitor and evaluate projects
approved, nor any incentive linking their proven satisfactory performance with the freedom to sanction new ones.

External influences may have enabled this seeming indifference to public accountability. Critics argue that without organizations such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank handing out enormous loans, governments may not have embarked on so many projects without completing and optimising use of existing projects. Perhaps greater consideration would have been given to 'more value for money' alternatives, including schemes which enable more efficient distribution and use of irrigation water.

Rangachari et al. (2000) refer to a list they have compiled, based on government reports and data from Singh (1997) of externally funded Indian projects in the late 1970s and 1980s. Although this list is not exhaustive it shows that:

[...] the World Bank funded about 46 irrigation projects with the total assistance amounting to nearly $5000 million. [...] There is little doubt that the spurt in the number of new major and medium projects taken up in the Fifth Plan [1974-78] was the result of World Bank funding. External funding appears to have tapered off in the late 1980s (Rangachari et al. 2000: 62).

Some argue for alternative irrigation projects, which are not only more socially acceptable, but also offer better value, but these are unlikely to see the light of day because of an inherent bias towards big stand-alone projects in the Indian planning system. Even when there has been an attempt to develop a whole river basin, this has often meant no more than planning a cluster of projects instead of holistic solutions.

The bias enables projects that may not offer best value to proceed with relative ease through the planning process. The result is a collection of projects that may possibly bring no net gain to the economy. The real impact of large dams, as far as irrigation is concerned, is almost entirely distributional i.e. it results in a reallocation of resources.

There is then, a large body of evidence to show that many dams have not offered best value in terms of fulfilling their planned objectives and financial performance. Such misgivings are accentuated when the social performance of Indian dam projects is brought into the picture.
2.4.3 The social performance of large dams in India

Displacement is the most disturbing aspect of India’s experience of large dam projects. Oliver-Smith (2001) described displacement as one of the central experiences of modernity and this is certainly the case for the millions displaced by dams – the ‘modern temples of India’. There is no official record of the number of people displaced by large dams, although there is an official rejection of the figures quoted in the report of the World Commission on Dams (Central Water Commission 2000). One estimate places it at between 16-38 million people (Fernandes and Paranjype 1997 cited in WCD 2000). Using a more modest figure of 21 million people displaced by dams in India, Fernandes, Das and Rao (1989 cited in Cernea 1999: 17) go on to claim that 15 million of them were not properly rehabilitated. In other words, three out of every four people were left impoverished after displacement.

The main problem has been the lack of (adequate) resettlement policies and legal safeguards for those displaced. The Land Acquisition Act of 1894 is India’s only law on forced eviction (or involuntary displacement). Under the Act the government has the power to compulsorily purchase private land for development projects for the public good. Although the Act was amended in 1984, the principle of eminent domain (whereby the state has the right over all territory in its domain) was re-enforced. Critics question, firstly, who decides and defines a particular project as being in the public interest? The lack of transparency and inability to participate in the planning process is a growing source of discontent in India. Second, under the Act the government is not legally bound to provide a displaced person with anything other than cash compensation and then only to landholders. However, the evidence suggests that merely providing cash to those who are not experienced in dealing with the market (as is often the case) is a recipe for disaster (Viegas 1992). The problem is particularly acute when the compensation received is at market and not replacement value.

In some states the Land Acquisition Act is supplemented with a state-wide resettlement policy, but these are rare. Only 3 out of the 14 states in which the World Bank financed projects with resettlement components by 1994 had state-wide ‘resettlement and
rehabilitation' policies and five had government orders regarding resettlement (Cernea 1996). Resettlement and rehabilitation packages are usually determined by individual project authorities.

Up to 1978, there was no assessment of the rehabilitation package of people displaced by dams. The Ministry of Environment and Forests then initiated a process by which all major dams had to obtain environmental clearance before their construction. As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, the rehabilitation packages of people being displaced by dams were also to be assessed. Recently, resettlement and rehabilitation plans have also to be submitted to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Rangachari et al. 2000). However, neither Ministry can specify the content of a rehabilitation package, and their assessments remain legally non-enforceable.

To summarise, ‘50 years of planned development in India have entailed large-scale forced evictions of vulnerable populations, without the countervailing presence of policies to assist them to rebuild their lives’ (Hemadri et al. 2000: v). However, Cernea (1996: 1521) sardonically argues that ‘the absence of domestic public policy [on resettlement] is a policy by default’. The result is a catalogue of resettlement and rehabilitation failures. Hemadri et al. (2000) have identified eleven dominant trends in the Indian experiences of displacement and resettlement as a result of large dams. A few (notorious) examples will illustrate some of the problems identified.

First has been the failure to inform and consult those affected. For example, the ‘Fact finding Committee on the Srisailam Project’ (1984) reported that villagers displaced by the Srisailam dam knew little about the resettlement plans when required to move in 1981.

Second, inadequate planning for rehabilitation. Two well-known cases of displacement without advanced and comprehensive planning for rehabilitation are the Bargi and Ukai dam projects. In the former, most of the displaced were not even resettled. Only 10 per cent of the population were resettled, primarily due to the failure to prepare an adequate
resettlement and rehabilitation plan (Hemadri et al. 2000 cited in WCD 2000: 106). Part of the problem is that resettlement is determined by the construction schedule rather than the other way round. The pressure to move people as the dam wall rises, without well worked-out plans in advanced, leads to a form of resettlement that can only be described as ‘crisis management’ (Chakraborty 1986 cited in Hemadri et al. 2000). ‘Making things up as one goes along’ was also evident in the Ukai dam project as observed by Mankodi (1992) and earlier Chakraborty (1986) who said the final policy consisted of about 20 different resolutions made by different departments of the Gujarat Government over a five-year period.

The third problem has been inadequate compensation. This can apply to a number of assets from land to compensation for housing. For example, resettlement policy often compensates for demolished shelters at assessed rather than replacement value. This occurred in seven projects researched by Pandey (1998) in the state of Orissa.

The fourth problem is the inability on the part of those displaced to handle cash compensation.

Fifth has been a failure to acquire alternate cultivable land, central to restoring livelihoods. Failure to do so results in economic marginalisation. In the Upper Krishna Irrigation project, which displaced a minimum of 300,000 people, only a fraction (13 per cent) of the households that lost land eventually bought alternative land. Yet even these households only managed to replace about 21 per cent of the land they lost (Parasuraman 1999: 171).

Sixth has been the effects of traumatic forced and delayed relocation. For example, Pong Dam oustees experienced hurried and traumatic relocation when project authorities released water into the submergence zone (Bhanot and Singh, 1992; McCully, 1996).

Seventh, problems at the resettlement sites. This can include a whole range of problems from inadequate housing to poor drainage resulting in flooding. Some of the sites where
people displaced by the Srisailam dam were expected to live did not even have water provision.

Eighth, multiple displacements. Some oustees endure displacement not just once, but twice as a result of faulty planning. In the case of displacement caused by the Bargi Dam – the first on the Narmada river – oustees had to be moved a second time in 1990, when the authorities realised their surveyors had miscalculated the extent of the submergence zone, which now included the resettlement sites (McCully 1996).

Ninth, failure to provide alternative livelihoods, as was the case when people were displaced by the Bargi dam in the early 1990s (Billore undated; Roy 1999).

Tenth, problems with host communities. For example, Verghese (1990) describes the clashes that occurred in 1984 when land was being allotted to project-affected people in the Sabarkantha District in Gujarat, resulting in the death of five people.

The negative consequences of large dam development are not, moreover, distributed equally, as highlighted in the final category identified by Hemadri et al., referred to as special vulnerabilities. Certain sections of the population are affected disproportionately by development-induced displacement and resettlement. Tribal people are disproportionately represented. At least 40 per cent of those displaced by dams in India are tribals (Hemadri et al. 2000), although they only make up 8 per cent of the India population (Patwardhan 2000). Including the scheduled castes within these calculations, who make up 16 per cent of the population (Census of India 1991), the figure rises to 62 per cent of those displaced (Rangachari et al. 2000). See also Singh (1997) for a detailed break down of social compositions of displaced people.

Although India has signed up to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention calling distinct measures to protect the rights of indigenous and tribal people, it is forcing rapid change on them, which may annihilate their culture.\textsuperscript{18}
We have seen that tribal people are a marginalised section of society evident from the fact that displacement is most likely to be forced on them. The threat of further marginalisation arises because tribal groups are often ineligible for compensation as they lack documented legal rights to the land they cultivate and because they rely heavily on common property resources for which the Land Acquisition Act does not provide compensation.

One issue that has been the subject of much recent discussion is the effect of displacement on specific groups within the population affected. Women are disproportionately disadvantaged by displacement and resettlement. As women are usually responsible for collecting food, fuel, fodder and water, ‘any loss of access to traditional sources of livelihood – land, forest, sea, river, pasture, cattle or saltpan land – marginalizes women ... It is only when land and other sources are replaced that women at least partially regain their economic status’ (Parasuraman 1999: 226). Existing social inequalities in India are reinforced or even exacerbated by insensitive resettlement and rehabilitation policies, such as giving replacement land in the name of the male family members. Displacement for women is said to be a multiple attack on all fronts. For example, Indian women are generally much less mobile than men, hence the breakdown of village and social units affect them much more severely (Dhagamwar et al. 1997).

Thus a more radical critique of large dams has developed recently, labeling this type of development as profoundly inequitable. Critics such as Dhagamwar et al. (1997: 281) deem the doctrine of ‘greatest good for the greatest number’ inappropriate, especially in a country where massive inequalities already exist:

In the game of numbers played by the government to justify its development projects, the ... utilitarian assumption seems to be quite valid at first glance (and even on second and third glances). But how far does it work when the society is not homogeneous?

Rangachari et al. (2000) highlight the different kinds of impacts on equity that need to be considered. These include: equity between those who gain and those who lose; equity among those who lose; equity among those who gain (irrigation and power
benefits accrue mainly to the richer urban and rural population, and those at the head reach rather than tail end of canal systems); equity across generations (sustainable development); and finally equity between species, which is given the least attention in India.

To encompass all these various concerns, cost-benefit analysis on which the decision to proceed with large dams is made, should be replaced, not simply by a class-benefit analysis i.e. one that considers who benefits and who looses and to what degree (Singh et al. 1997, Kothari 1997), but with a fuller equity impact assessment (Reddy cited in Rangachari et al. 2000). Currently the Ministry of Environment and forestry is required to consider social costs and benefits under the Environmental Impact Assessment, but this should be, instead, an explicit evaluation with equity as a primary yardstick.

However these sorts of changes in decision-making procedure have not been forthcoming, neither has been a National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy, demonstrating for many a lack of commitment on the part of planners to safeguard the interests of the weakest in society, including people affected by the projects. By invoking the rhetoric of sacrifice for the greater common good, India's decision-makers imposed their policies on marginalised communities and then exonerated themselves of the responsibility to counteract the adverse effects of displacement. The result: a dearth of examples of sensitive and successful resettlement – 'the evidence ... found for "rehabilitation" suggests that only partial, late, and segmented rehabilitation has taken place' (Cernea 1999: 18).

In India and elsewhere, the debate about large dams had become so polarised in the last decade that an impasse has been created by pro- and anti-dam activists. This divide in thinking has found physical expression, in standoffs between pro and anti-dam activists at dam sites, including the Sardar Sarovar. The Indian anti-dam movement has linked up successfully with other anti-dam groups around the world and with a broad array of groups engaged in human rights, the environment and the rights of indigenous people, as well as those calling for greater democratization and increased participation of local
populations in the decisions and projects affecting them. They have combined to form an impressive and effective ‘transnational civil society’ in a process labeled ‘globalization from below’ (Brecher, Costello and Smith 1999 cited in Oliver-Smith 2001). By coming together (aided by the spread of modern communication technologies) these groups have been able to establish international movements, which are becoming increasingly difficult to ignore, notably the anti-dam movement.

To demonstrate the impact of this movement, The International Rivers Network (2001: 1) refer to a speech made by the President of ICOLD in 1992, in which he said the industry faced ‘a serious general counter-movement that has already succeeded in reducing the prestige of dam engineering in the public eye, and it is starting to make work difficult for our profession’. His warning was justified. The First International Meeting of People Affected by Dams took place in 1997 in Curitiba, Brazil. It was seen by the IRN as the first step in building and strengthening a global network of the dam-affected. Since this meeting there has been an ‘International Day of Action Against Dams’ held every year on 14th March, with campaigning events all round the world.

In between these events regional organisations have been working with larger organisations, for example the Narmada Bachao Andolan with the IRN, to halt or frustrate destructive river development projects and ‘revive’ rivers and their watersheds. The movement cites the shelving of the Bui Dam project on the river Volta in Ghana and the agreement by the Thai government to open (at least temporarily) the flood gates of the Pak Mun dam, seven years after its completion, as two of their recent successes. They have also had considerable success in pressurising multilateral development banks and export credit agencies from supporting large dams.

At the launch of the World Commission on Dams’ final report in 2000 (see section 2.6) the President of the World Bank was keen to emphasize how their involvement with large dams has been decreasing. Between 1970-1985 it is estimated that World Bank financing was involved in about 3 per cent of new dams projects, now reduced to about 1 per cent. However, just because donor agencies start to change their policy on large
dams (stop funding new ones or withdraw funding from existing projects) it does not mean that they will cease to be built; the Sardar Sarovar dam being a case in point.

2.5  Sardar Sarovar Project case study

2.5.1  Context

The Narmada, over 1300 km in length, is the largest westward flowing river on the Indian peninsula and the fifth largest in the country. Rising in the village of Amarkantak, the river is fed by many tributaries as it passes through Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat, on its way to the Arabian sea. Eager to harness this ‘wasted’ asset (ninety per cent of the river’s flow occurring during the brief monsoon months) planners first mooted their plans to dam the Narmada in 1946. Fifteen years later the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, laid the foundation stone for a dam near Kevadia village in Gujarat, but the project failed to get off the ground because the three states through which the Narmada passes argued over the distribution of water. The issue was only resolved in 1979 when the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal made its recommendations for water allocation. Once financing could be secured Gujarat would embark on its long awaited desire to tap the waters of the Narmada to provide irrigation and drinking water, particularly to the drought-prone regions of Kutch and Saurashtra, as well as provide electricity. In 1985 the World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors approved credit (No. 1552) and loan agreements (No. 2497) for the Sardar Sarovar Project totaling $450 million (Fisher 1997a; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1985). Hailed as the lifeline of Gujarat, the construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam, whose reservoir is expected to have a gross storage capacity of 7.7 MAF, submerging 39,134 hectares, began in earnest in 1987 (Figure 2.1).
The Sardar Sarovar is one of 30 major dams in the Narmada Valley Development Project, playing a specific role as the terminal dam on the river. The master plan includes 300 medium scale and 3000 small dams on the Narmada river itself or on its tributaries. With Sardar Sarovar still under construction, Bargi is the only completed major dam on the main river. Given the intensity of opposition and problems with implementation, the future of Narmada Sagar, Maheshwar and Omkeshwar dams – other significant schemes on the Narmada – remains highly uncertain. The Sardar Sarovar Project, however, having nearly reached its final height has come too far for abandonment. But it too has been the subject of fierce debate, leading eventually to the Indian government forgoing World Bank funding for the scheme in 1993. Claim after counterclaim by both the project advocates and anti-dam activists relate, not only to physical, technical, and financial performance of Sardar Sarovar, but also to social performance.
2.5.2 Technical and economic performance

As with other large dam projects the aims of the Sardar Sarovar dam are laudable. These are to: irrigate 1.8 million hectares of land, provide drinking water to 8,215 villages and 135 towns as well as generate electricity with an installed power capacity of 14500 MW. A final verdict on the technical and economic performance of the Sardar Sarovar dam is not possible since the project is incomplete. Nevertheless critics argue the project has and will fail to meet its targets, thus refuting the government's claim that the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) is the 'lifeline of Gujarat'.

Critics question first the ability of the Sardar Sarovar to provide irrigation to 3393 villages in over 12 districts as planned. Ram (1997) argues that the irrigation plans of SSP are fraught with problems. If the amount of irrigation that can be provided was 'properly' calculated the area receiving water decreases by as much as 58-69 per cent of the original estimate. He contends that the amount of water that will be lost through evaporation in the canals supplying water to fields is greater than the official estimates, meaning those at the tail end of the canal system will be deprived of water. This renders the official line, that the project will irrigate the most needy and drought-hit areas of Kutch and Saurashtra a 'mirage in the desert' (1997: 124).

Many authors (Shah 1997, Ram 1997, Paranjype 1990) assert that agricultural production will be hindered by the problem of soil salinisation and waterlogging in attempting to provide canal irrigation in a region not suited to it. Ram (1997) asserts 55 per cent of the command area appears to be in danger of suffering these two conditions and that 87 per cent of the water delivered for irrigation will have to be pumped back out of the ground to prevent waterlogging. Others (Patel C.C 1997; Blinkhorn and Smith 1997; Alagh and Buch 1997) refute this charge pointing to the numerous precautions undertaken to ensure the elaborate surface drainage network and canal system cause minimal salinity and waterlogging. They believe lessons have been learnt from past experiences and these have been incorporated into the design plans of the SSP.
Critics are far from convinced that the design plans of the Sardar Sarovar dam offer the best trade-off between power generation capacity and extent of submergence, both of which relate to the height of the dam. Some engineers such as Dharmadhikary (1997), now working for the Save the Narmada Movement, calculate that a small decrease in dam height would not significantly affect power generation, but it would importantly substantially reduce the area of land submerged. They add that the targets for power generation are, in any case, quite overoptimistic.

These shortcomings are of great concern, particularly given the enormous cost of the Sardar Sarovar Project. Crucially, the cost of the project is far greater than original estimates and keeps rising. This is primarily attributable to delays in project completion and according to Alvares and Billorey (1988) because the cost of catchment area treatment, resettlement and compensatory afforestation have all been underestimated. The combination of higher costs and over-valued benefits makes the benefit-cost ratio on which the project was sanctioned much less favourable. Alvares and Billorey (1988) calculate the benefit-cost ratio as no more than 0.38 compared to 1.84 quoted by project authorities. Paranjype (1990) and his team conduct their own benefit-cost analysis, finding a ratio of 0.66, but the final indictment is the same: that it is not worth undertaking a project involving such a huge investment which cannot even cover the interest on capital. With the project still under construction and no completion date certain the cost overruns continue to mount.

Given the pessimism about the technical and economic aspects alone, it is little wonder that there has been so much opposition to the Sardar Sarovar Dam. Unconvinced of the claims that the Sardar Sarovar is a case in which lessons (relating to technical aspects) have been learnt, critics have argued that the government should do away with this project from the past conceived in the 1950s in an era that promoted what is now an outdated development paradigm (Shah 1997), in favour of alternative ways of supplying irrigation and power. The alternatives include an expansion of lift-irrigation and small-scale reservoirs (Alvares and Billorey 1988), solutions provided by Suhas Paranjape and K. J. Joy (cited in Ghosh 1996) and creative ways of dealing with power shortages.
provided (Prof AK N Reddy; Peter Miller, 1989; Grish Sant, 1993; cited in Dharmadhikary 1997). All these challenge the rhetoric ‘There Is No Alternative’ (TINA) used by Mehta in 2001.

The debate about whether the Sardar Sarovar project is the ‘life-line of Gujarat’ is one that is hotly contested. Recognising that this project is too far gone to be abandoned, the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement), supported by the Government of Madhya Pradesh have proposed an alternative – that is to reduce the final dam height. Decreasing the height from 455 feet to 436 feet it is argued (see Dharmadhikary 1997) will reduce the number of people displaced by this project by 70 per cent.\(^{22}\) Displacement is the most disturbing aspect of large dam projects, although Blinkhorn and Smith 1997: 112) argue that displacement needs to be kept in perspective:

The basic problem that the project seeks to address, and the project’s ultimate objective – reliable water for one of the most severely drought-prone areas of India and better life for millions of poor people (the ratio of beneficiaries to oustees lies somewhere above 100:1) – have regrettably been overlooked.

2.5.3 Social performance

The intensity of debates in this arena is reflected in a vast and expanding literature on the Sardar Sarovar project. The most comprehensive volumes on this topic are *Towards Sustainable Development* edited by Fisher (1997) and *The Dam and the Nation* edited by Drèze, Samson and Singh (1997).

Official figures claim the Sardar Sarovar dam will lead to the displacement of 22,000 families from 245 villages in the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Two thirds of those due to be displaced are tribal (*adivasi*) people who will be moved from the hills to the plains, to live amongst villagers long exposed to the market economy and engage in livelihood practices typical of mainstream rural Indian culture rather than the *adivasi’s* domestic subsistence economy.\(^{23}\) Baviskar (1997) describes Narmada tribal people as having their own structures of organisation and social relations organised in an egalitarian fashion through webs of favours, obligation and reciprocity.
These ties are expressed and reproduced in all areas of life from agricultural practices, through structures maintaining law and order to marriage customs, all producing a sense of cohesion.\(^{24}\) Although tensions arise in daily life these actions and arrangements give the community an identity.

Much of the literature espouses the view that the movement of tribal, particularly Bhil people, away from the economic and socio-cultural milieu of the hills, will be an attack on both economic and social fronts leading to their annihilation. For example, Alvares and Billorey (1988) assert that the uprooting of tribals from their forest and river will be very traumatic and that many of them will just not survive when forcibly dispersed in far-flung, adverse environments:

> Besides serious economic deprivation, the displacement will affect the tribals’ very culture and basis of livelihood – their beliefs, myths and rituals, their festivals, songs and dances, all closely associated with the hills, woods and streams. As these disintegrate in their new harsh surroundings, so too will the joy of their existence. Are such human rights atrocities permissible? (1988: 18).

Pallit and Mody (1992) come to equally pessimistic conclusions believing the tribals will become part of the mass, cheap labour work-force, that they will fall into debt and that their social customs will become non-viable. The Narmada Bachao Andolan support this view.

However, it was not until August 1988 that the organizations working in the submergence villages of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra declared their total opposition to Sardar Sarovar. Prior to that they had worked in parallel with their counterparts in Gujarat, notably ARCH-Vahini and Oxfam, to lobby the World Bank to intervene and secure an appropriate resettlement and rehabilitation policy from the government over and above that decided by the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal. Although the resettlement package decided by the Tribunal in 1979 was groundbreaking in that it provided land-for-land rather than cash compensation, it did not go far enough to safeguard the majority of tribal families, as most do not formally own the land they cultivate. The NGOs demanded that ‘encroachers’ be provided with alternate land and that this provision should be applied to all adult males aged 18 years and over.\(^{25}\) The
two organizations working to mobilise the tribals in Maharastra and Madhya Pradesh made virtually identical demands, but the Maharastra organisation Narmada Dharangrast Samiti pressed for an additional concession, to allow the tribals to resettle on denuded forest land. The Maharastra tribals had identified this land in their region as somewhere they would be willing to resettle if entitlement to the resettlement package was extended to include ‘encroachers’.

Until the World Bank was alerted to these demands by letters from ARCH-Vahini and Oxfam, they were unaware of the fact that such large numbers of people by virtue of their classification as encroacher would be left out by the existing resettlement policies of the three states. In August 1983 the World Bank sent Professor Thayer Scudder (a leading international expert on resettlement and rehabilitation) on a mission to India to assess the situation. Scudder confirmed the facts presented by the NGOs and recommended the encroachers be given the same entitlements as land-holders otherwise the Bank would not be honouring its own requirement to ensure that the standard of living of displaced people should be regained if not improved following resettlement. This principle had been established in 1980 in the first comprehensive World Bank policy on the issue of development-induced displacement and resettlement, the World Bank’s Operational Directive on Resettlement and Rehabilitation.

Although the Government of India and the state governments vehemently resisted the pressure to include encroachers in the terms of the loan agreement with the World Bank, they had to accede in order to secure funding for the Sardar Sarovar project, as it had become the main sticking point to finalising the deal. Even then the state governments dragged their heels. The tribal people backed by the NGOs continually applied pressure on the state governments, and in December 1987 an announcement was made by the Government of Gujarat that all adult males aged 18 or over in 1987 would be entitled to 2 ha (5 acres) of land regardless of their land-ownership status. Patel (1997a and b) describes this as a significant victory and in the resulting wave of enthusiasm the Gujarat NGOs began working on ensuring proper implementation of the policy. It was regarded as the most liberal and revolutionary policy on resettlement Gujarat had ever seen.
Soon after the announcement in Gujarat, Patel (1997: 189) notes how the organizations working in Maharastra and Madhya Pradesh ‘stopped looking for the ways to achieve similar policies in their own states and started raising doubts about the policy of Gujarat’, questioning whether it could be implemented. This was followed in August 1988 by these organisations announcing their total opposition to the project, which was labelled as a ‘planned disaster’, claiming that the tribal peoples would rather ‘die in the lap of the Narmada’ from submergence than resettle. The Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement) was born and it was at this point that NGOs supporting the oustees divided into two main groups (Singh 1997). Members of ARCH-Vahini challenged this ‘U-turn’, questioning whether it was really led by the tribal people. The most damning evidence that the NBA placed the interests of the tribal people secondary to attacking the Sardar Sarovar Project is provided by the Taloda forest argument. NBA activists (who had previously demanded the release of denuded forest land in Maharashtra during their campaign for better resettlement policy) opposed the move to release the Taloda forest land on which some tribals had wanted to resettle. 27

According to Patel (1997b) withholding information from the tribal peoples is consistent with the goal of the anti-dam activists to fulfil their prophecy that resettlement is impossible. Others have also argued the NBA tried to thwart the process of successful resettlement and rehabilitation. Gill (1997) provides an account of how the ‘gaon bandhi’ (closed village) policy of the anti-dam movement that restricted access of all those involved in resettlement to the submergence villages was responsible in part for poor implementation. The ban on entry was not just restricted to senior civil servants; Dhagamwar (1997) recalls how her research team stopped going to the valley in 1989 as they were told by NBA activists that they were not welcome. ‘They did not want people to be informed about the resettlement offered under the NWDT Award, as this information would probably induce potential oustees to think of accepting resettlement, which in turn would weaken the movement’ (Dhagamwar 1997: 95). Although ARCH-Vahini have in recent years become decidedly less enthusiastic and disillusioned about their role in resettlement due to problems they encountered in working with the government and politicking of everyone involved (including oustees), Singh (1997: 8-9)
argues that their ‘success depends on achieving a collaborative relationship between the
government and the oustees, which the anti-dam movement is seen to obstruct, while the
NBA’s success largely depends on the continued failure of resettlement measures which
ARCH-Vahini is trying to prevent’.

Medha Patkar, leader of the NBA, defended complete opposition to the SSP in her
interview with Kothari (1997). They began to see the ‘bigger picture’, leading them to
conclude that the SSP was yet another unequitable and unsustainable form of
development. Although Gujarat had espoused a liberal policy, Madhya Pradesh and
Maharastra have not. This disparity renders meaningless the oustees’ supposed ability to
resettle in their own state if they so choose, since oustees are pressured to resettle in
Gujarat by its more attractive resettlement and rehabilitation policy. Furthermore, only
those displaced by submergence from the reservoir are entitled to benefit, whereas those
displaced by the construction of the Kevadia colony (government quarters where those
working on the SSP live) and those displaced to make way for the main canal from the
dam are not. She also claimed that they are justified in believing that adequate
resettlement policies are not available as Madhya Pradesh has yet to provide evidence
that they can provide enough land for resettlement.

This view was given backing by Morse and Berger (1992). Their involvement marked
the first time the World Bank had commissioned an independent review of one of the
projects it was funding. Although their report acknowledged some success in the
resettlement of tribal people in Gujarat, its overall assessment of the situation was that
the prospects for achieving successful resettlement and rehabilitation were slim.
Environmental issues were also not addressed adequately (Morse and Berger 1997). The
Review stated that the Bank had failed to ensure the borrower complied with the
regulations set out in the loan agreement and had allowed standards to be flouted, typical
of the Bank’s ‘approval cultural’ (see Wapenhams report 1992). Their findings and
recommendations have however been vigorously attacked on many grounds (Alagh and
Buch, 1997; Blinkhorn and Smith, 1997; Gill, 1997; Patel, 1997). Fisher (1997a)
concludes that the Independent Review fanned the flames of controversy rather than extinguished it.

Whether or not oustees have been properly resettled (at least according to the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal criteria) has been and continues to be a source of debate. The NBA, with the backing of the Madhya Pradesh State government, took this argument (and others) to the Supreme Court of India in 1994. In 1995 the Court prevented any further construction until the Gujarat government proved that the grievances of those already resettled had been addressed. The grievances in question included disputes over whether or not the land received was fit for cultivation. Later in the same year the court gave conditional clearance to raise the dam height from 80 to 88 m, but the final verdict came in October 2000. The court felt satisfied with the evidence provided by Gujarat about the work on resettlement and lifted the injunction on dam construction (Cullet 2001).

Analysis of the Narmada literature shows that some of the negative trends in the experience of development-induced displacement and resettlement identified by Hemadri et al. (2000), do not feature particularly in the Sardar Sarovar case, whereas others do.

The Multiple Action Research Group (a Delhi-based NGO) found that state governments had failed to inform and consult oustees about the SSP (MARG 1992). Thukral (1989) found they had been given defective information about their choices.

Second, the Narmada Bachao Andolan have continually argued there is inadequate planning for resettlement and rehabilitation demonstrated by the fact that Madhya Pradesh cannot show where they are to resettle all remaining oustees (NBA 1998).

Given that oustees were given land for land, relatively little is made of the issue of compensation, except to say that communal resources such as grazing land are not adequately compensated.
The fourth trend identified by Hemadri et al. – that is the inability to handle cash compensation – is happily not an issue, or at least does not feature in the literature on the Sardar Sarovar case, as oustees were given land (instead of cash to acquire land), a subsistence allowance per family and other agricultural grants. Also money for house construction is provided into bank accounts in installments as construction progresses, preventing it from being frittered away.

The provision of land for land by the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal reduces the possibility of the fifth trend occurring, that is the failure to acquire alternate land. The literature does, however, explain how the richer farmers in Madhya Pradesh, owning more than 8 acres will not see full replacement of their land due to the land ceiling (Dwivedi 1999). There is also reference to those losing land to make way for Kevadia Colony (new mini-town housing Sardar Sarovar project staff) and the irrigation canals, as in neither case will alternate land be provided.

Six, Bela Bhatia argues that the tribal people did experience traumatic relocation if one uses an expanded definition of forced eviction. This includes ‘displacement without the full satisfaction of stipulated requirements, or under circumstances in which the displaced persons were unable to exercise their own free will and judgement’ (Bhatia 1997: 267).

Seven, problems at the resettlement sites are documented in a whole host of literature. Under the loan agreement the three states were to commission independent research institutes to carry out bi-annual monitoring and evaluation reports. In Gujarat the Centre for Social Studies carried out this task, producing 24 reports covering 120 sites occupied by Gujarat oustees. The Gujarat Institute of Development Research (GIDR) undertook a similar exercise for the Madhya Pradesh and Maharastra oustees resettled in Gujarat. These reports highlight a gamut of problems at the resettlement sites needing to be addressed, concerning for instance, the number of people receiving poor quality land, the sites lacking amenities such as school rooms, tree platforms etc. The Gujarat government also had to prove that grievances brought to the attention of the Supreme
Court by the NBA had been dealt with and this requirement resulted in a series of field-visit reports on the status of resettlement. There are many other reports by other researchers and research teams about conditions at the resettlement sites that come to overwhelmingly negative conclusions. Sometimes they highlight problems that are capable of a solution, but some also to make the point that the SSP is simply unworkable. These include Parasuraman’s 1999 report on Parveta resettlement site, hosting oustees from Maharashtra, Dixit and Karamchandani (undated) on Karnet resettlement site and the People’s Union for Civil Liberties (1995) on conditions in a large number of sites. There are many more studies of this kind asserting that, although the resettlement package looks good on paper the reality is very different.

Eight, the subject of multiple displacements is not apparent in the literature, although that is not to say it has not occurred.

Nine, pro-dam supporters argue that the failure to provide alternative livelihoods (the ninth trend in Indian experiences of development-induced displacement) is negated by the land-for-land provision, as oustees continue to make their living from farming. Others do not see how resettlement on small plots of land in the plains provides oustees’ with sustainable livelihoods (Pallit and Mody 1992).

Ten, problems with host communities are noted in the report by Morse and Berger (1992), but it is mostly dam critics who report this as an issue.

Lastly, it seems the Sardar Sarovar case has not escaped the problem of special vulnerabilities, identified as another trend in the experience of large dams in India by Hemadri et al. (2000). Many studies critique SSP on the grounds that it exacerbates inequality. As noted earlier, two-thirds of those to be displaced are tribal people; this is regarded an attack on the most vulnerable group in society. Singh (1992) objects to the fact that women are not recognised as a separate entity in the resettlement policies of the states. Their dependence on men therefore makes them more vulnerable at the vasahats.

As regards to those who benefit, Prajapati (1997) observes that although the project
disallows intensive water use, many new sugar factories are planned or underconstruction in the command area, signaling the intention of big farmers and the landed elite to switch production to growing water-guzzling sugar cane.

In short much of the literature on the social performance of SSP, like the Independent Review, comes to the negative conclusion that it is not possible to resettle and rehabilitate such large numbers of people adequately.

Whilst not all writers are promoting a case either for or against the dam, the literature review on the technical, economic and social performance of the Sardar Sarovar project reveals the differences between those who are. The anti-dam lobby believe that the project is not one that has gone wrong, but a typical project born of a flawed model of development, with the only difference being one of scale. So extreme is their concern about this that Alvares and Billorey (1998: 49) go as far as saying that the project paves ‘the way for the planned execution of what may eventually turn out to be the world’s worst human and environmental tragedy’. Whereas Patel (1997b) and others argue that the project has suffered from a tendency to attract the general critique of large dams and poor experiences of the past, without substantiating whether or not this is legitimate i.e. without sufficient evidence that the general critique holds true. Thus the debate on SSP rages.

2.6 Current positive thinking on large dams: World Bank policy, World Commission on Dams and the Indian response

Amongst years of intense debating about large dams significant gains have been made in the arena of development-induced displacement and resettlement. The latest efforts focus squarely on developing ways of ensuring acceptable ‘development’, but this process really began in the first attempts to resettle people ‘properly’ by learning lessons of past.

Early on in the experience of development-induced displacement and resettlement it became obvious to project authorities, state and national governments that something
needed to be done about displaced populations. Early attempts at resettlement included efforts to secure some economic resources for displaced people as well as providing them with housing often in ‘resettlement colonies’. Some of these, not altogether successful, attempts were extensively documented in the literature: for example the resettlement of Nubian people following construction of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt. Here inappropriate house and settlement design led to the abandonment of many houses in the resettlement colony (Fahim 1983). Similarly in one of the first large dam projects in India – the Hirakud – only one in ten of those displaced chose to live in the resettlement colonies (Baboo 1996 cited in Koeing 2001). Planners did learn from previous mistakes and acknowledged the value of the input from anthropologists and other social-scientists in designing resettlement schemes. Solutions that went some way to dealing with resettlement problems, such as helping people to construct their own houses using locally available materials, were disseminated.

Although social-scientists were being employed by project authorities, the social science literature was, however, littered with example after example of poor resettlement, leading Koeing (2001: 6) to conclude that ‘The isolated attempts at improving resettlement were not all that successful’. Cernea (1993) cites some of the classic work that appeared including that by Herbert Gans in the 1950s and 60s, and by Burman (1961), whose study of the impact of building the Rourkela industrial complex in India established a research model used by others later studying dams.

It became apparent that more needed to be done to synthesise the experiences (see Koeing 2001). The most useful and influential work in this regard is that of Michael Cernea who identified the risks that a displaced community is likely to face as well as their causes. These are unemployment, homelessness, landlessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, loss of access to common property, increased morbidity, and social disarticulation. The value of identifying the risks in this way is that they point to the factors that need to be addressed in order to mitigate them and reconstitute livelihoods, hence it is known as the ‘Risks and Reconstruction’ model (Cerneea 1995, 1997). For
example, the risk of impoverishment through becoming landless is significantly reduced when project authorities provide land for land instead of cash compensation.

Cernea has always argued that it is not enough for social scientists to present their evaluations of resettlement to planners; they must also actively participate in formulating and shaping policy. He writes 'The “enlightenment model” of social science influence over society … which contended that simply exposing social ills would lead to their correction – proved little more than a well-intentioned illusion in the case of forced displacement' (Cernea 1993: 19). To address this ‘cognitive dissonance’ Cernea assumed an instrumental role in formulating the World Bank’s first resettlement policy, launched in February 1980. The policy has been revised a number of times (see Cernea 1993 for details) and the latest version is issued as Operational Directive 4.30 on Involuntary Resettlement. The main principle, that the standard of living of those displaced should be restored if not improved, was a clear statement that the utilitarian ‘balance sheet’ approach that left so many destitute was unacceptable. It also stated at the outset that in considering projects for funding the Bank would, when feasible, seek the least displacing alternative (Cernea 1988). The need for such a policy cannot be understated considering the number of projects the World Bank was funding that resulted in displacement during the 1980s.

The policy guidelines that have been drawn up by Cernea have gone a long way to moving resettlement away from a ‘salvage and welfare’ operation to one that pursues development objectives. The World Bank’s policy directive ‘has become the de facto international standard for the rights of the resettled and the obligations of those responsible’ (Downing 1999: 2). Other multi-lateral agencies have followed by example and produced their own principles and guidelines relating to resettlement following dam construction and the like. For example, in November 1995 the Asian Development Bank launched their own policy on Involuntary Resettlement (ADB 1995, 1998).

Without a doubt these policies do improve resettlement outcomes. Cernea (1997: 13) attributes China’s improved resettlement performance in the last decade to major
changes introduced in its national policies and legal environment surrounding resettlement operations. However, anti-dam activists argue that they still do not prevent economic, social and cultural impoverishment. In doing so they are quick to use Sardar Sarovar as an example. Nevertheless these reformist policies will go some way to delivering the objective of anti-dam activists, in that they will probably lead to fewer large dams being commissioned that displace great numbers. I would argue that this is achieved in two related ways. In responding to pressure by the public and international agencies Governments have to demonstrate that the projects they promote do not lead to impoverishment, in order to secure funding. This means the cost of resettlement has to be fully internalised within the project itself and the increased cost should deter governments or at the very least encourage them to search for cheaper alternatives. Cheaper alternatives will be those that displace fewer people. It is perhaps with this thinking in mind that opponents and proponents of large dams came together in May 1998 to take part collectively in the World Commission on Dams.

The Commission was born in 1997 when delegates at a World Bank sponsored workshop in Switzerland proposed its creation. Funded by 53 contributors (including governments, international agencies, private sector companies, NGOs and other foundations), the work of the Commission was conducted under 12 commissioners, chaired by Professor Kader Asmal, Minister of Education, South Africa. Essentially, the Commission came about because the heated debate about large dams had created an impasse between anti-dam activists and supporters of these projects. Thus it was formed not only to conduct a global review of the performance of dams but to also to find a way out of the deadlock.

The World Commission on Dams report, published in 2000, states, ‘The debate about dams is a debate about the very meaning, purpose and pathways for achieving development’ (WCD 2000: xxxiii). At the heart of this debate is the question of whether or not big dams can be equitable, especially when approached from the perspective of the powerless. Whilst anti-dam activists will answer ‘no’ to this question the Commission thinks otherwise. It contends that with a change in the decision-making
process for development some large dams can be justified and their benefits distributed more equitably. To this end the report offers a new framework for decision-making – one that will improve the development-effectiveness of future decisions by its consideration of all the benefits, impacts and risks of large dam projects to all parties. This requires the introduction of new voices into the decision-making process - that is all those affected – and a process that builds consensus. Five principles (which, translate as tests) need to be applied to decisions on water and energy development. These are equity, efficiency, participatory decision-making, sustainability and accountability. Applying these tests in the decision-making process will improve outcomes for all parties. The rights and risks approach advocated by the commission sees clarification of relevant rights (rights of the developer/investor, rights to a place, rights to water by different states through which a river flow etc) and an assessment of the risks (not just for developers but anyone affected by proposed development/development alternatives). Only with full appreciation of everyone’s rights and risks can competing interests and needs be reconciled with everyone that has a right to do so assessing the risks they are prepared to take to achieve/secure a benefit.

This approach has great significance for potential oustees. For them this in effect means a shift from the notion of involuntary resettlement to voluntary resettlement, as they would have taken part in the decision to proceed with a dam project having calculated that the entitlements they will receive outweigh the risks of resettlement. It is however acknowledged that this approach will not work of its own accord. Involuntary risk bearers must have the legal right to engage with the risk takers to ensure the rights and risks are negotiated on equal terms.

The report is ultimately optimistic that ‘decision-making on water and energy management will align itself with the emerging global commitment to sustainable human development and on the equitable distribution of costs and benefits’ (WCD 2000: xxxiii).

How the Commission’s report has been received in India, especially by the Government, I cannot say. Government, like any other institution, is not monolithic – a point made by
Fisher (1997) in his analysis of the Sardar Sarovar case. Seemingly determinate structures can be altered and different sections within an institution respond differently to applied pressure. This is certainly the case in India and it can be argued that Sardar Sarovar, with all the negativity surrounding it, is also a story of successful maneuvering on the part of tribal peoples and NGOs to secure benefits that the authorities were initially unwilling to concede. What is, however, obvious is that enormous strides have been made with regard to displacement and resettlement in India. The fact that the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal award in 1979 gave land for land in the Sardar Sarovar case, instead of cash compensation, shows that some lessons were being learnt, even if only some oustees were included. Granted that some improvements in resettlement policy such as land for those without formal title deeds, have only come about through World Bank and public pressure and that ‘as long as the governments define R & R entitlements on the basis of intensity of protest, unity among the displaced, and the bargaining power of the people affected, there can be no common minimum needs package’ (Parasuraman 1997: 58). However, I would argue that Parasuraman underestimates the amount of change that can be brought about. Perhaps the most promising development in India in recent years is the proliferation of people’s movements outside the conventional space of politics that combine red (human/class) and green (environmental) agendas (see Guha, 1988; Baviskar, 1997). In an age of globalisation these movements draw our attention to place and remind us that development, as all too often practised, involves the separation of local life from a sense of place. Forcing that separation on people – dis-placing them – should be avoided whenever possible. The arguments of these movements are increasingly entering into the mainstream, which is extremely important because the government is much less likely to overlook the interests of the marginalised if society at large demands justice for all its citizens.

Through such a shift in attitude, policies such as the National Policy for Resettlement and Rehabilitation may finally emerge out of the ‘black hole’ that it is currently in. The Draft National Policy circulated by the Ministry of Rural Development is apparently stalled somewhere at cabinet level. This was the Ministry’s second draft produced in
1994, following consultation with 15 other ministries, and significantly it acknowledged displacement as suffering which ought to be addressed not merely for the purpose of satisfying international donors. There are, however, gaps in the draft, for instance it talks of displacement with consent but does not explain how this will be ensured. In the meantime, therefore, an alternative draft was produced by 1500 NGOs in India and presented to the Ministry in October 1995.

One of the fifteen points made in the alternative draft was that no development should be allowed that irreversibly disrupts the traditional culture of a community (see Fernandes and Paranjype [1997] for details). This point is likely to be one step too far for governments to accept as it could be argued any that change irreversibly disrupts culture. Enshrining the aforementioned principle in law would ossify culture as well, curtailing all development efforts. Also there are some aspects of ‘traditional’ culture that are oppressive to some people in those communities. In any case change will happen without development interventions. Perhaps such a stipulation is unnecessary if the rights and risks based approach offered by the World Commission on Dams is adopted. Potential displacees should be free to calculate for themselves the risk of resettlement compared with the entitlements (rights) gained through the move. They may find the risk worth taking, in which case involuntary resettlement can become more like voluntary resettlement. Quite often resistance to development occurs because those affected are not able to calculate the risks, for example, they are not given proper information about the project; the decision-making processes are not transparent, entitlements are vague; or entitlements are not guaranteed. Thus in order to avoid resistance project authorities must be transparent, provide information and allow people to engage in the development of their resettlement and relocation plans.

Although it is difficult to come across examples of successful resettlement in the Indian literature where this more progressive approach has been used, some do exist. Burra et al. (2002) describe a resettlement programme in Mumbai in which 60,000 people were moved, without coercion, to make way for improvements in the capital’s railway system. Of course sometimes the socio-economic and cultural risk to the people, no matter what
the benefits, will be too great for them to accept. No doubt one of the things oustees will want to weigh up in their calculations is whether or not the inducements offered by project authorities are worth the risk of leaving their 'home'. This then raises the issue of what happens to those who feel the risk is not worth taking, rejecting all offers, especially in dam development projects where it is all or nothing – you leave or you drown. Ultimately the issue comes back to a dictatorship of the majority (of those affected) and to utilitarian principles, but the 'rights and risk’ approach is still better in that at least those affected have collectively had a genuine say in the outcome.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed the intense debate surrounding large dams, which India has not escaped. The previous experience of large dams in India has not been a happy one on many counts. They have often not delivered the expected benefits, but have instead incurred huge costs, which are not acknowledged in the cost-benefit analysis on which they are based. The costs have instead been shouldered by vulnerable sections of Indian society. It is argued that much of the literature on SSP has been plagued by a tendency to invoke failures of the past in assessing this present-day project, but this tendency is not unreasonable unless proponents of the scheme can demonstrate convincingly that they no longer apply.

Thus with pro- and anti-dam activists both writing profusely in order to prove their respective points that resettlement on this scale can or cannot work (simultaneously contributing to discussions about appropriate development) an assessment of resettlement by the oustees can become dis-placed from the debate or submerged like their place of origin. The next chapter introduces an approach I have chosen to listen to the voices of the oustees and their assessment of resettlement and rehabilitation.
Notes for Chapter 2

1 Large Dams, as defined by the International Commission on Large Dams (INCOLD) are those having a dam wall above 15m in height from the lowest general foundation to the crest. Dams between 10-15 m may also qualify as large if they satisfy a number of another criteria (see Rangachari et al. 2000).

2 See section 2.3.1 on India.

3 Although there are some beneficial impacts to the ecosystem such as the creation of a reservoir providing a suitable habitat for wetland species, the evidence overwhelmingly shows negative impacts (Rangachari et al. 2000).

4 Estimates of displacement vary widely. The root cause is the lack of systematic recording of displacement figures by the authorities of some top large-dam building nations. Missing or incomplete data challenges others to make their own calculations, using their own methodologies, which are in themselves debatable. For example, to arrive at his estimate of world-wide displacement, McCully gathers data on 120 completed dams for which data is available, in countries excluding China and India (a fraction of the total number built but includes most of those with the largest number of evictions). He finds that these dams displace a total of 2.1 million people. For Indian displacement figures McCully cites the Indian Social Institute estimate of 14 million evictees. For China, he rejects the official figure of 10.2 million, choosing instead an unspecified figure from a range suggested by Dia Qing (a fierce opponent of the Three Gorges dam) who believes that between 40 to 60 million people have been displaced. Choosing – for an unknown reason – a figure from the lower end of Qing’s range, McCully concludes that a realistic estimate of world-wide dam evictees would be around 60 million. This figure lies within the range suggested by the World Commission on Dams. The Indian Government does not accept the displacement statistics featuring in the WCD report, alleging that they make no sense in comparison to the figures quoted for Indian dam displacement. The India statistics are discussed more fully in Section 2.4.3.

5 Decommissioning as explained by McCully (1996) includes anything from merely closing down electricity generation to the costly and challenging exercise of completely removing a dam and restoring the river to it’s former state.

6 Rangachari et al. (2000) state that from fewer than 300 large dams existing at the time of Independence, the number of dams constructed and under construction has to risen to about 4291. Their figures are based on the National Register of Large Dams compiled by the Government of India.

7 Perhaps one of the underlying reasons for wanting to create a centralist and state-orientated nation was the fear of division, particularly the creation of an East and West Pakistan.

8 The issue of contested development has just as much relevance in India today as it did at the time of Nehru and Gandhi. Many more recent critiques of India’s development ideology can be described as ‘Ecological Marxism’ (Baviskar 1997).

9 Lipton first wrote about urban bias in relation to Indian development and felt that whilst planning under urban bias had ‘achieved a great deal in rural India’ (Lipton 1968:147), on the whole development had been retarded by this phenomenon – even more so in other developing countries as he was to find later. In the first instance the agricultural sector is squeezed (farming is left alone, few resources are provided and it is heavily taxed) and its outputs (food and raw materials) are obtained cheaply for the cities to finance industrial development (Lipton 1989). Subsequent policies arising out the deficiencies of the original approach, he argues, are seldom free of urban bias, reflecting the city based orientation of city based planners.

10 The emphasis on canal irrigation and large dams for agriculture can be placed in a longer historical context. For example, as far back as the fourteenth century Firoz Shah created the original version of the celebrated Western Yumuna Canal. After falling into disrepair it was later renovated or remodelled under various Mughal rulers and by the British. Habib (1999)
presents evidence of other large canals that were dug during the Mughal period, especially in Northern India. In 1817 the British commenced their canal-building activity in India, initially modifying indigenous works and then embarking on their own projects beginning in 1836 with the Ganges Canal (Stone 1984). According to Singh (1997) the British replaced diverse traditional irrigation systems by a standardised response based on civil engineering. Rather than developing water management techniques, the British concentrated on canals and technological expertise. Whilst this may be an overly simplistic interpretation of irrigation development under British rule, critics like Whitcombe (1972) regard the basic approach to have been generally unhelpful to peasant communities. The large dam technology of the 1930s provided the final break between traditional irrigation science and this 'scientific' approach.

Government agricultural development or welfare schemes are currently based around the following classifications: big farmers are those with more than two hectares, smaller farmers with between one and two hectares and marginal farmers with less than one hectare, irrespective of the land being irrigated or not.

Rangachari et al. (2000) also observe that even lower standards (whereby benefits could be the same as the costs) were considered acceptable for projects in drought-prone areas.

Projects qualify for approval if the promoters can demonstrate a cost-to-benefit ratio equal to or higher than 1:1.5 i.e. every rupee worth of costs requires a return of 1.5 rupees. Thus, benefits to the economy (for example, the increased income generated from higher yields, value of the fishing industry that develops in the dam reservoir etc.) must be one and half times the costs (for example, capital costs of the project, loss of revenue from land outlined for submergence etc.). Rangachari et al. (2000:56) find that in their own evaluation of some 11 command area development projects, 6 failed to reach the qualifying ratio of 1.5, thus confirming their view that projects usually have higher actual costs than what is stated on paper.

Roy (1999: 58) notes 'there has not been an official audit, a comprehensive, post-project evaluation, of a single Indian Big Dam to see whether or not it has achieved what it set out to achieve'.

No mention is made of the size of external funding in the 1990s.

See Rangachari et al. (2000) for a full account of the procedure for inclusion of projects into the National Plan and the way in which the playing field for large irrigation projects and 'alternatives' are far from even.

Walter Femandes is the head of the Programme for tribal studies at the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi. Many others have contributed to this highly politically charged debate (see Bhalla 1999, Kak 1999).

Some critics, however, argue that it is not appropriate to talk of non-tribals benefiting at the expense of tribal people for this sharp distinction is not appropriate in the Indian context (Joshi 1997). If there is a difference it is just a question of how far a cultural group is along the tribe-caste continuum.

Those affected by development projects were often in the Indian context referred to as oustees. Dhagamwar (1992) notes a shift in nomenclature to 'project affected people' to reflect the array of people impacted by such projects not just those uprooted from their houses. The shortened version pap is commonly used although some critics object to such dehumanising terminology and it is best avoided.

Cernea's conclusion is made in relation to case studies of Indian resettlement complied by Dr Parasuraman (1999)

The estimated cost of the Sardar Sarovar in 1983 prices was Rs. 42 billion. The actual cost by 1994 was Rs. 342 billion (McCully 1996: 299). See Turton (2002: 60) and Shah (1997: 355) for more details about cost of the Sardar Sarovar Project.

The Government of Gujarat refute the suggestion that a reduction in dam height will have minimum impact on the dam's performance, stating that 'there would be a loss of 230 to 350 MKwh per year in the beneficial use of water for power generation and power will be only seasonal' and in terms of water availability the loss 'works out to 1.52 Million Acre Feet
The Supreme Court in its judgement on 18th October 2000 endorsed the Gujarat Government's view, ordering that construction continue as per the parameters set out in the award of the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (1979).

Baviskar (1997) describes how the crops grown by *adivasi* do not require them to follow a rigid agricultural schedule, unlike in the plains where cash crops are grown. She notes that this flexibility allows people to organise 'laabs' whereby, when an agricultural task exceeds the capacity of an individual household, others in the village are called upon to help out. In return the host family provides a feast and will be able to help others when needed. This applies to house construction as well. The web of favours that develops is based on the recognition of mutual dependence.

Communal work, group dancing, story-telling, worship of the natural and supernatural world and attending markets and fairs together all serve to foster a community spirit. This is heightened by *adivasis'* relative independence from mainstream society (Baviskar 1997).

Morse and Berger (1992: 70) define encroachers as, 'the people, who as a result of successive political and economic pressures over a long colonial history, find themselves to be illegal uses of what they have believed to be their own lands'. *Adavasis* in the Narmada Valley became 'encroachers' overnight with the British government of India classified forests with reserved status.

At the time the Gujarat resettlement policy was the least satisfactory as the state government tried to capitalise on the fact that the Tribunal's directions on the resettlement package did not explicitly refer to these as applicable to Gujarat government. The government argued that the only condition placed on them by the Tribunal was that they were to resettle any Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra oustees wishing to relocate to Gujarat to be in the command area of the project. If oustees chose to resettle within their home states the cost of their relocation would be borne by the Gujarat government since it has the most to gain from the project.

The Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh NGOs, with the support of the World Bank, Prof Scudder and others, had criticized the Ministry for not honouring the World Bank loan agreement by refusing to release forest land for oustees. In June 1990 the Ministry announced they would consent to the resettlement of tribals on the Taloda forest land. However, in the interim the Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra NGOs had declared their objection to the SSP. Consequently when the announcement was made the NBA supplied a memorandum to the Maharashtra government, claiming to represent the views of tribal people in the thirty-three Maharashtra submergence villages, stating that they no longer wanted the land (as they were totally opposed to displacement and resettlement). Only later, when the tribals came to know that such a decision had been taken on their behalf by the anti-dam activists, did some come forward to say that they did in fact want the forest land as per their original demands.

The document presented by the NBA is civil writ petition No. 319, 1994.

This latest directive has been widely critised. Downing (2002) argues that it weakens existing World Bank policy on resettlement and rehabilitation.

Other key elements of the World Bank policy include a commitment to minimising/avoiding displacement, allocating resources and sharing benefits, moving people in groups, promoting participation, rebuilding communities, considering hosts' needs, protecting indigenous people (Cerneaa 1997).
3 Theorising home to study resettlement

3.1 Introducing thesis assertions

The main theme of this thesis concerns the notion of place, more specifically the home place. The sub-themes are identity and development. There exist numerous linkages in the relations between these terms. Cultural identity is often perceived as bound up with place as suggested when a group is said to occupy a ‘homeland’. The link between personal identity and place can be equally strong as individuals identify with ‘home-places’ or feel themselves ‘out of place’ in spaces largely claimed by others. Identities of places are frequently contested. Massey (1995) writes about how the meaning of a place may vary between different groups and such meanings may be mobilised in battles over the material future of places: for example whether a new development should occur or whether a place should remain ‘unspoilt’. In Chapter 2 we learnt how one such battle is occurring at the moment in the Narmada Valley, where tribal people are being forced to move from their homes in the hills as a result of the construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam. I believe that, ideally, resettlement should be avoided and governments should pursue alternative forms of development. If, however, the dam is to go ahead, the main argument of this thesis is that proper resettlement cannot be achieved without a full understanding of what home means to those displaced.

Guidelines from donor agencies, provide the framework for resettlement, but in themselves are insufficient – they need to be built on. Through this investigation into the experience of resettlement and rehabilitation in the Narmada Valley, I aim to demonstrate the merit in giving explicit consideration to ‘home’ when designing resettlement policy. India is currently drafting a National Resettlement Policy and I wish to contribute to the body of knowledge on which those drafting such legislation can draw.
3.2 Resettlement challenges

Project Authorities responsible for Development-induced displacement and resettlement face enormous challenges. For successful resettlement they must ensure all possible forms of impoverishment (described in Chapter 2) are mitigated/averted. In this thesis I focus on three challenges that need to be addressed and contend that in each of these areas making home the focus is 'a good place to start'.

**Economic marginalisation** Cernea (1997b) identifies three forms of impoverishment in this regard: unemployment, landlessness and marginalisation. It is taken as given that successful resettlement is not possible if the people displaced cannot sustain a livelihood as good as or better than that enjoyed prior to resettlement. Whether this is through settling people back on cultivable land or income-generating employment, securing means to an adequate living is the heart of the matter in reconstructing livelihoods. The hearth after all can only be sustained through some form of production.

**Homelessness** Being homeless can occur at two levels. The first is the condition of not having a shelter – a proper roof over your head. Cernea (1997a) describes how the risk of homelessness increases when the resettlement policy compensates for demolished shelters at assessed value rather than replacement value. On a psychological level oustees can feel homeless when they feel alienated in their new houses or settlements, expressing little place attachment to their new living area. This sense of placelessness was first discussed in the 1970s literature concerning the resettlement of Nubians after the construction of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt (Fahim 1983; Tadros 1982). The pioneering work of architect Hassan Fathy demonstrated that a key to successful resettlement hitherto not considered was socially and culturally appropriate house and settlement design. Perhaps one of the most poignant observations was made by Polk (1973) when he compared housing with clothing: if it is not the right size, style, colour or design it will feel uncomfortable. Unfortunately resettlement agencies do not always make efforts to provide or assist in the (re)creation of appropriate house and settlement design. In other cases, oustees choose not to reside in houses that architects have
carefully modelled after their original houses. When Huichol people were displaced by the Aguamilpa dam in Western Mexico architects and anthropologists worked together to recreate traditional thatched roofed housing, unaware that thatch was all the Huichol could afford, not the material of their choice. Guggenheim (1993) records one oustees' response to the designers: 'thatch may look very refreshing and folkloric for you who come from far away, but you don’t have to live with scorpions falling into your soup every time you sit down to dinner' (cited in Downing 1999: 5).

In this thesis I argue that to ‘get it right’ planners of development projects need to understand the meaning of home for the population facing displacement. For example, what aspects of home are valued? What features of their original homes would they like to see changed? Consideration can then be given as to how their wishes can be incorporated into the design of the built environment to avoid the emotional side of being homeless.

Social Disarticulation Theodore Downing (1999b) makes the point that the most underdeveloped area with regards to risk aversion is the last category identified by Cemea, that of social disarticulation. Despite attempts to mitigate social impoverishment, involuntary displacement frequently unravels the underlying social fabric causing the weakening of social networks and family life support systems and the collapse of authority systems. ‘The people may physically persist but the community that was – is no more’ (Downing 1991b: 1). Social impoverishment, he claims, is the result of the disruption to routine relations of social time and social space. These ‘social geometries’ are crucial dimensions of any culture. In routine culture, people navigate within a space-time continuum in which they chart their positions within socially-constructed time, socially-constructed space and among socially-constructed personages. Relocatees are forced to re-examine their primary cultural questions – ‘where are we?’ means for most people in this situation also re-examining, ‘who are we’? Disruption occurs along multiple dimensions of spatial-temporal order. Downing believes that mitigating social impoverishment begins by reconstructing in a culturally appropriate manner the social geometry of the displaced. He identifies ten salient properties of the social space-time continuum which include, for example, ‘moral
ordering’. This property refers to the way in which certain kinds of people are allowed or denied access to certain places at certain times according to the moral standards of a culture.

I would argue that if recreating social geometry is crucial to mitigating social impoverishment then, again, one could do worse than to ‘home in’ on the home. Most of the salient properties of the space-time continuum are the same as those that feature in the literature about the meaning of home and what it means to be at home (see Section 3.6.1). For example, ‘control, manipulation and recreation’, one of the properties identified by Downing equates to the meaning of home as acting upon and modifying one’s dwelling.

It seems curious that in the resettlement literature an explicit focus on the home is virtually non-existent. Perhaps it is not so surprising when we recall that literature on the concept of home is relatively recent. It is only over the last ten-twenty years that a significant body of literature has developed. Even so ‘three decades of feminist geographical research have not secured house and home a place on disciplinary agendas’ (Varley, 2003). This is in itself very surprising considering the fundamental importance of home.

3.3 The significance of home

‘Being human means: being on earth as a mortal, that is, to dwell’ (Heidegger 1958: 173 cited in Korosec-Serfaty 1985: 69). The use of the same word to describe either the act of living (dwelling) or to describe where a person lives (a dwelling) illustrates a fundamental connection between people and their abode. The house or home is almost universal even though its form may vary and ‘in many societies, homes are one of the most important places’ (Altman, Oxley and Werner 1985: xix). This is not surprising if we consider the amount of time spent at home, the amount of capital invested in it, the amount of goods produced or consumed there and the quantity of leisure and recreational activities that happen there. Of greatest importance, according to Stretton, is that ‘people are produced there and endowed there with the values and capacities which will determine most of the quality of their social life and government away from home’ (Stretton 1976 cited in Saunders 1989: 177). It is therefore not an exaggeration to state that
houses or homes are the core of our lives. The depth of the relationship between people and their abodes is illustrated by Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995: 3) when they suggest that ‘the space of house is inhabited not just in daily life but in the imagination’. When writing about houses Bachelard (1964 cited in Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 1) claims ‘they are in us as much as we are in them’.

Governments have long recognised the significance of home and have used the concept in their political campaigns. For example, Buckley (1996 cited in Domosh 1998) describes how Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone appears on television promoting the home as the site of ‘family values’ in preparation for welfare functions being handed over from the state to its ‘rightful’ place – the family. Similarly the ‘home’ has been strategically modified and used by activists as part of nationalist struggles (Chatterjee 1993). For example, Ruonavaara (1996) describes the role of the Martha Organisation in Finland which educated working-class women in domestic economy to ensure the nation could be self-sufficient in times of crisis in the struggle against Russification. It is curious then that academics, especially geographers, have been slow on the uptake in engaging with the home. It is only relatively recently that the ‘home’ has been put on the agenda.

3.4 Reasons for the neglect of the home in social science research

Various reasons are postulated for the common neglect of this topic in the social sciences (including geography). I present five categories of explanation.

First I would suggest that just as the people who are closest to us frequently get taken for granted, houses or our homes share the same fate. Speaking at the Sixth International Conference on ‘Maharastra: Culture and Society’, Sharad Pawar, former Chief Minister of Maharastra (1998: ix) said of the ‘home’, it ‘forms such a major part of our background and upbringing that, like the air we breathe, we have ceased to think about it and tend to take it for granted’. Complacency can arise from the fact that ‘because every person lives in a dwelling, every person feels that he or she knows what dwellings are’ (Rapoport 1969 cited in Anderson and Weidemann 1985: 154).
Second, Domosh (1988: 276) offers a rather different explanation: 'perhaps it is because these spaces are so meaningful, so complex and so close that we tend to keep our distance from them in our research'. A decade later geographers were still remaining largely silent about the home (Gregson and Lowe, 1995; Domosh 1998).

Third, Saunders (1989) feels the neglect is due to an unjustified preoccupation with formal work and production in consideration of people’s lives and experiences in subjects like sociology.

A fourth set of reasons may be related to the image of ‘home’. It is perhaps too mundane to be worthy of research. Perhaps it is viewed as being unimportant, a woman’s world, a site associated with reproduction not production despite much evidence of women’s contribution to the household economy. Feminist critique has exposed the ‘masculine’ biases in the social sciences that have directed fields of enquiry. Feminist analysis allows for:

- a reshaping of contours of acceptable objects and subjects of study, and new ways of interpreting material. So in recent years, feminist geographers have re-examined and reclaimed as an object of study that which has often been ignored: house and home, the household and the domestic world (Domosh 1998: 276).

A fifth reason, related to this, is that the home or the private sphere is associated with the self-evident, the ‘natural’ as opposed to the cultural, and hence the uninteresting, in the dualisms that shape Western thinking.

Finally, even feminist scholars may have contributed to the neglect, rejecting home for its role in oppressing women. Young (1997: 156) notes that a series of recent essays elaborate ‘an argument that feminists should reject any affirmation of the value of home’, prompting her to highlight also the ‘dangers in turning our backs on home’ (164).
The general neglect of the home in academic work has delayed the development of resettlement policy that pays it adequate consideration. To mitigate ‘homelessness’, social disarticulation and other forms of impoverishment amongst resettled populations, we need to understand what home means to those people.

This proposition is based on the following beliefs:
1) notions of home will emerge as significant in oustees’ feelings about displacement;
2) studying the home can lead to insights into how to mitigate impoverishment;
3) when other issues related to displacement and reconstruction are more important the home can be used as a starting point from which these other avenues can be explored;
4) the ‘home’ is a useful place to ground my work.

To guide my work I shall consider five key research questions:

1) What is the meaning of home to those displaced?
2) To what extent is satisfaction or dissatisfaction with resettlement related to the impact on the home and community social relations?
3) Does satisfaction or dissatisfaction vary within the displaced population? And if so why?
4) What could/should have been done to help mitigate the adverse affects of resettlement in this respect?
5) How useful is the concept of home as a tool for helping us to understand/think about the impact of resettlement?

3.5 Relating the literature on home to resettlement in the Narmada Valley

Narmada displacement is well documented, including the campaign to resist tribal removal from their ‘homeland’. However of the 299 references put together in a bibliography by Jai Sen (1995) not one deals specifically with the notion of home for displaced adivasis. In this chapter I have taken a deliberate decision not to crystallise the concept and meaning of home into any static definition. The reasons for this should become clear as a review of the literature on the home
highlights its dynamic quality. Most of the literature on house and home deals with ‘the meaning of home’ for individuals. The meaning of home and attitude towards it can vary between cultures, social groups and households, as well as from one individual to another.

3.5.1 The meaning of home

There has been a division of labour in academia whereby the research into the meaning of home has been conducted in two disciplinary spheres. Broadly speaking the literature diverges between sociological and non-sociological (psychology, social psychology and phenomenology) approaches. Despres (1991) reviews the mainstream empirical literature, investigating the meaning of house as home from non-sociological perspectives. Ten of the most frequent categories of meaning, as summarised by Despres, are provided below.

- **Home as security and control**
  The home is perceived as the area of control and provides the individual with a sense of physical security.

- **Home as reflection of one’s ideas and values**
  Individuals refer to their home as a symbol of how they see themselves and wish to be seen by others. To some people their home expresses their tastes, interests, and character, through furniture and decoration as well as by the objects and possessions kept in the home.

- **Home as acting upon and modifying one’s dwelling**
  This dimension of home arises through the process of controlling and acting upon one’s environment. This process includes people’s physical, financial and/or emotional involvement with their dwelling unit. This involvement can provide a sense of achievement and control, a place for self-expression and/or action. ‘Tuan uses the phrases fields of care to refer to the connections with place that grow over long periods of time through everyday dwelling and care,’ (Dovey 1985: 42 referring to Tuan 1974). These transactions between the individual and the home are harmonised by practices of appropriation, by
affordances and by processes of social and cultural regulation’ (Somerville 1997).

- **Home as permanence and continuity**
  Home can only be experienced through the passage of time. Over the weeks, months or years, the home becomes a familiar place providing the dweller with a sense of belonging somewhere, of having roots. Home can also be memories indicating connection with past experiences.

- **Home as relationships with family and friends**
  The home is often perceived as a place to strengthen and cement the relationship with the people one cares for. For some people their house is transformed into a home with the birth of children. Home is viewed and experienced as the site of intense emotional experience and as the setting where one’s actions, opinions, and moods are accepted.

- **Home as a centre of activities**
  The home also acts as a setting: a behavioural centre that supports work, hobby, leisure activities and activities related to human psychological needs.

- **Home as a refuge from the outside world**
  Home as haven or sanctuary is frequently mentioned. The home is a place to get away from outside pressures, a place where one can control the level of social interaction and a place for privacy and independence.

- **Home as indicator of personal status**
  For some the home is a vehicle to display one’s social status or socio-economic position.

- **Home as material structure**
  This meaning refers to the physical characteristics of the home such as the size and spatial organisation of the dwelling unit, the amount of space in and around the dwelling, the facilities available within it and its aesthetic characteristics.
• **Home as a place to own**

This meaning of home is often associated with freedom of action, controlled space and permanency. Ownership is also associated with providing solid foundations to family life. It also plays an important role in the pride people take in their home. Finally in the US it is associated with an important economic investment. Ethnologist Robert Ardrey and geographer J.D Porteous (cited in Duncan 1981) believe there is a need to possess a defended space as an innate, universal characteristic of humans.

The meanings of home as deciphered from literature reviewed by Despres are drawn from work mostly conducted in contemporary Anglo-American culture. Somerville (1997) undertakes a review of the literature derived from sociology and finds the categories of meaning to be very similar. There is just one new category of meaning, that of ‘ontological security’. This is defined by Giddens (1984 cited in Saunders 1989: 186) as being ‘confidence or trust that the natural and social worlds are as they appear to be, including the basic existential parameters of self and social identity’.

Although the meanings given above are drawn from western culture the list of concepts provides a useful basis for asking questions about home for the oustees from the Narmada Valley.

**Research questions on the meaning of home:**

1) **What are the meanings of home for adivasi?** For example, do the meanings of home identified by Despres make sense to the adivasi? If not, what meanings are associated with home?

2) **What is the impact of resettlement with respect to the meanings of home?**

   For example, has resettlement changed the significance of some meanings over others? Have new meanings emerged? Or is it that the meanings associated with home remain the same but their fulfilment becomes harder/easier?
3) **If changes have occurred why is this?** For example, is it the result of interaction with hosts? The influence of a development discourse implicit in the government’s resettlement programme and/or that of the NGOs involved? Different livelihood practices in the plains? Or does the experience of being forcibly moved in itself automatically mean the meaning of home will change?

4) **Do the oustees view their new dwelling units as homes?** For example, are they satisfied with them? What factors shape how they perceive their new dwellings? Are perceptions formed in relation to the host’s dwelling units, in comparison to their previous dwellings or with regard to their expectations, aspirations and ideas about development and progress? Do the physical features of the built environment dictated by the resettlement package allow for the creation of home?

**Existing literature on Narmada adivasis' meanings of home** As indicated by Sen’s (1995) bibliography and my own review of Narmada literature, there is a gap in studies relating explicitly to Bhil meanings of home, warranting research on this topic. Whilst some descriptions exist on adivasi dwellings before and after resettlement (Hakim, 1995; Joshi 1983), problems with housing or the lack of it at the vasahats (Centre for Social Studies, 1987; Tata Institute of Social Sciences, 1997; Independent Review Team, 1997; Bhatia, 1997) and non-adivasi attitudes towards traditional dwellings (Morse and Berger 1992), none focus exclusively on dwellings as homes and how changes in this regard influence the meaning of home; particularly whether or not displaced Bhils identify with their new home-place.

The association of home with personal identity is apparent in most of the categories mentioned in the literature review by Despres. Some meanings of home have a more obvious connection with identity, such as ‘home as a reflection of one’s ideas and values’. However even the category of home ‘as a refuge from the outside world’ is linked to the concept of identity in that it is in the privacy of one’s home where some people feel they can be themselves. The next section deals with link between housing and identity.
### 3.5.2 Housing and identity

A common theme taken up in the literature about house and home is that of home as identity. There are different scales of social unit that may possess an identity. First I shall deal with individual identity.

Perhaps the most salient image in the house-identity literature is that of Clare Cooper's 'house as the symbol of self'. Using a Jungian approach she describes a symbol to be the medium by which an archetype becomes manifest in the here and now. Cooper claims that in trying to comprehend the most basic of archetype, the self, people grasp at symbols. The first is the body and the house ranks next as a universally important symbol of self. Cooper describes how the house reflects the way human beings see themselves; with both an intimate interior or self as seen from within and revealed only to those who are let inside, and a public exterior, the self displayed to others. The home becomes a mirror image of the self: 'our personal space bubble is extended to embrace the house. As we lay claim to this little niche in the world we project something of ourselves into it' (Cooper 1974: 131). Cooper's understanding of the house as self leads her to make the proposition that there is a universal need for a house form in which the self and family unit can be seen as separate, unique, private and protected. It follows that the unpopularity of high-rise buildings for family life is a result of their representing a violation of one’s self image as a separate and unique personality – one’s identity.

Perhaps the reason for numerous cases world-wide where different parts of the house are seen as analogous to different parts of the body (noted by Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995) is the connection of house and body as symbols of self. Similarly if the first symbol of the archetype self is the body it is not surprising that much literature on the home talks about the house as an extension of the body.

This view of house as an extension of the body serves as a critique of dualisms associated with western knowledge systems. 'It is a grand hoax of the Western world that the individual is something different from the universe around him' (Cooper 1974: 143). Perceiving there to be a differentiation helps to free us, and
so we are reluctant to acknowledge how dependent we are on the environment. The reality is that the self and home are intertwined.

Cooper sees the house as a universal symbol of self, but can this house-self concept really be applied cross-culturally, amongst all social groups? To assess the validity of the concept it is necessary to analyse assumptions entailed: First, that individual identity or the self as distinct from group affiliation is important; Second, assuming that individual identity is important, that an important medium for self-expression is the house/home.

If Cooper's thesis is robust then we should find examples of the house-self linkage in the third world too. Through the use of women's autobiographies Mahadev Apte (1998) describes 'the home as the extension of self' in Maharastra, India. However Rappoport (1981) believes the house as symbol of self is generally less applicable in non-western cultures where self-identity and self-esteem are not so closely linked. Gerry Pratt (1981) demonstrates that you do not even have to go that far afield to show that the concept is not universally applicable. Her critique of Cooper's thesis derives from comparative research between two different elite social worlds (in Vancouver, Canada) and their respective attitude toward the house. One group living in the area of Shaughnessy possesses similarities with traditional societies in that individual members strongly identify with the group. They have grown up in the area where there is a homogeneous population; their friends are often those from school days; and they share a strong degree of commitment to their community. However, the second elite group, who live in West Vancouver, are a mixed bunch. They are mostly newcomers, upwardly mobile and socially fragmented. Whereas individuals of the Shaughnessy group were only concerned with the house insofar as it was within the realms of tastefulness as defined by group standards i.e. not as a mode of self-expression, the West Vancouver elite were keen to express their individuality through the house.

To express oneself as a unique personality through one's interior decoration is not a universal need. It is a particular attitude, both towards the self and the home and objects more generally, which has been identified with a specific relationship between the individual and broadly speaking, society (Pratt 1981: 173).
This example tries to illustrate that in some social worlds identification with a group is more important to the individual than his or her individual identity. The first assertion — that individual identity is important — may therefore not be universally applicable. However, the second — that where individual identity is important the house is an important medium for its expression — does seem to be supported by this example. It should also be noted that the self might instead be expressed in other ways, for example through one’s occupation.

Similarly, sociological studies comparing attitude to housing between different social classes in the UK point to the fact that the middle classes are more likely to view the home as a vehicle for self-expression and a status symbol than those from working-class backgrounds. Perhaps the latter give priority to group affiliation rather than individual identity.

From his analysis of two elite groups in Hyderabad, India, James Duncan (1981) attempts to theorise the relations between identity, status and the house by setting up a dualism between groups or societies that are collectivist and those which are individualist. In more traditional, collectivist groups/societies where group membership stays constant (and presumably where group affiliation is important to the individual) the most efficient way to seek status is through group-orientated display (for example, feast, big weddings) and the house is merely seen as a container for women and goods. However, in individualistic societies where members come and go, hence identification with a group is weak, status has to be achieved rather than ascribed and the most efficient way to do this is through the display of one’s objects, especially the house.

Both types of actions described above are perfectly rational according to the different circumstances, but Duncan finds both groups tend to stigmatise the other. For example, the new elite in Hyderabad considered the old elite’s large family parties to be a foolish waste of money which demonstrated that they were still caught in the traditional ways of life, whereas the old elite perceived the new elite’s houses to be ostentatious, demonstrating they were superficial people who had abandoned principles of loyalty (Duncan 1981: 37).
Collectivism (where identification with the group is given priority over the self) is, rightly or wrongly, generally associated with traditional/non-western cultures, whereas individualism is linked to western cultures (although the Vancouver case study shows that both types can exist as their own social worlds within a larger societal context). Rappoport (1981) argues that it is unproductive looking for the house-self link in non-western context. It may, however, actually be productive as ‘[...] the house is at the centre of momentous social changes, not only in India and Mexico, but throughout the world. [...] The shift towards individualism within the Third World is linked to Westernisation, or what some authors refer to as modernisation’ (Duncan 1981: 53).

Having established that in ‘individualistic’ social worlds or societies the individual communicates his/her identity in part through the house I will now explore the means by which a group communicates its identity.

Group identity can be conveyed through either environmental and/or non-environmental cues (Rappoport 1981). Both serve as symbols and remind people where they are located in social space.

Non-environmental cues include using the presence of systems such as roles, occupation, religion, caste, tribe, ethnicity and marking them by clothing, hairstyle, physical type, language, facial markings etc to convey a group’s identity. Other cues include behaviours, avoidance, food habits, ceremonies and carnivals.

Environmental cues can be classified further as having either:

- **Semi-fixed features** to communicate identity including mailboxes, shutters, awnings, colours, levels of maintenance, lawns, plantings, gardens (Rappoport 1981)

- **Fixed elements**, which comprise the landscape and the built environment (including settlement and dwelling unit). Whereas the house in the ‘home as symbol of self’ scenario can be read as a text to
ascertain the individual’s identity, in this case the built environment can also be read to ascertain characteristics of the group. The social structure and organisation of the group is expressed in the built environment.

As we can see, groups can express their identity using a variety of means and the type of dwelling unit is only one of the available modes of expression. We can ask ourselves what this means with respect to resettlement.

First, where group identity is expressed through non-environmental means cues such as clothing, language, food habits and festivals etc can all be transferred to another place without damaging or altering group identity. On the other hand, relocation may result in decontextualisation as the cultural practices used by the group to communicate identity are removed from their setting.

Second, where group identity is expressed through environmental means the obvious answer would be to recreate the environmental elements, which communicated group identity. For example, where identity is communicated through the spatial layout of dwellings the pattern can be recreated to minimise the potential damage to the group. Where environmental features have not been or cannot be recreated (for example due to limited space or because the landscape itself was used to communicate identity), unless the displaced group can adopt other perhaps non-environmental cues group identity can be damaged.

Rappoport (1981) claims that through the use of defensive restructuring some changes can be accommodated by the group without affecting group identity. This involves retaining a few key elements to establish and maintain group identity. Some of these elements on which the group will focus may be environmental. He gives the example of Bedouin people who embrace ‘modernity’ in that they have replaced their tents with houses built from modern materials, yet the spatial organisation of the dwellings remains the same, thereby reproducing the socio-cultural relations that are central to their cultural identity.
To ascertain the impact of resettlement it is necessary to discover the extent to which the group’s identity is place-bound. Rather than examine the extent to which identity is communicated through the environment, it is perhaps more informative to question the extent to which the group draws its identity from the environment.

I shall briefly describe one way in which groups takes their identity from place. Home as identity entails an important component that is supplied by the site itself. ‘We not only give a sense of identity to the place we call home, but we also draw our identity from that of the place’ (Dovey 1985: 41). Ancient civilisations believed deities dwelt in or below the earth’s surface, hence the Roman phrase *genius loci* (spirit of the place). Each place is unique as it has its own resident gods. The sense of identity encapsulated in the phenomenon of home includes the concept of being indigenous. Natives are said take on attributes of the place as they are ‘rooted’ in the site, sprung from the land itself, born from within (see Tuan cited in Lowenthal 1976).

Home in this sense is something that grows in a place rather than being imposed from without. It grows both from the particular personal and social circumstances of the dwellers but also from the environmental context of the place itself, its genius loci. Thus the home has a key element of uniqueness, it is place-based (Dovey 1985: 42).^6

In some groups/societies the sense of rootedness is heightened through the use of ‘foundation/origin’ myths describing how the group belongs to their place. Unfortunately, the more widely known mythological stories about Bhil origins are ones that appear to be created by others, which make little reference to place other than to say that the Bhil were banished to the forests (see Kumar, 1997; Sharma, 1996). For examples of their own legends concerning Bhil/Bhilala creation myths, see Baviskar, 1997 and Khare, 2001.^7

This work on the meaning of home as identity raises a number of interesting questions which can be posed in the context of tribal resettlement in the Narmada valley.
Research questions on home and identity literature

1) Do adivasis make efforts to express individual identities? Is it important to express the self? Is the house a symbol of self?

2) Do adivasis share a sense of group identity? If so what are the characteristics of this identity? Is it expressed through environmental or non-environmental means? Is the social structure of the group reflected in the built environment? Is tribal identity drawn from the home-place/the homeland?

3) What are the implications of resettlement for individual and group identity? Is the group’s identity changing? Has the group maintained its core characteristics? Does displacement from ‘homeland’ entail (cultural ethnocide) destruction of tribal identity? Are social relations changing from collectively-orientated to individualistic? Do the changes alter attitudes toward the home? Did planners in any way take tribal identity and the way it is expressed into account in designing the resettlement sites?

Existing literature on home and identity

Hakim (1995) provides compelling reading on the distinct cultural identity of adivasis (Bhils/Bhilalas) affected by the Narmada Project. Baviskar (1997) cautions us not to think of their identity statically because it has evolved over many years, shaped by the struggle to survive as adivasis were increasingly pushed onto marginalised land. However anti-dam writers interpret the link between adivasi identity and place in a particular way: resettlement will, they predict, cause the ‘destruction’ of tribal culture because their identity is considered to be ‘place-bound’. This is implied in the quote referring to a motherland featuring on a bookmark sold by the Narmada Bachao Andolan as part of their campaign to ‘Save the Valley’.

We are born in the belly of Narmada and we are not afraid to die in her lap.... What will you compensate us for? For our forest? Our mother river? For our fields? For our very life? What price can you put on these?

The literature on ways of expressing identity through place (particularly the work by Rappoport, 1981) is useful when exploring Narmada displacement and resettlement. It is clear from Deliege’s (1985) description of adivasi settlement
pattern that Bhils communicate their group identity using fixed environmental cues, so it is appropriate to examine the effects of the new built environment on their ability to feel ‘at home’ in the vasahats.

Earlier it was noted that tribal identity was in part based on the relations of reciprocity and mutual cooperation. The Narmada literature speculates that the joint-working arrangements found in the hills will no longer be feasible in the plains, thus having a detrimental effect on the social relations that characterise adivasi culture. One could argue against essentialising adivasi culture in this way, as Bhils have already adapted to a wide variety of social and economic circumstances in areas beyond the Narmada. Others such as Joshi (1987: 40) downplay the significance of the changes by pointing out that a process of reorientation of social relations is in any case taking place in the hills ‘from traditional group considerations to modern and individual considerations’. Nevertheless, presumably resettlement to the plains will accelerate this change, making it appropriate to consider Duncan’s (1981) theory on the different ways householders in collective and individualistic groups choose to demonstrate their status. According to this theory housing for the Bhils should increasingly become a means of displaying individual status, particularly so if they internalise host’s criticism of their engaging in time- and money-wasting activities such as drinking and having parties (Hakim 1995), which make sense in the context of collectivist societies. If resettlement results in greater individualism, then theory would suggest that oustees would spend more money on more ‘worthy’ expenditures such as their houses.

Establishing and reaffirming identity, whether it be individual, sub-group or group identity, helps us to know who we are in relation to others and therefore know where we belong i.e. where we feel at home. This process involves creating order through demarcation and use of boundaries. It is to this process that I now turn.

3.5.3 (B)ordering

Space and time are organised by people so that they can make some sense of the world and negotiate through it. Creating order, in other words “patterning” in environmental experience and behaviour, is the process used to organise. ‘Being
at home is a mode of being whereby we are oriented within a spatial, temporal, and sociocultural order that we understand’ (Dovey 1985: 35). Dovey goes on to describe these three types of order.

First, spatial order derives from the gearing of the body to the world. To be at home is to know where you are; it means to inhabit a secure centre and to be oriented in space. However, ambiguity in the concept of home becomes apparent because the spatial range of home can include neighbourhood, town and landscape. The boundaries between what constitutes home and what does not are not always clear.

Second, temporal order is also necessary in order for someone to feel at home. The home is an origin to which we can return. It is a place enriched with familiarity of past experience. This familiarity is rooted in bodily routines, supported by the particular arrangement of things in the home by those who dwell there (Young 1997). Routines enable the home environment to become predictable so that one feels a sense of stability and ‘insideness’ whilst there.

The order that constitutes the experience of home often looks like chaos to an outsider [...] Because the insider’s temporal order stems largely from the personal routines and cycles repeated through extended periods of time, it may remain invisible to the outsider who sees only the resultant spatial form (Dovey 1985: 38).

As Tuan (1977) observes ‘in time a new house ceases to make little demands on our attention, it is as comfortable and unobtrusive as an old pair of slippers’ (cited in Altman et al. 1985: 6). By definition the home therefore intrinsically contains temporal qualities.

When people are displaced from their homes recurrent events (daily routines, birthdays etc) can help to reconstruct the home in the new location. However, one-off events (such as the birth of a first child) or life stages associated with particular places are not subject to reconstruction. This may affect the achievable level of ‘insideness’ in the new home. However as with spatial order, what determines being inside and outside is not always clear.
Third, to be at home is to be located in a particular sociocultural order, a particular way of relating to the environment that one understands. Dovey argues that particular patterns of rituals and environmental experience and behaviour are primarily sociocultural phenomena. Dovey argues that particular patterns of rituals and environmental experience and behaviour are primarily sociocultural phenomena. For example the way people eat differs over time and space according to cultural patterns, so in certain cultures, people may well sit on the floor to eat (as would have been the case in many Indian homes) instead of sitting on chairs.

As patterns of experience and behaviour stabilise over time, so do the spatial arrangements and environmental props that support and evoke those experiences. Patterns of dining, talking, sleeping, studying, and watching television form the bulk of the assumptions that go without saying in housing design (Dovey 1985: 38).

Dovey (1985) describes how the home as social order can be as enabling as it is restrictive. For example, it is enabling in that patterns of experience and behaviour can be transposed, hence the feeling of being at home can be revoked if the patterns are recreated in a different place. It is restrictive in that everyday discourses and social practices rarely question the spatial context within which they are located and concretised. If sociocultural order is embodied in the home and this order is taken for granted then things like social hierarchy, injustice and outmoded gender roles are difficult to question (see Madigan and Munro 1991).

With respect to resettlement it is important that planners understand the spatial, temporal and socio-cultural orders of those to be displaced. Efforts should be made to ensure these orders can be recreated to help mitigate the 'homelessness' and social disarticulation described by Downing. Pains should also be taken not to recreate those orders which some groups within the population may find restrictive or unsatisfactory. For example, Downing (1999b) describes the actions of households resettled due to construction of the Zimapan hydroelectric dam, hastily rearranging spatial layouts, designed to reflect those found in the original villages, to decrease contact with in-laws at the new sites.

There is a spatial limit to orders, which is where the notion of boundaries comes into effect. This literature review has established home as order and identity. The
classic view of identity (be it individual, group or nation) is that it involves a content and a boundary. The process of creating identity is then said to occur in at least two steps:

First, the definition of a contents, the distinctiveness of the unit which implies a contrasting set of “other”. Second, this in turn involves the setting up of some boundaries separating the two domains (Rappoport 1981: 11).

However, this is a very static view of identity. Recent literature in the social sciences emphasises the fluidity and dynamic nature of identity construction and maintenance. The concept of ‘us’ and ‘them’ is not set in concrete with fixed boundaries. Rather, identities are constantly negotiated and renegotiated. For example, Smith and Winchester (1998) describe how some men are trying to establish alternative masculinities. One way they do this is by undertaking more jobs in the home which were once highly gendered roles. ‘As men contest their identities by negotiation, they undertake a process of “endless becoming”’ (Nilan 1995 cited in Smith and Winchester 1998: 329). The concept of ‘endless becoming’ is interesting because the home can be thought of in a similar way. When does a house become a home? When does one become at home? Dovey (1985) argues that there is no precise point at which a house becomes a home and there are no particular properties that are necessary or sufficient for the experience of home. ‘Rather, like fibres in a rope, each property lends strength to the meaning of home’ (Dovey 1985: 51).

There is no precise point at which a house becomes a home because the home comes into being through dynamic processes which are dialectical. Dovey asserts that unlike the house the meaning of home is not self-contained but emerges from its dialectical interaction along a series of binary oppositions shown overleaf.
Talking about the home as a set of dialectical processes evokes the importance of thresholds.

Just as the entrance to the temple was, and still is, regarded as the dividing line between the sacred and the profane worlds and is suitably embellished to ward off evil spirits, [...] so the threshold of the house is regarded as one of the most important dividing lines between inner private space and the public world (Cooper 1974: 141).

Where thresholds are located can be very important indicators as to how the inhabitants relate to the wider world. Cooper suggests that in the US the threshold of a house is normally considered the front door, illustrating the welcoming nature displayed to outsiders. In the UK the threshold is located further out at the front gate, highlighting the more reserved nature of the British. Dengle (1998: 52) describes how the Wada (a particular form of house type in Maharashtra, India) was designed in such a way that it ‘created a series of layers of insulation between the individual and society’. Often there is a series of thresholds within the house.
to demarcate different spaces. In some spaces in the house certain types of behaviour are permissible whereas in others they are not. Often these are highly gendered spaces. In an article entitled 'the home as social universe', Kosambi (1998: 86) describes in detail the invisible division of space within the Wada: ‘these physical arrangements and the apportioning of space introduced strict but invisible gender segregation without observing the system of purdah’. It is important to remember that although the boundaries appear to be static they can be negotiated, shifted or even violated.

The violation of a boundary is particularly distressing as one of the meanings of home is based on the sense of having some kind of control over where the boundary should be and when it can be crossed. Being burgled obviously takes away that sense of control. Forced displacement must play havoc with a person’s sense of control. Not only is a boundary violated but the person is forced to establish new boundaries in a new context. They can no longer choose how they want to live – it is under the control of others.

Being under the control of others is a very common theme in the literature about house and home in India from a woman’s perspective. Much of the literature talks about the Maher-Sasar antithesis. These terms are full of emotional overtones for women throughout India. Maher refers to the place where one is born, the parents’ house, the natal home where people grow up with their brothers and sisters. The term carries overtones of warmth, nurture and care and is associated with the mother. The sasar is a house where a married woman stays with her husband and his parents, brothers, and sisters. Here the mother-in-law and others exercise control over her and often treat her cruelly. Whatever the reality for the individual bride, ‘the sasar has thus become a powerful symbol of harassment, torture, persecution, oppression, isolation and estrangement of women’ (Dabre 1998: 103). Going to sasar evokes the images of feeling confused, lost and lonely: ‘severed from the atmosphere of tenderness and love, and a sense of belonging and acceptance in her parents’ house she was abruptly inserted into a strange new world’ (Dengle 1998: 103). It would be interesting to compare the experience of going to sasar with that of forced displacement.
It should be noted that the sasar-maher antithesis is a stereotyped one. Being at maher is idealised but is not necessarily such a liberating experience. Kosambi (1998) describes how many women in nineteenth century Maharashtra felt confined (oppressed) even before marriage because of the restrictions parents placed on their movement. Referring to more recent experiences of home, Junghare (1998: 110) comments that ‘in the language of Maharashtrian women we do not find the expression my home (majhe ghar) instead, the dominant expression seems to be our home (amce ghar)’. The expression majhe ghar is not used even to refer to being at maher: ‘before marriage it is her mother’s home, and after marriage it is her mother-in-law’s home’ (Junghare 1988: 111). Junghare finds that this situation is not restricted to Maharashtra but applies in other parts of India as well. Ironically, a further observation that is made is that ‘while both women, daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, struggle for power over the household, nobody in the society thinks that the house actually belongs to either of those two women’ (p122). There is often a great difference between an individual’s perception of control and ownership and the reality. This is highlighted again by Laine (1998) who, drawing on Marathi text, describes how in India a person building a house thinks it will be his own, when actually everyone from non-domestic animals, pet, servants, and worst of all, guests and friends, makes their claim on it.

The lesson to be learnt from these examples is that ultimately creating stability from the use of boundaries is an illusion. After all, someone may ‘own’ their house but then be forced to move. Referring to the work of a seventeenth century saint called Ramdas, Laine (1998) illustrates the similarity of house and body and claims that it is an illusion to believe that they are one’s possession with untransgressed boundaries. Presumably, the body and everything else in the world ultimately belongs to God. The life story of Tukaram, another Maharashtrian saint is interesting in this respect. Tukaram describes the feeling of being away from God as being at sasar whereas being at one with God is to be at maher. Although in India looking after the ‘ghar’ (house and home) is one’s duty, if family commitments are getting in the way of being at one with God the ghar can be renounced:
from the true renouncer's point of view, the house, which is so often conceived cosmologically and anthropomorphically, is, like the body or 'the world', something to be abandoned, the act of renunciation itself being a giving up of boundary-protection (Laine 1998: 132).

Tukaram describes the experience of boundarylessness: 'we have built ourselves a house in empty space. We reside in formless eternity' (cited in Laine 1988: 131). Another renouncer describes how he had for a mattress the vast world and for his covering the sky.

The renouncers' experiences are borne of a distinctively high caste view of home (in Vedic-Aryan culture it was Brahmins from whom these pursuits were expected) but what they illustrate is that the home does not need to be restricted to one's house; nor is it necessarily place-bound. People will have different boundaries for what they consider to be home.

**Research questions on home and order**

1) **What were the previous social and spatio-temporal orders of hill adivasi?**

   What was the spatial extent of the orders? Where were the boundaries of home? Were they different for different sections of the tribal population? Were the orders enabling or restrictive? Were tribal people satisfied with existing orders?

2) **What is the impact of resettlement on previous orders?** To what extent have existing orders or new ones been (re)established according to wishes of the oustees? If orders are not established according to wishes what were the limiting factors and can the problem be rectified? Do oustees have control over new borders?

**Existing literature on home and orders** It is evident from the Narmada literature that hill adivast have their own socio and spatio-temporal orders, although not necessarily conceptualised in this way. The literature documents the greater freedoms enjoyed by Bhil women compared to women living in the plains (Hakim, 1997; Tata Institute of Social Science, 1997; Centre for Social Studies, 1997). For instance they report that women oustees now have to retreat to the
privacy of the house when they want to smoke as non-\textit{adivasi} hosts frown upon women smoking. This is clearly evidence of changing sociocultural orders of the kind described by Dovey (1985).

Hakim (1995) and others have described the different agricultural cycle in the plains whereby work on the fields has to continue throughout the year, whereas in the hills there was a significant interval when \textit{adivasi} could have parties, weddings and feasts and make trips to see relatives. These changes again point to the establishment of new types of temporal order.

During my preliminary field visit to Suka resettlement site oustees spoke of how their children are taking up new opportunities. Rather than working on the fields they want to take up non-agricultural jobs and if they do so, clearly new social and spatio-temporal orders will be established. For example the times that people will be away from home will be dependent on the employer not the agricultural cycle and relations with householders may change if no longer working side by side on the family field. Perhaps the holdings at the \textit{vasahats} are insufficient to meet the basic needs of a family, requiring young people to search for alternative livelihoods or perhaps movement to mainstream culture has created or fuelled aspirations which cannot be fulfilled through agricultural production whether in the hills or in the plains. If the latter it may signal that some people find the existing orders restrictive. It is precisely because the home/hearth can be restrictive that Tuan (1996) advocates efforts to free people from their constraints as described in the following section.

### 3.5.4 Home and development

It is often the restrictive nature of hearth that causes Tuan to advocate what he calls ‘high modernity’. The original project of modernity was to liberate people from their traditional ties, their hearths, in order that they could enjoy being cosmopolitan. It was a belief that no-one need be locked into a place (whether that is a locality or a type of occupation). The idea was to liberate groups from their fixed conditions. However over the last thirty years a counter-ideology has
developed, partly due to disillusionment with the enlightenment project. One element of the attack on modernity tries to restore place as a locus of human fulfilment. The relativist tendencies of post-modernism have left us in a position where each group's culture is valued and preserved. It does not, however, allow minorities or the underprivileged to jump from their own patch into another's if they wish to do so. Tuan (1996) believes that cultures deserve affection rather than idolatry as they are our first homes rather than our last. However, a balance needs to be struck between hearth and cosmos for although the cosmos can be liberating it can also be bewildering and threatening. This can be achieved by adopting 'high modernism', giving importance to both hearth and cosmos. At the moment only the elite in this world have both world and home. They can be cosmopolitan and still return to hearth for nurture and renewal when needed. Those adopting the high modernity approach seek to free others so that they too can have this privilege. However, there are others who denounce modernism 'as a hegemonic ideology somehow linked to imperialism, that has trampled on the world's diverse cultures, each of which has been a nurturing hearth to a people' (Tuan 1996: 179). Tuan believes this counter-ideology to modernity is unhelpful and its advocates are hypocritical when they themselves enjoy being cosmopolitan.

Although responding to a different group of critics (western feminists), Young (1997), like Tuan, identifies the dual role of home, both as oppressive (when it represents a longing for fixed identity) but also enabling (through its capacity to provide safety and security). Following bell hooks, she suggests 'having a home is currently a privilege' and that the values of home should be democratized' (Young 1997: 157). Similarly, Dovey (1985: 43) identifies the enabling role of home for those enjoying it: 'knowing that we have the power to remain in place and change it permits us to act upon and build our dream'. Thus for the development of individuals in society it is important to find ways of enabling people to simultaneously enjoy being at home and also be cosmopolitan.

Tuan (1996) describes how the concept of community is at odds with the development of cosmopolitanism. He describes how the concept of community has its historical roots in toil and struggle; in scarcity and a narrow and ego-
centric conception of mutual help; in social immobility and in indifference to the uniqueness of the individual. Community develops from a common fight against an external other. This other can be nature, for example, such that even if people dislike each other they are forced to cooperate and form communal bonds to survive. Although reciprocity produces bonds it can become dangerously close to bondage.

Many close-knit groups project an outward air of calm and mutual solicitousness [...] People stand by or lean on one another as houses do. Nevertheless, behind the walls we should not be surprised to find tragicomedies of betrayal or lives stunted (Tuan 1996: 148).

Research questions on home and development

1) What is the impact of resettlement on tribal aspirations? What were/are the aspirations, hopes and fears of tribals? Have their aspirations changed after relocation to the plains? In what ways can the resettlement policy be improved to cater to tribal aspirations? Is the ‘politics’ surrounding this project masking what tribal people really want or would have wanted for themselves?

2) Do they think that relocation to the hills has had a good or bad impact on their lifestyles? Do they feel they are enjoying the benefits of modern living? If so, can this ever compensate for what they have lost?

Existing literature on home and development

Many see the displacement of tribal people in the Narmada valley and their resettlement to the plains as a development opportunity. Hakim (1995: 73) observed that ‘resettlement is invariably viewed as an opportunity to “uplift the tribals into the modern economy”’. The counter argument is that if tribal people wanted to enjoy the benefits of modernity (such as electricity in their villages) the government should have been brought it to them anyway through the Government Rural Development Programmes. The NBA argue that tribal villages in the hills have been neglected for years, attacking the politicians for speaking of resettlement as an opportunity for development, when they were not so concerned about tribal welfare when there was no dam to be built. Also resettlement in the plains does not mean oustees will automatically enjoy the benefits of modern living. The Narmada Bachao Andolan reports that many oustees are suffering hardship in their ‘new
homes' and want to return to their original villages. Perhaps removal from their villages in the hills leaves them with neither a home or a cosmos to enjoy.

Some writers, however, provide a critique of the anti-dam movement for glossing over the harshness of the hill environment. The home that anti-dam activists idolise was an increasingly degraded environment (Gill 1997). Similarly Patel (1997) highlights the divergence between the aspirations of *adivasis* and NBA's goals and objectives. Thus can the anti-dam activists who promote a particular construction of home-place and tribal identity be accused of being hypocritical? Does their identity politics serve to restrict the tribal peoples' possibilities?

### 3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the meaning of home (at the scale of the house), the connection between home and identity, the relevance of boundaries and forms of order, as well as the role of the home in supporting or hindering development. It is not my intention to provide equal and exhaustive responses to the questions outlined in the four sections. Rather, these were the sorts of questions that I found it helpful to consider whilst conducting and analysing my fieldwork, acting as a theoretical guide to understand the concept of 'home' and the impact of resettlement on the home for *adivasi*.

To reiterate, the ultimate aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that a full understanding of what home means to individuals and to the group being relocated (including which aspects of home are viewed positively and negatively) is crucial to successful resettlement, as it can inform the design of subsequent resettlement policy.

It is important to take into account the need for sensitivity toward the differences between individuals within the displaced population. Resettlement policy should be flexible enough to accommodate these differences. People will vary in their reaction to resettlement (see Fried 1963). Above all there may exist very varied post relocation realities. These variations need to be considered when designing a methodology to study the meaning of home for the displaced population – issues that are addressed in Chapter 4.
Notes to Chapter 3

2 A resettlement project can be deemed successful if it meets the criteria as set out in project guidelines. However these guidelines may be of a low standard. The success of resettlement can be assessed according to a number of criteria. In my thesis the satisfaction expressed by resettled people will be the criterion on which I determine the success of resettlement and rehabilitation.
3 In the literature the words house and home are frequently used interchangeably. Theoretically however, it is argued that '[...] home is distinguished from house in that the former is a relationship, an experienced meaning' (Dovey 1985: 35).
4 It is perhaps necessary to remain cautious of Pratt's interpretation of Shaughnessy group members, as the concern that their housing conform to group standards can itself be regarded as a mode of self-expression, albeit a 'restrained' one.
5 These kinds of dualisms associated with western and non-western cultures have since been critiqued through postmodern theory, hence should be treated with scepticism.
6 This perspective of place implies it is settled, enclosed and internally coherent, a view that has since been critiqued. Instead place is considered to be a meeting-place of social relations which crystallise in a particular way, giving each place unique characteristics i.e. there is nothing special about the site itself (see Massey 1995, Clifford 1997).
7 Bhilalas are said to be people from the miscegenation of Bhils and Rajputs.
4 Researching the home in Sardar Sarovar resettlement

4.1 Introduction

The most telling aspect of any study is its methodology. In this study the politics surrounding the Sardar Sarovar Project profoundly affected the design and execution of the methodology, pervading everything from site selection to interaction with oustees. This introduction therefore includes not only a description of what is to come but also an account of my introduction to this politically-charged terrain.

Chapter 2 introduced the main players in the Narmada controversy, including the Indian and Gujarat state governments, the main proponents of the project; the World Bank, previously part-funders of Sardar Sarovar; the NBA, fierce opponents of high dams on the Narmada; the international English-language media, supporting the NBA stance; the local Gujarati press, promulgating the TINA (There Is No Alternative) concept; ARCH-Vahini, an NGO that has concerned itself with the proper execution of the resettlement; and a myriad other Indian and international organisations engaged in either opposition to or facilitation of resettlement. The oustees may be pawns caught in the politics conjured up by these groups (and others) but they are also actors in their own right – something that is often overlooked.

I was only able to grasp the full extent of this politically charged terrain during a three month preliminary visit to India beginning in September 1998. My objectives were to learn about Sardar Sarovar resettlement from relevant NGOs and research institutes and visit some resettlement sites (vasahats). Not knowing how my presence as a researcher would be received I initially steered away from government departments. I imagined that if I encountered government officials at best I would be instructed to cease making enquiries with particular individuals (for instance with the head of an NGO under government contract to build oustees’ housing) and at worst would be required to leave the country.
Initially most of my time was spent with members of the NBA, but unfortunately my relations with them deteriorated as my exposure to groups with different points of view increased, and particularly after an unfortunate encounter with the media. When approached by a reporter of the *Times of India*, I (naively) agreed to do an interview about my research. Anyone reading the resulting article would have gained the impression that after visiting Gujarat, a foreign researcher had changed her position from being anti-dam to recognising that there were some problems with resettlement but nothing major. This did not accurately convey what I had learned or said.

Before my preliminary fieldtrip I had been steeped in literature about the Narmada project from western NGOs and the English media. Ultimately this all came from one source: the NBA. The preliminary research allowed me to speak to a variety of actors and hence obtain a more rounded picture of the roles they were playing, the strategies they had adopted and how they interacted with each other. It enabled me to reassess the information I had received and dispel some preconceived notions about the resettlement process. For example, prior to my trip I had read an article in the *Indian Express* in which Medha Patkar described a ‘massive exodus’ of oustees from the resettlement sites. I began to question whether it would be possible to conduct a post-relocation study at the resettlement sites if there was no one there! I discovered, however, that the return migration was limited enough (in relation to the overall number of families that had been resettled) for me to pursue the research as planned.

The visit made me aware of the need to probe harder when working on such a politicised topic. For instance, I learnt that the oustees at one particular *vasahat* who, according to the NBA had no land and no means of feeding their family except through the sale of alcohol, were actually cultivating land allocated to them. (ARCH-Vahini explained that the oustees were *officially* landless, having refused to sign for the land because they were campaigning for resettlement elsewhere.)

I also came to realise that ‘the government’ was not a monolithic institution. Through my contact at ARCH-Vahini I was introduced to the Commissioner for Resettlement

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and Rehabilitation at the Sardar Sarovar Punavashat Agency, the arm of the Gujarat Government responsible for the task identified in its title. He instructed all the relevant officials to be totally cooperative (which they were, providing me with any information that I requested), whilst obtaining from me a letter stating the purpose of my visit to India. Whilst gathering information from the SSPA office I stayed for two weeks at the Sardar Sarovar guest-house in Vadodara. In the eyes of my NBA contact this compromised my neutrality – a valid response, given my concern to be seen as neither for or against the dam.

Apart from the insight into the fierce battle being fought, the main advantage of this visit was to provide an overview of the displacement and resettlement process, thus enabling me to devise a detailed research strategy. The strategy that developed from the information gathered during the field visit is outlined in Section 4.2. The remainder of this chapter documents the experience of researching home in the Sardar Sarovar resettlement during the main fieldwork period from September 1999 to September 2000.

4.2 Devising a research strategy

The scale of the Narmada project means that resettlement is a vast and complex process. The limitations of PhD research in terms of finance and time make it impossible to study all aspects of resettlement, even though my work focuses only on that arising from the construction of a single dam. Defining an appropriate research strategy therefore required a series of decisions geared towards cutting down the size of the task in a meaningful and appropriate manner.

The Sardar Sarovar Dam Project is an interstate venture. The Narmada river flows through three states: Madhya Pradesh, Maharastra and Gujarat. Although most villages to be submerged are in Madhya Pradesh, most resettlement has taken place in Gujarat and it is here, therefore, that I chose to work. The main purpose of the preliminary field visit was to identify case study locations. I soon discovered this would not be an easy task. Of 170 resettlement sites in Gujarat state, 117 sites house oustees from Gujarat, 13, from Maharastra and 40, from Madhya Pradesh. I decided
not to include oustees from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh who have been resettled in Gujarat on practical grounds (I would have had to recruit three interpreters, one for the language of each state).

Discussions with NGO activists involved in the Narmada issue enabled me to identify factors that might affect the likelihood of oustees perceiving their new location as home. I classified these as either ‘origin-related’ or ‘resettlement-related’.

4.2.1 Dealing with origins

The displaced tribal (adivasi) people in Gujarat belong to one of three ethnic groups or sub-tribes: Tadvi, Rathwa and Bhil. They come from one of nineteen submergence villages. The Centre for Social Studies has divided these villages into three zones according to infrastructural facilities, external (market) linkages and socio-economic development (Table 4.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone 1: Rock-fill dyke villages</th>
<th>Zone 2: Dam site villages</th>
<th>Zone 3: Remote villages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupants: Tadvi</td>
<td>Occupants: Tadvi &amp; Bhil</td>
<td>Occupants: Bhil &amp; Rathwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navagam</td>
<td>Vadgam</td>
<td>Dhumna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limdi</td>
<td>Surpan</td>
<td>Chharbara</td>
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<td>Kalvani</td>
<td>Mokhadi</td>
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<td>Panchmuli</td>
<td>Gadher</td>
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<td>Zer</td>
<td>Katkhadi</td>
<td>Ferkada</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Makadkhada*</td>
<td>Turkheda</td>
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<td>Hanfeshwar</td>
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<td>Panderia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Joshi 1987: 33
Notes: *According to Joshi (1997) this village straddles Zones 2 and 3 as it is geographically close to Zone 3 villages and has similar infrastructural facilities to other Zone 3 villages. ARCH-Vahini activists argue that it belongs in Zone 3.

I decided to concentrate on oustees from one zone and one ethnic group only, studying the resettlement of the Bhil group from Zone 3.

Generically all the sub-tribes are Bhils. However contact with non-adivasi culture has led some tribal people to adopt aspects of Hindu culture. The concept of hierarchy in the Hindu caste system has permeated adivasi culture to the extent that those who
have emulated Hindu practices perceive themselves as ‘higher up the ladder’ than others, leading them to deny their Bhil origins. This is important when considering the resettlement of tribal people. First, if some *adivasis* aspire to emulate the plains culture and perceive development to mean becoming less ‘tribe like’, leaving their old homes may not be as traumatic as is often suggested. Secondly, those sub-tribes more accustomed to non-*adivasi* culture may find it easier to adjust to life in the plains. Of the three sub-tribes the Tadvi are most accustomed to mainstream Hindu culture and the Bhil, the least. For this reason I felt it important to focus on Bhil. [These postulations, of course, only make sense in relation to the social world of the Narmada Valley. We know that Bhils have been living in the plains for generations, including major urban centres such as Udaipur in Rajasthan where they might be converts of Christian or Bhagat (Hindu) cults and where education, income and occupation (class) determine status rather than ethnicity].

Some submergence villages are situated in hillier, more remote regions making it more difficult for outsiders to gain access. Rural development programmes seem to by-pass these villages, perpetuating their inaccessibility. The level of development and availability of amenities, including communication facilities, is poor, reducing the level of interaction with the non-*adivasi* population. Resettlement thus implies the greatest change for those from the remote villages. Oustees from the more inaccessible villages are likely to feel the force of change (for better or worse) more strongly than those in less isolated villages. Perhaps their relative isolation would produce a heightened sense of being out of place in the resettlement sites in comparison to people from less inaccessible villages, warranting a focus on oustees from the most remote villages. These are the villages in Zone 3.

Joshi (1983, 1997) describes Zone 3 as being the least developed, with no transport services or schools; people have to work hard to produce sufficient food. People in this zone are also the most socially cohesive, with each village united under traditional leadership. Prior to displacement the total number of households was 608, a population of 3,840. Fifty five per cent of households in this zone are Bhil, more than double the proportion of Rathwas (the second largest group).
Resettlement has occurred in stages. Zone 1 villagers were relocated first and Zone 3 last. By the time oustees from Zone 3 were displaced most of the major policies were already in place, and resettlement agencies could therefore be expected to have learnt from past mistakes – another reason for focusing on the resettlement of people from Zone 3.3

I decided to study two resettlement sites in which the oustees were Bhils from Zone 3. This strategy was preferable to the alternative – selecting a Zone 3 village and using government records to trace its Bhil residents to all their resettlement sites – for two reasons. First there would be a danger of spreading my efforts too thinly over a large number of resettlement sites, leading me to lose time travelling between them. Second I wanted to make the site selection with ‘resettlement-related’ variables in mind.

4.2.2 Dealing with resettlement-related variables

Resettlement has occurred in Vadodara and Narmada districts in Gujarat state. According to ARCH-Vahini activists, the resettlement sites of Gujarat oustees are located in one of seven geographical areas or blocks (Figure 4.1).

There is relative homogeneity within each block with respect to oustees’ zone of origin (hence exposure to mainstream culture etc), length of stay and physical conditions at the site (soil type, propensity to flood etc). This relative homogeneity is mostly a result of the timing of displacement and where land was available at the time oustees left their submergence village. For example, villagers from Mokdhi who accepted the meagre compensation offered before a proper resettlement policy was announced are located in an area of poor quality land labelled by ARCH-Vahini as the Dedipada block.

Virtually all resettlement sites hosting Zone 3 oustees are in Bhaka, Bodeli-Golagamdi and Dabhoi blocks. They form the dominant group in Bhaka and Bodeli-Golagamdi blocks (Table 4.2).
Figure 4.1 Resettlement of people from Zone 3 submergent villages
### Table 4.2 Description of geographical blocks dominated by Zone 3 oustees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Summary statistics</th>
<th>Description of block</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhaka</td>
<td>• 8 vasahats</td>
<td>As vasahats in this block fall outside the command area of the Sardar Sarovar project they will not benefit from the dam. As there is no other irrigation project in the area, crop production does not achieve its full potential and incomes are lower than elsewhere. Many oustees live in houses provided by Anand Niketan Ashram.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 186 families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Av. 23.3 families/site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 95% of oustees from Zone 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodeli to Golagamdi</td>
<td>• 22 vasahats</td>
<td>At present only two or three sites such as Zakherpur have irrigation although the block lies within the Sardar Sarovar project command area. People come from Zone 3 villages between Dhumna and Hafeshwar. Anand Niketan Ashram has been involved in their resettlement and rehabilitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 847 families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Av. 38.5 families/site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 90% of oustees from Zone 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dabhoi</td>
<td>• 19 vasahats</td>
<td>Land in this block is supposedly of good quality but floods during the monsoon. All sites are within the Sardar Sarovar command area but 60% of oustees already have irrigated land through the Wadhavana irrigation scheme. Resettlement began 1991/1992. ARCH-Vahini activists describe most of the houses in this block as good. They were built after the government decided to provide plinths but before the announcement of Rs 45,000 cash for house construction. Oustees should receive this amount later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 911 families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Av. 52.4 families/site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 61% of oustees from Zone 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 29% from Zone 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 10% from Zone 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Government of Gujarat documents

Note: Number of families relates to project-affected families from Gujarat; those from other states are not included in these figures.

Whilst there is a high degree of homogeneity within each block there are significant differences between them. The properties of the land vary, including the quality of the soil and the amount of water it retains. The NBA has produced a list of twenty-one resettlement sites that become waterlogged every monsoon. This significantly affects oustees’ ability to adjust to their new homes. The location of the site also determines whether or not irrigation facilities already exist. With irrigation two crops per year can be produced. In addition, the travelling distance from each block to oustees’ villages of origin varies; this may influence the number of trips home that
can be made (e.g. to see relatives). Finally oustees from different blocks have encountered pro- and anti-dam NGOs to greater or lesser degrees. This can influence the way oustees express themselves to outsiders.

I decided I would select two sites from different blocks in order to compare oustees originating from the same zone but living in different areas.

### 4.2.3 The case study approach

To make the final selection of case studies I needed to decide an appropriate method for selecting resettlement sites from within the three blocks in question. I opted for a purposive rather than random approach to selecting sites for study. Although random selection would remove any dangers of bias, my chosen approach had a number of advantages.

First, this approach would allow selection of a less well-known site where oustees are less likely to be tired of answering questions. For example, I decided to avoid the ‘model’ sites where the government takes its official guests.

Secondly, some sites may be more likely to yield interesting information. For example, for the purpose of this study on the home there seemed to be little merit in researching sites where basic problems had yet to be solved. People who have been resettled on poor quality land and are awaiting transfer would be very unlikely to regard their existing location as home. The same applied to those resettled in areas liable to flooding. Eliminating sites where people are clearly dissatisfied runs the risk of missing the most interesting cases, but I had to bear in mind my focus on the home. Oustees lobbying for a solution to their problems may insist on keeping these the focus of discussion. Chapter 3 argued that without adequate means to sustain a livelihood, satisfactory resettlement is impossible and the first priority must therefore be to resolve livelihood issues. This thesis, however, looks beyond this basic precondition to consider the importance of the home in resettlement. This may be difficult in sites such as Kanteshwar where I was taken by NBA activists; here,
livelihood issues dominate, overshadowing questions about the home. The NBA have a strong presence in such sites and often urge oustees to demand transfer to another site or demand to be allowed to return to their original village (requiring the release of water behind the dam).

Thirdly, I was interested to study the effect of the site’s social composition on oustees’ ability to feel at home. A simple analysis of the block profiles demonstrates that six different situations prevail and I decided to select from the first two of these categories:

- oustees in the resettlement site are from different original villages but all from Zone 3
- all oustees are from the same original Zone 3 village (the most common situation)
- oustees are from more than a single zone: –
  - with the majority from Zone 3
  - with a minority from Zone 3
- nobody in the resettlement site originates from a Zone 3 village

Finally, the case study approach would allow me to select vasahats of suitable size. The size of the resettlement site is important because it affects the type of services and amenities to which oustees are entitled. When there are too few households to warrant provision of a service they are expected to share the facilities of host villagers. In addition, oustees may feel less out of place if they are surrounded by fellow oustees. Part of the NBA’s political argument is constructed around this very theme – one senior activist compared Sardar Sarovar resettlement with the unease which would be felt if a few black households were ‘dumped’ in amongst a white neighbourhood in South Africa.\(^4\)

The average size of the resettlement sites is 38 households in the three blocks in question and 41 overall. If I selected sites with this number of households or fewer, however, I might not have been able to find enough people willing to cooperate. For
this reason I decided to select larger than usual sites even though they were not representative.

Armed with this strategy plan or framework I returned to India, to select specific research sites and undertake the research.

4.3 Fieldwork

By far the most rewarding aspect of this research was my experience ‘in the field’. It began with much thought given to logistical and practical matters (Section 4.3.1) including the most basic concern of finding somewhere to live. The vasahats I chose to study are described in Section 4.3.2. Throughout my time at these vasahats I was constantly reminded how perception of the researcher affects the research. Section 4.3.3, ‘Who are they?’, therefore refers not to the oustees but the research team, namely my interpreter and I. I discuss issues around language and the use of an interpreter in Section 4.3.4, before describing the research tools I used to study home in the resettlement process.

4.3.1 Setting up

I decided to study two resettlement sites in order to allow comparison between them, particularly in view of the variety of conditions described in Section 4.2.2, whilst keeping the amount of fieldwork manageable. Selecting suitable sites was not straightforward. I needed to select two vasahats from the 49 in Bhaka, Dabhoi and Bodeli-Golagamdi blocks.

My NBA contact was concerned that I should not select vasahats from Bodeli-Golagamdi or Bhaka. These areas were settled with the help of Anand Niketan Ashram, an NGO headed by Shri Harivallah Parikh, a well-known local figure (see Prasannan, 1994). According to the NBA activist, Harivallah’s pro-dam stance and influence would undermine my research. He would either instruct the oustees not to cooperate with me or dictate what they were to say. I nonetheless adhered to my
strategy, selecting Kandewal (in the Bodeli-Golagamdi block) as the first case study vasahat. Experience showed that neither of the pessimistic predictions were correct.

I chose Kandewal because all but two families were Bhils and there were 69 registered project-affected families. The oustees in Kandewal had also been largely ignored by journalists and other delegations/fact-finding teams. I found a place to stay in a nearby village with the help of an ARCH-Vahini contact and conducted fieldwork over an eight-month period.

As I did not live in Kandewal vasahat itself, I was keen to reside in the second case study vasahat. This pointed me towards a vasahat where the person who introduced me was trusted by the oustees. My ARCH-Vahini contact introduced me to oustees in Vadaj-1 and arranged for us to occupy a room in Purubhai’s house. The oustees would then introduce me to their kin in Vadaj-2, less than three miles away. The combined populations of Vadaj-1 and -2 – 66 registered families – would be comparable to that of Kandewal. This also allowed me to compare the effect of social composition as this vasahat, unlike Kandewal, comprised people from the same original village. Vadaj-1 and -2 are located in Dabhoi block.

4.3.2 The case studies

Kandewal vasahat is a large site accommodating 67 households, with a total population of 469 people (109 male adults, 117 female adults and 243 people under 18 years of age, according to my household survey). All oustees are from the most remote submergence villages in Zone 3 and with the exception of two Rathwa households, all are Bhil adivasis. Oustees come from four different submergence villages: Hafeshwar, Panderia, Dhumna and Charbara. This mixed composition is relevant not only to social relations and community cohesion but also to oustees’ response to resettlement: even amongst Zone 3 villagers there were different levels of exposure to the ‘outside world’.
With a population of 1,568 people, Hafeshwar was by far the largest submergence village in Zone 3. Individual hamlets within Hafeshwar were like villages in themselves. Kandewal oustees were from Devdi hamlet. Whereas Panderia, Dhumna and Charbara were only accessible by the river or on foot, Hafeshwar was serviced by a *kutcha* road, negotiable by jeep, although only in good weather. There was also a large temple in Hafeshwar that attracted Hindu pilgrims circumambulating the Narmada River, giving the villagers exposure to outsiders.

Across the river from Hafeshwar was Panderia village, with a population of 97 people. Although still within the Gujarat borders, Panderia villagers were culturally like Bhil *adivasis* in Maharastra State. Panderia and Hafeshwar villagers knew each other and shared similar levels of exposure to mainstream society.

Dhumna and Charbara villagers on the other hand had very limited contact with mainstream society. Their nearest bus stop was 14 kms away in Gadher village. Although Dhumna village had a temple Joshi (1987) found that villagers had no consciousness of Gujarat, India or party politics. Dhumna and Charbara villages comprised 67 and 34 people respectively who frequently got together for social occasions, saying they were like one village.

Although many families from these villages moved to Kandewal, others were resettled in different *vasahats*. The final destinations of oustees from these four submergence villages is shown in Table 4.3 (Makadkhada village is discussed later). Panderia oustees have been resettled in Kandewal alone, whereas Hafeshwar oustees are resettled in 21 different sites, with Kandewal only one of many.
Table 4.3 Destinations of oustees from selected submergence villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submergence village</th>
<th>Vasahat location</th>
<th>No. of families</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No. of vasahats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panderia</td>
<td>Kandewal</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hafeshwar</td>
<td>Karamadi</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Navagama</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satbedia</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Utkoi</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vadivada</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zoz</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kalidoli</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lachharas</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vadadala</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bhaderpur-1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bhadruli</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dormar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phata</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ferkuva</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kadaacchala</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kandewal</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kundi-Uncha Kalam</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undi</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dabhoi-dalnagar</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kukad</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pansoli</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charbara</td>
<td>Kandewal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phata</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ferkuva</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhumna</td>
<td>Kandewal</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanoli</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kavita</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makadkhada</td>
<td>Chameta</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karnet-1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karnet-2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Navi-Mangrol</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sathod</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vadaj-1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vadaj-2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from government records
Notes: Refers to block-wise location where B = Bhaka, B-G = Bodeli to Golagamdi, D = Dabhoi, K = Kalediya
House plots of Dhumna and Charbara oustees are set slightly away from those belonging to Hafeshwar and Panderia oustees on the main site. In keeping with the NWDT award for a vasahat of this size, Kandewal has a primary school, dispensary, well, children’s park, seating areas (tree-platforms) and three handpumps, although not all these amenities were functioning at the time of my fieldwork.

Figure 4.2 Disused school – Kandewal vasahat
The *vasahat* is located on the doorstep of Kandewal host village which has a mixed caste population typical of rural villages in the area. A daily bus service runs both north and south along the rural road serving Kandewal and other villages and *vasahats*. Heading south one can go all the way to Sankheda town (approximately 5 miles away) or get down at the crossroad (near Golagamdi) where the road crosses the Vadodara-Bodeli Highway. From here it is a 20 minute bus ride to Bodeli town where oustees go to sell cotton. In the other direction it takes 1½ hours by road to get to the heart of Vadodara city. *Vasahats* in the Bodeli-Golagamdi block are thus well connected to the road and transport network.

Vadaj-1 and -2 are even closer to Vadadora: less than an hour away and a very short distance from the major town of Dabhoi. I stayed in Vadaj-1 where there are 14 households. A few of these families actually turned out to be from Gadher, a
submergence village from Zone 2. However the remaining oustees in Vadaj-1 were from Makadkhada, as were all those in Vadaj-2, less than a 20 minute walk away. The other destinations of Makadkhada villagers are shown in Table 4.3.

I was particularly keen to examine this vasahat since the oustees have had different external contacts from those at Kandewal. In Vadaj-1, for instance, the oustees had good relations with my ARCH-Vahini contact, although contact had diminished over time. The oustees in Vadaj-2, on the other hand, had been in regular contact with NBA activists. Indeed, Vadaj-2 was one of the sites I had visited with the NBA on my preliminary trip. A year later contact with the NBA had decreased after the oustees decided they would stay in Vadaj, abandoning their demand to be resettled elsewhere.

Oustees in Vadaj-1 and -2 have separate facilities. In Vadaj-1 the government has provided a school with just one room since there are so few families. They also have a handpump and taps with running water and a tree-platform. Vadaj-2 has more amenities, including a three-roomed school.

Figure 4.4 Water facilities – Vadaj-1
4.3.3 Who are they?

Just as I was trying to discover who are the Bhil *adivasi* people, the oustees, particularly those in Kandewal, were trying to establish who my interpreter and I were and what we were doing in their *vasahat*. I am sure the reason most people initially engaged with my interpreter and I was that they felt they had to do so. A government official first took me to Kandewal to meet Raahibhai, the (unofficial) *vasahat* leader. He probably felt obliged to receive and talk to us. In due course I came to learn that a number of other people with influence had also asked the oustees to cooperate, explaining that I would do them no harm.

It was more difficult gaining the trust of oustees in Kandewal than in Vadaj. Oustees in Vadaj were familiar with the concept of an independent researcher doing empirical work for educational purposes. They frequently spoke of Roxaben (Roxanne Hakim), a PhD student from the University of Cambridge who lived for two years in their original village in Makadkhada. They knew she was there to learn about *adivasi*
culture. In the limited time available I could not establish the same kind of rapport with oustees as Roxanne, but clearly had one thing in common with her: being there for research purposes. In Kandewal I did not have this advantage. People were unsure what research involved or what it was for and so I was not able simply to dive in with pens and tape recorders for surveys and interviews.

At the start the only way people in Kandewal could ‘place’ me was by association. I was introduced by the extension officer, a government employee who is the interface between them and the SSPA. Naturally people assumed I was on the government payroll. It perhaps did not help that I appeared to have easy access to the SSPA and offered to take up issues such as their broken hand-pump, which were more likely to attract a speedy response if I made the complaint on their behalf. On another occasion in an attempt to be helpful I asked the SSPA to send a medical vehicle to take an injured oustee to hospital in Vadodara. I am unsure about my motivation for these actions. Perhaps I was trying to use my influence to minimise my own guilt as a western researcher seeking to extract information from people without being able to bring them any direct gain; on the other hand it would have seemed callous not to help if I could. Whatever my motivation, my actions probably perpetuated the impression that I was working for the government. As time passed and oustees gained a more realistic understanding of what I was doing, however, a few lost interest but many seemed as keen as ever to continue helping me. I came to realise that there was a whole range of reasons for people wishing to talk to us (as suggested by Baviskar 1995, Varley 1996). The village leader perhaps saw it as preparation for becoming an elected representative of both the vasahat and Kandewal village, an ambition he revealed during a discussion on local government in rural India. The ability to engage with ‘outsiders’ is regarded by oustees as a measure of personal development (Chapter 8). It seemed that Sumantbhai, an oustee originally from Charbara, was always eager to speak to us for such reasons. He saw himself as a spokesperson for his people. One woman liked the fact that we were interested in hearing what women had to say, unlike government officials who only speak to men. Others enjoyed
teaching us about their customs and found it entertaining, for example, to see me trying to learn their dance steps and executing them appallingly badly.

In a culture where social interactions are so highly regulated by the caste hierarchy (even with and amongst adivasis for whom in theory the caste system is not applicable) small gestures could mean a lot. Eating the food people had prepared or sitting on the floor before they had a chance to bring out chairs or beds, as they invariably did when visitors came to see them, eventually dispelled any notion that we were government employees. For a number of oustees, however, the belief that our work could benefit them in some way still remained the prime reason for speaking to us (see section 4.3.5).

Over time we seemed to gain oustees’ confidence. Gaining confidence was about loosing the fear of being judged as much as anything, and this was a two-way process. Oustees did not want to be judged for their enjoyment of alcohol or other activities they thought I might perceive as unsophisticated. I also feared their judgement. During the first week I was consumed by dilemmas over how to present myself: to emphasise my Indian origins rather than my western upbringing? Divert attention from my wealth, for example, by leaving the hired jeep on the main road outside the village and walking in? At the end of the day the power relations could not be avoided. I was a western researcher conducting fieldwork with one of the most marginalised communities in Indian society. My interpreter and I were university educated, middle-class, city dwellers. If oustees had any doubt about my socio-economic status, my response to their questions about the cost of my airfare inevitably confirmed that in their eyes I was rich.
4.3.4 Language and the use of interpreters

There were two options for deciding the medium through which the empirical work should be carried out. It had to be conducted either in the Bhil mother tongue, a tribal dialect called Bhili, or in Gujarati, the state language. Some oustees were well versed in Gujarati before resettlement and others had picked it up since. My own (lack of) language skills influenced the choice. Language courses enabled me to understand basic Gujarati, although not speak it sufficiently well, so I needed an interpreter. Ideally my fieldwork would have been conducted in Bhili. Very few people, however, can understand the Bhil dialect as well as speaking fluently in English and/or Gujarati. Those who could do so, and particularly people fluent in English and Bhili, would probably have too little time to be able to work with me or would already have been involved in the Narmada issue in some capacity, compromising their neutrality. The research would therefore have to be in Gujarati and it would be better to employ an assistant with a good command of English, given that I was not confident in communicating entirely in Gujarati.

I arrived in India in September 1999 and took just over five weeks to find the right interpreter. Adverts in the Times of India and noticeboards at MS University of Baroda did not attract a suitable candidate. Subsequently, I came to know of a recent graduate called Deepa who was prepared to live with me in the village. She was reliable and committed to the work and we quickly developed an excellent working relationship. Deepa appeared to have an instinctive awareness of when I would require a translation of the things people said and when translation was unnecessary. This meant conversations with oustees flowed remarkably well. She was also a great companion. So, although ideally there would be no need for an interpreter when conducting empirical research, I was in some way glad that my limited language skills meant I needed an assistant. Using an interpreter, however, does bring some difficulties to the process. I learnt, for example, that Deepa had refrained from translating any swear words as she was uncomfortable repeating them and so (perhaps knowing that I would be interested in knowing more about the context in which they were used) did not tell me that people had been swearing.
Asking oustees to speak in their second language obviously has serious drawbacks, mainly because some may feel less able to express themselves as they would in their mother tongue. Language was certainly an obstacle in Kandewal, particularly for women from Dhumna and Charbara. Before my fieldwork many people said that Bhil adivasis, especially the women, are the least expressive of all communities in the Narmada hills. In practice this may simply apply to their expressiveness with outsiders. The women were either too busy or seemed too shy to speak to us. We learnt, however, that women who avoided speaking to us were embarrassed to speak Gujarati in front of their male relatives in case their husbands or brother-in laws ridiculed them for getting the words wrong. To overcome this we had to speak to women when they were on their own, which was not easy.

4.3.5 Employing appropriate research tools
This investigation is a study of social change and the primary source of data is the experiences of oustees recounted in their own words.6 Research was carried out with individuals and at the community level. It must be recognised that the work was conducted at a particular time: as time passes, oustees may will feel differently about their new homes in the plains.

Since Narmada is such a controversial subject I have also sought to ‘triangulate’ my evidence using different sources to obtain information about the same issue, countering one-sided or selective accounts. In total I spent a year in Gujarat conducting fieldwork. During that time I used multiple techniques to fulfil the research objectives, including both quantitative and qualitative research tools.

Contextual Analysis

A survey was undertaken of resettlement policy documents. The Sardar Sarovar Punavasahat Agency provided minutes of their meetings detailing when and why changes to resettlement policy (such as the decision to provide oustees with Rs 45,000 for house construction) were made. Over eighty resolutions have been passed
adding to resettlement policy. These minutes and resolutions provide insight into the legislative and administrative context of resettlement.

To avoid reinventing the past or wrongly attributing broader processes of social change to resettlement, I familiarised myself with recent pre-displacement ethnographies (such as Hakim 1995, Baviskar 1995) and Centre for Social Studies reports on submergence villages.

Before going to the resettlement sites I consulted a variety of sources of information. The SSPA provided me with the official register of all project-affected persons relocated to the resettlement site, including their ethnicity and place of origin. I obtained information on the design and layout of the resettlement sites, including the position of house plots and agricultural plots. NGOs were also a rich source of information. In addition to providing valuable oral accounts of the history of resettlement for each displaced community, ARCH-Vahini and the NBA, for example, gave me access to their libraries, which hold reports on earlier research at the resettlement sites. I also made use of reports by the Centre for Social Studies on the ‘Monitoring and Evaluation of Resettlement and Rehabilitation Programme for the Sardar Sarovar Project’. These reports tried to compare people’s standard of living before and after resettlement through questionnaires at both village and household level. The household questionnaires sought information from the heads of households about the socio-economic status of household members. They also asked about changes in housing, land, livestock, agriculture, labour, production and distribution, assets, consumption pattern, education and health, as well as the experience of relocation. Although the research aims of the CSS differed from mine, I also required the kinds of information described above. This secondary data was thus useful background information, although it is presented in amalgamated form, without the detail I required for individual households.
**Group meetings**

My preliminary field visit, when I was taken to seven resettlement sites, demonstrated that much could be learnt from oustees through informal discussions. When not in their fields, men in particular spent a lot of time chatting with one another outside their houses. For example, in the part of the *vasahat* occupied by oustees from Dhumna and Charbara, men frequently gathered on the porch area outside their leader’s house (Figure 4.6). There is no tree-platform on this side of the *vasahat* where oustees can sit. Although there is a tree-platform on the side occupied by oustees from Panderia and Hafeshwar, it is unusable (Figure 4.7). In Vadaj-1, however, the tree-platform is the most popular place to gather (Figure 4.8). Deepa and I spent many hours engaged in informal and spontaneous group discussion, often at these places. Group meetings were used to gather information on aspects of village life (past and present). They enabled us to gain an overview of changes in community relations, relations between oustees and hosts, authority structures, social and economic practices and group identity. I used this opportunity to obtain oustees’ version of their ‘resettlement history’ i.e. how they came to arrive at that particular *vasahat*.

Figure 4.6 Popular gathering place for Dhumna and Charbara oustees – Kandewal
Figure 4.7 Deepa trying out the tree-platform

Figure 4.8 People relaxing in Vadaj-1
I also gained a general sense of the overall level of satisfaction with resettlement, including an understanding of the major issues of concern to oustees. Our first weeks in Kandewal were therefore spent ‘chatting’ to oustees, not only to gather information, but also to ‘break the ice’, helping to establish a good rapport. As the research progressed to more formal information gathering, less time was spent in this way, although we sat with people to chat throughout our time in the vasahats.

The household survey

Defining the household: There is a large literature on definition of the household. I used the definition employed by the Centre for Social Studies: all those sharing a hearth (eating from the same pot) belong to the same household. This was the most appropriate definition, particularly as many of the houses constructed in the vasahats were built to accommodate two households thus rendering any definition of the household as people ‘living under the same roof’ meaningless.

Purpose: The aim was to survey every household in the two vasahats: to obtain a socio-economic profile of each individual in the household; to map the changes in household structure resulting from resettlement; to map any separations from other family members; to document the establishment of residence at the vasahat, including the period when household members arrived at the site, the length of residence in temporary dwellings and the present housing, and the cost of house construction (Appendix 1).

The survey section on the socio-economic profile of household members was loosely based on the survey designed by the Centre for Social Studies. Some vital questions were not included in their profiling, however, including the circumstances of adult males, whether as project-affected persons entitled to the resettlement and rehabilitation package or as non-project-affected persons.

Respondent: The rationale for the household survey was to gather factual information, which in theory should not be person-dependent, meaning any
household member could provide the information requested. Two considerations favoured asking the head of household to answer the household survey. I defined the head as the eldest person with project-affected status. Although there is an extensive literature on the nature and definition of the head of household, such debates are in practice pre-empted by the practices of the resettlement agencies. The reasons for targeting the head for the household for surveys were therefore as follow.

a) One of the main purposes was to ascertain the extent of household and family separations. Changes in household structure had to be described in relation to a fixed person, so the response from households could be compared. The easiest approach to identifying such a ‘reference’ person is to use the head of household. Thus it made sense that they be the respondents.

b) It was far easier to secure an interview with male oustees. I wished to save my time with women for the individual surveys and in-depth interviews to seek their views of resettlement. In most cases the heads of household were men as project-affected-person status is not given to women except for those widowed before 1987. In a household where both father and son received land, I considered the father to be the head of the household.

In total we conducted 103 household surveys (interviewed 103 heads of households): 66 in Kandewal (all but one household in the vasahat) and 37 in Vadaj (which covered all but a handful of households).

On the whole conducting the household survey was fairly straightforward. Since virtually everyone was illiterate it was conducted orally with the responses handwritten by me on the survey. The only question to create difficulties was the age of household members. Most people were able to work out the ages of their children by calculating how many years before or after resettlement they were born, but the ages of older household members proved more elusive.
Economic survey

Purpose: The economic survey had two sections. The first sought information on the domestic economy before and after resettlement: the amount of land cultivated and its status (owned, rented, illegally cultivated etc), cultivation arrangements, crops grown, yield, earnings from crop sales, sources of income, employment of labourers, debts, ability to meet consumption needs, diet and livestock owned (Appendix 2). All the questions related to the completed agricultural year prior to the survey (i.e. September 1998 to August 1999). Concerns about the reliability of the information gathered are discussed later in this section and in Chapter 5.

The second section included a series of open-ended questions (Appendix 3). These probed perceived changes to the household economy and resources and culminated in general questions about whether respondents felt better or worse off after resettlement. The aim was to gain a sense of levels of satisfaction with changes in production and consumption, and hence the influence of economic factors on oustees' satisfaction with their new home. Responses were recorded and the findings are analysed in Chapter 5.

Respondent: The head of household was again targeted for the economic survey, although ideally the views of both the head and their partner would have been sought. Women are likely to have different perceptions from men of changes in the domestic economy since they make a different contribution to it. For example, the response to questions on the ease of feeding the household may well have been different. However, many women used the in-depth interviews to talk about these issues.

At first attempts were made to survey households that were selected using random sampling methods, but after much inefficient use of time (calling on households repeatedly until we could pin-down the required respondent or until we thought it was fruitless to keep trying) a more practical approach was adopted – surveying any head of household who was around and willing to participate. In total 40 economic surveys were conducted in Kandewal. Regrettably most of the data collected in Vadaj
for the first section of the economic survey went missing (although the recordings with 28 household heads were still available). As a result, the changes in production and consumption documented in Chapter 5 are primarily based on findings from Kandewal vasahat.

The economic survey was the most problematic element of the methodology. At the best of times information about household economic circumstances is difficult to elicit. In this highly politicised case, the accuracy of some of the data is highly questionable. During fieldwork, oustees in Kandewal were pressing for the inclusion of 22 young adult males on the list of project-affected-persons. This classification would entitle them to the resettlement package, including 5 acres of agricultural land. Some oustees were therefore keen to express to outsiders their hardships as a result of resettlement to a region where land is in shorter supply. This emerged primarily in responses to questions about circumstances in their original village, particularly the amount of land previously cultivated. On two occasions Deepa understood the dialect words of fellow oustees urging the interviewee to ‘tell them more’ i.e. to report a greater area than had actually been cultivated.

A contact at ARCH-Vahini lamented that this was typical of what has happened everywhere in the Sardar Sarovar resettlement. He commented that people they had known and with whom they had enjoyed an excellent rapport for years were now telling a different version of events from what both parties knew to be the case. Before resettlement, he said, it was much easier to introduce researchers to the villagers, ‘they [the researcher] could just get on with it [their work]’. My impression was that anybody conducting research on Sardar Sarovar resettlement would face these difficulties. My contact in the NBA advised us to collect information through group interviews, as there was less chance of our being misinformed. Experience suggested this was not necessarily the case: in fact, as noted above, a respondent could be ‘egged on’ by others. Oustees in Kandewal were keen to demonstrate a collective voice on the issue of hardships faced by landless oustees. Their solidarity with those less fortunate was apparent when those with land said they would rather
the dam remain unbuilt (even if they had to wait longer for irrigation) as this would increase the chances of the 22 landless oustees getting project-affected-person status. (Once the dam is built oustees are convinced the government will forget about them.) I imagine this was also the reason why one Kandewal oustee changed his tune about post-resettlement economic circumstances when a brother of a landless oustee walked into the house in the middle of an interview. Oustees also displayed solidarity with the NGOs seeking to help them. In Vadaj-2, for example, one interviewee suggested that oustees would be unwilling to acknowledge that they had benefited from resettlement for fear of undermining the work of the NBA.

It would, however, be wrong to leave the impression that inaccuracies in the data (particularly on production and consumption in the original villages) are the result only of misrepresentation. It was difficult for oustees to quantify such things as the amount of land cultivated and crop production when these were previously unmeasured. I imagine the amount of cultivated land in the hills could appear greater simply because there were no tangible boundaries, leaving the eye with the impression of large tracts. Moreover, perception is as important as the ‘objective’ situation. Chapter 5, where most of the analysis of the economic survey is presented, will demonstrate a way of coping with these problems.

**Individual survey**

**Respondent:** This survey was administered to all adult members of a household, not just the head, to examine variations in perceptions of resettlement according to age and gender. There was no systematic selection of respondents; individual surveys were conducted with people as and when they were available. Altogether 147 individual surveys were conducted. In Kandewal we surveyed a total of 56 adults (29 men and 27 women) and in Vadaj we surveyed 91 people (50 men and 41 women).

**Purpose:** The aim of the individual survey was to investigate people’s perception of the impact of resettlement on various aspects of life (Appendix 4). I was interested in
the extent to which resettlement concerns are related to the home through questions on the following:

The built environment: not only satisfaction with the dwellings themselves, but also their configuration and layout in the vasahat. Oustees now live in compact villages: how did they feel about this change?

Activities and leisure: individual roles within the household, establishing whether these had changed and whether or not it was now more or less difficult to carry out these roles. Changes in household duties affect the amount of leisure time available, so this section included questions on free time.

Social activities, social relations and support networks: the impact of removing adivasi people from their social milieu on individuals and on the community. Many general statements have been made by anti-dam critics about the removal of tribal people from their environment and its disastrous effects. An assumption is often made that only ‘hard’ subjects require quantitative data collection and analysis, rather than ‘soft’ subjects relating to social matters. A primary objective of this survey was to gather quantitative data concerning levels of social activity, enjoyment of activities and changes in support networks to provide a more informed assessment of the impact of resettlement on oustees’ social lives.

Amenities: this relatively short section could have been expanded to include questions on a greater range of amenities but this had to be balanced with the need to keep the survey brief.

General questions: an open question on the advantages and disadvantages of living in Kandewal/Vadaj enabled oustees to express their feelings on issues they chose to raise. My purpose was to gauge the individual’s overall satisfaction with resettlement. The final question ‘Does Kandewal/Vadaj feel like your place?’, was the most
difficult to word but also perhaps the most important in attempting to gain a sense of whether or not oustees feel at home in their new environment.

The individual survey changed substantially from the first draft produced before the main research visit. It was modified as a result of three inputs: a) consultation with and feedback from academic institutions and NGOs b) reflections on the pilot conducted in Phata vasahat (a vasahat neighbouring Kandewal) and c) reassessment after commencing the survey with oustees in Kandewal. For example:

1) A section comparing mobility before and after resettlement was revised to focus on specified social activities. For instance, the original question required details of all the occasions in the year when oustees ventured outside their village, but this proved unworkable because of the sheer volume of movement. The question was abandoned in favour of a more focused effort to determine whether attendance at events such as festivals and fairs had decreased or increased since resettlement.

2) The question on the level of practical help from fellow oustees before and after resettlement was divided up to distinguish between help for house construction and help on the fields etc.

3) Questions eliciting the same responses from all oustees were removed. For instance, oustees did not discuss individual preferences concerning the decision to resettle at the chosen vasahat; instead they simply repeated the grounds on which the collective decision to do so was reached.8

Most of the modifications to the individual survey arose from the pilot study, conducted in Phata. The draft survey took two hours per person to complete. The final draft usually lasted 50 minutes. Many of the questions involved answering a follow-up question or expanding on an answer if there had been a change. The shortest session was 30 minutes long, with an oustee who responded ‘the same’ (no change) to all questions.
In-depth interviews

Respondent: These were conducted with anyone willing and available to respond. A total of 50 in-depth interviews were conducted: 30 in Kandewal and 20 in Vadaj, with equal proportions of men and women.

Purpose: The literature on the concept of home raised many important questions. In general these are abstract rather than operational. The in-depth interviews were designed to explore the meanings given to home by oustees in a user-friendly manner: the link between home and identity, the boundaries of home and the order of the home; the link between home and development, as well as the emotional experience of relocation. For instance, the meanings of home were explored through the perceived difference between a house and ‘home’ (makan and ghar). Oustees were also asked to describe their previous homes.

Questions on the link between identity and scale were directed at two levels. The first was at the scale of the dwelling unit. For instance, how would they describe their ideal house? Do they like their houses to look the same as or different from others? The second level addressed the link between identity and place. I was particularly interested to know how people felt about leaving their forefathers’ land.

The home was described in Chapter 3 as a spatial, temporal and socio-cultural order. Resettlement is disorientating as it disrupts this order and forces people to re-examine the primary questions: where are we? and who are we? Many of the questions explored these issues. For instance, oustees were asked how they felt about having to reside in a fixed location, something that imposes a particular kind of order.

One set of questions were used to ascertain whether oustees regard their new home in terms of an opportunity or of barriers to development. Oustees were asked about their hopes and fears and whether or not the direction of change was for the better or the worse.
Oustees were generally much happier to engage in in-depth interviews than they were to answer survey questions. All the in-depth interviews were recorded with the permission of the respondents, given—contrary to my expectations—without hesitation. For oustees the recording was the best aspect of doing the interviews as they could listen to their voices on tape afterwards.

Interviews varied enormously in length as some people were chattier than others. The richness of the material also varied enormously, with some giving animated responses and telling stories of their experiences whilst others were less informative. During a significant proportion of interviews we struggled to encourage oustees to expand on their answers, hoping for more than 'I like it' or 'I don't like it' when referring to a particular change. Sometimes we were offered no more than a cryptic response such as 'oh, it was like that', when asked, for example, to describe their old village home. Our supplementary questions, 'it was like what?' did not always prompt explanation.

People may have been tired of accounting for their feelings and attitudes or not inclined to express them to an outsider. They may also have found it difficult to express themselves in Gujarati. Often they were not used to articulating their feelings on the issues raised or took the attitude that there is little point in talking about things over which they have no control. Hakim (1997) found that Bhil adivasi do not dwell on things that happened in the past or happened 'to them'. This perhaps may explain why oustees repeatedly used the phrase 'Sum Kare?' ('what to do?').

Their repeated use of these particular words may have indicated their resignation to the cruel hand that they had been dealt. Yet it was a phrase that was also used in conjunction with descriptions of changes they liked. For instance, one woman spoke about her strong preference for living in compact villages because they are more sociable, yet finished her sentence with 'now the houses are closer together – what to do'? It may just have been a way to round off this particular discussion, a sort of conversation filler. On the other hand, the interviewee may have felt that to end the discussion on a negative note can serve as a reminder that resettlement—an
experience that people were forced to undergo – is a traumatic experience whether or not there are some good outcomes.

Oustees had a tendency to speak about the impact on others rather than their own circumstances. This might have reflected an orientation towards the collective rather than the individual or an attempt to speak with one voice on matters they were keen for the outside world to hear about.

**Participant observation**

Our presence from dawn till dusk in Kandewal vasahat and both day and night in Vadaj provided the opportunity to witness the routine of daily life and responses to unexpected events. We were invited to participate in oustees’ social events and also tried our hand at a variety of tasks. Throughout the year I kept a diary of field observations, which later proved useful in helping me to reconstruct details, chronologies, memories and impressions.

**4.4 Working through the research material**

Use of the methodological tools described resulted in 120 hours of taped recordings and 290 completed surveys. A small proportion of the in-depth and economic interviews were simultaneously translated and transcribed from Gujarati to English in a joint effort by Deepa, myself and Rajesh (a recent graduate of MS University of Baroda) who worked with us for a while. I transcribed most of the interviews myself in the UK and the transcripts were checked by my Gujarati teacher. I ruminated over each transcript making notes as I read and used a qualitative software package (ATLAS) to enhance my analysis of the in-depth interviews. Each transcript was coded in two ways. Although the in-depth interviews were open-ended, some standard questions were asked of all oustees. The responses for a particular question were coded together. The transcripts were then coded according to major themes (economics, housing, social relations, and development) and sub-themes creating the structure of the empirical chapters.
The data from household, economic and individual surveys were all coded and analysed using a quantitative software package (MINITAB). Simple cross-tabulation was used to analyse these data. The findings from the quantitative and qualitative analyses are presented in the next four chapters.
Notes to Chapter 4

1 Like the results of a study of people ousted from a working-class area in Boston where those who aspired to be middle-class did not share the sense of grief experienced by others (see Fried 1963).

2 For descriptions of the Bhil and the sub-tribes see: Ahuja (1966); Doshi (1971); Chandra (1975); Varma (1978); Deliege (1985); Patel (1996a); Patel (1996b); Vyas (1996).

3 The timing of displacement is important as the resettlement policy has evolved. For a long period the government of Gujarat would not match the more liberal resettlement policies of the two other states by offering five acres of land per family. Instead it offered some meagre cash compensation to villagers from Mokhadi. Only a small amount of land of inferior quality could be purchased with this money. Subsequently, in the early 1980s the government was pressured into implementing the five-acre policy. In Suka resettlement site I came across oustees who were settled there before the five-acre policy, and so are now engaged in a process of negotiating for an extra two acres of land due to them. Once the site is established, however, it is difficult to create more space to allow for such changes. There have also been various resolutions passed over the course of the decade, each signalling an improvement on the existing policy.

4 This comparison was made during a meeting with the Vadodara based activist on 26 October 1998.

5 At one stage I feared that my efforts to break down barriers had an equally unwanted effect. Some oustees suggested I was from the NBA, the anti-dam movement, because like Medhaben (the most prominent figure in the NBA) I sat on the floor, not caring that I got my clothes dirty.

6 All personal names are pseudonyms, using common Indian names rather than Bhil names.

7 I followed the government definition of an adult as someone over the age of 18.

8 Villagers awaiting resettlement would be informed when land became available by the land purchasing committee. They would be offered a chance to view the area. A group of male villagers would view the land and after discussion decide as to whether the community should accept the offer before them. Female oustees were not given chance to voice an opinion. In effect questions about preferences and choice were too hypothetical. Even the male oustees who went to view different sites did not express individual preferences. They never mentioned the internal debates that must have taken place amongst them, only the final decision and the reason for selecting the final site chosen.
5 Home as a place of production and consumption

5.1 Introduction

The notion of home as 'a place of production and consumption' does not feature explicitly in the literature review by Despres (1991). That the home is tied up with production and consumption is demonstrated in the phrase 'domestic economy', even though in Greek the word 'economy' itself referred to that which happened in the home. The omission by Despres is perhaps indicative of a difference between non-agricultural societies (from which her findings were drawn) and agricultural societies. It also reflects a history of thought on the notion of private and public that says work does not take place in the home. Whilst not altogether surprising, it is inconceivable to talk about understandings of home without talking about production and consumption.

In this chapter I show how resettlement has entailed a shift from a livelihood system based on a self-sufficient and subsistence domestic economy into one based on the market economy, invariably resulting in significant changes in production and consumption. Given the objective of resettlement planners to restore the livelihoods of those displaced, I ask whether oustees are better off at the vasahats than when living in their original villages. I also explore whether or not oustees feel they are better off. I then compare oustees' economic status with their own feelings about economic changes to see whether or not there appears to be a material explanation for reported satisfaction levels. I argue that the 'home' is regarded and experienced, inter alia, as a site of both production and consumption, hence satisfaction/dissatisfaction with changes to the domestic economy will have a bearing on oustees' satisfaction with their new home. The final section shows that in spite of having to leave their original village home behind, oustees can nonetheless conceive of the vasahat as home.
5.2 Livelihood strategies

Based on my discussion with oustees I describe in this section the livelihood system at oustees’ village of origin (which was cross-checked with Hakim’s pre-displacement ethnography) and at the vasahat, beginning with the strategies used to make a living prior to resettlement in the plains.

5.2.1 Livelihood strategies before resettlement

The (displaced) Bhil adivasi had for many generations lived in a seemingly inhospitable environment in the hills of the Narmada Valley by carving out an existence which made use of a wide resource base that included the hills, forest and river. In this environment subsistence agriculture formed the mainstay of their existence. Subsistence agriculture is defined as ‘farming and associated activities which together form a livelihood strategy, where the main output is consumed directly by the household, where there are few if any purchased inputs and where only a minor proportion of the output is marketed’ (HEARD, 2000:1). Like most people who carry out subsistence agriculture, however, the Bhil adivasi were not entirely self-provisioning. It is therefore appropriate to describe the range of rural livelihood strategies adopted.

The Bhil adivasi were first and foremost cultivators – an adaptation from the way of their predecessors who were hunter-gatherers and later, as noted by Baviskar (1997), slash and burn shifting cultivators – yet only a relatively small proportion of the land that they cultivated actually belonged to them. Making use of a variety of land tenure arrangements was thus a vital component in their livelihood strategies.

Most households cultivated some katidar land – legal land holdings (dating back to British, and in some cases Mughal, land settlement schemes) on part of which they normally built their house. These legal holdings on which land revenue was paid (indicated by ownership of a red book with the appropriate documentation) were, however, smaller than the areas of forestland cultivated illegally by almost every household. The cultivation of (extra) forestland was a necessary component
of their livelihood strategies given low productivity levels resulting from thin, stony topsoils and a lack of irrigation. Despite legal restrictions the oustees had for generations cleared and cultivated forestland by providing ‘cha-pani’ (bribe money)3 to the forest officer in charge of the respective area. Although not without its problems, this was a system that worked for both the oustees and the officer, who made extra income without fear of reprimand from higher government officials from the Forest Department. The oustees cultivated the extra land needed to support themselves.4

A third type of land previously cultivated by oustees of Vadaj-1 and -2 and Hafeshwar-Devdi was Dormaapni or Karaba land. This is government wasteland – land previously forested that had been cleared for one reason or another. Although the land did not belong to the oustees, paying a sum of money (for which a receipt was provided) gave them the right to cultivate this land. In effect the government leased this land to them, and in one instance oustees from Vadaj managed to acquire some of this government wasteland.5

The availability of different combinations of kathidar, dormaapni/karaba and forest land (called jungle land by the Bhils) for oustees to cultivate meant no one went landless in the hill villages, although some households may have been so in legal terms. In the absence of a developed market economy – due to limited access to markets – oustees cultivated only what they needed to support themselves, not more and never less. The official figures for types of land to be submerged in the original villages of relevance to this study are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Land to be submerged by type as of 1981 (hectares)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Cultivable private land (katidar)</th>
<th>Cultivable wasteland</th>
<th>Forest land</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Makadkhada</td>
<td>113.1</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>305.8</td>
<td>474.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhumna</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charbara</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hafeshwar</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>3673.0</td>
<td>660.4</td>
<td>4402.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panderia</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Das and Charan (1983).
Note: figures rounded up to one decimal place
Rural livelihood strategies are obviously about more than ensuring the availability of land – what one does with the land is equally important. Bhil adivasi relied on rain-fed agriculture: even simple forms of irrigation such as rainwater harvesting and lift irrigation were absent in this region. To counteract the resulting vulnerability to the vagaries of nature, the Bhils grew a variety of crops as a risk-reducing strategy (Hakim, 1997). These included coarse grains – maize [Zea mays], deshi jowar [Sorghum bicolor], small grains – Bhadi [Setaria italica Beauv] or fox-tail millet, bunti [Echinochloa crus], kodri [Paspalum scrobiculatum], pulses – tuwar [Cajhanus cajan], urad [Phaseolus mungo] and other crops such as red bhindi [Hibiscus Sabdarifa], moor, bajra [Pennisetum typhoidium], moong, mung phali, masoor, tali, chillies and val papri.

Maize and jowar were the staple diet. The grains were ground, made into a dough and cooked to form pancake-shaped rotlas eaten with pulses or a vegetable dish. Virtually everything grown was used for home consumption. No cash crops such as cotton were cultivated, although excess tuwar was sometimes sold for money. Villagers would carry a basket of tuwar on their head and walk over the hills to their nearest market (up to 25 km away). The seeds of red bhindi were exchanged for salt at the market.

Fruits from trees on oustees’ land, and fruit and vegetables from the jungle supplemented their diets. Oustees named many types of fruits that they ate from the jungle, the most popular being charoli. Vegetable dishes such as segvi bhaji and mukhi bhaji were made from the leaves of trees found in the jungle. Another popular vegetable item collected from the jungle was khandiya. In poor crop years oustees would resort to eating a poisonous root vegetable dug up from forest, which had to be placed in river water for 24 hours for the poison to be removed before it could be cooked and consumed. Access to the river allowed for the consumption of fresh fish in certain seasons. Thus the forest and the river acted as insurance in seasons of crop failure. Moreover, for pleasure oustees made and drank alcohol either from mahuda fruit trees or by collecting the juice of tad
trees and allowing it to ferment in the sun. Alcohol, the consumption of which is prohibited in Gujarat, was also used in religious ceremonies.

Whilst meat was not consumed on a daily basis, oustees did sometimes cook poultry reared in their home and on special occasions goat meat was consumed, again from animals reared at home. Cattle, which grazed freely in the hills and forest, provided a limited supply of milk. Rearing animals was however less to do with fulfilling dietary desires than with providing a form of capital. Although households were generally self-provisioning, clothes and jewellery were purchased from the market and these purchases were mostly funded through the annual sale of male goats. With the exception of oxen (rarely sold as they were used in the fields for ploughing) cattle were also sold, particularly in preparing for a marriage when the groom’s household had to raise a bride price. Thus the rearing of animals formed a crucial component of oustees’ livelihood strategies and the hills provided ample grazing grounds.

With the capacity to only grow one (monsoon) crop per year the agricultural season in the hills lasted no longer than 4 months. The rest of the year oustees were able to enjoy themselves, although most households used some of their free time to engage in other forms of income generation, which brought in modest sums of money. Beedi leaves in which tobacco is rolled were collected and marketed via the Gujarat State Forest Development Corporation Ltd (Centre for Social Studies, 1997). Gum was also collected from forest trees. Some oustees were paid by forest officers to tender young saplings in nurseries, and a few households in Panderia made money from taking people across the river in their hand-made boats. All these activities were carried out in the vicinity of their home in the valley hills. Only in Devdi did some household members migrate annually to the plains to work for wages, but they stress that this was only for something to do during the long idle months: they did not need to migrate to sustain their household.
Table 5.2 Regular sources of income before resettlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of income</th>
<th>% of households with income from this source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection and sale of forest goods e.g. gum</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling animals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Poultry</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Goats</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cattle</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labouring (excluding agricultural)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labouring only</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self employment e.g. boating</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service employment e.g. nursery carer</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loaning assets e.g. oxen</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N = 42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic survey
Note: Number of missing answers varies

In short subsistence needs were met drawing on a wide sphere that included agricultural land, forest, grazing pastures in the hills and the river. This is in complete contrast to oustees' lives in the plains.

5.2.2 Changes to livelihood strategies after resettlement

Resettlement has entailed adjustment from a subsistence to a market-based economy. The resulting changes in (the sphere of) production and consumption require an altogether different approach to sustaining the domestic economy and oustees have transformed their livelihood strategies accordingly. Whilst cultivation remains the mainstay of the vast majority of households, the production and sale of cotton as a cash crop, has become a dominant feature of the new domestic economy.

Subsistence agriculture is no longer possible following resettlement. In the first instance, production in the plains relies on purchased inputs. Without artificial fertilisers and pesticides production levels would be dismal. Fertilisers were used in the hills but only in the form of cow dung. Since cattle in the original villages were tied up indoors at night, dung was collected every morning by women and then scattered on the field immediately surrounding the house (vaddo). Dung was also naturally deposited as cattle grazed freely for much of the year. In the
vasahats some families store the dung collected every morning in extensions (adalis) built outside the house and when there is enough to fill a cart load – every few months – a tractor will be hired to take the dung to the field. Natural fertilisers are however not enough in the plains and oustees have to purchase artificial fertilisers at a considerable cost, typically Rs 2500 for a five-acre plot. In addition pesticides have to be spread on the fields at a similar cost.

Production in the plains can incur other financial costs. The topography and soil type requires a more rigid time-bound and input-orientated agricultural regime. The deeper, water-retentive black gorat soils require more labour for ploughing, sowing and weeding. Greater efforts now have to be made in preparing land before the onset of monsoon as explained by Dhimatbhai: ‘in the old village we only needed to do hal-lakru [ploughing] once. Here you have to go round four-five times’. Deep furrows are needed, whereas in the hills either shallow furrows were ploughed, or none at all i.e. the seeds were simply thrown across the land. The furrows then need to be covered over using a kadab pulled by oxen. Subsequently weeding is necessary and they have to be removed continuously, whereas in the hills weeding was carried out only once in an agricultural season. The ferocity of weed growth is in part due to the application of fertiliser in the plains.

Due to the water-retentive quality of the soil all these activities have to be carried out at the right time i.e. when the soil has particular water content. Failure to do so can result in lower yields or even total crop failure. For example, fertiliser has to be spread just before rain for it to soak through into the soil, otherwise it is rendered useless and more has to be applied.

Not only do these activities have to be carried out multiple times for each harvest, but also the number of harvests is greater, because the agricultural season in the plains is longer, again increasing oustees’ workload. In the hills there was no option but to grow monsoon-fed crops. One crop per year was grown, with agricultural activities starting from mid-June. By mid-October crops would be ready for harvest. In the vasahats, however, two crops can be taken, a monsoon
crop (*chomasu pak*) and a winter crop (*shiyalo pak*). The agricultural season thus lasts eight instead of four months.

The increased workload causes some households, particularly those cultivating the most land, to hire labour (landless host villagers) during busy periods. The precise timing of the agricultural cycle means that oustees generally cannot work on other peoples’ fields, as everyone is busy working at the same time. Forty four per cent of households (N=93) employed agricultural labourers in the year preceding my visit (Sept 98’ – Aug 1999), whereas only twelve per cent of households in which the present heads lived had ever paid for people to work on their fields before resettlement (N=89). Households are most likely to employ labourers during the cotton-picking season at a cost of Rs30 per day.

Adding to the cost of production is the yearly purchase of hybrid seeds. In the hills seeds from the previous harvest were used. Oustees can use *Deshi* cotton seeds obtained from previous harvests if they wish, but these have lower yields.

To meet these agricultural costs as well as other household expenses oustees are incorporating the generation of income from their fields into their livelihood strategies, just like the land-holding host villagers. Oustees have therefore adopted new patterns of crop production, including cash cropping of cotton. Cotton sales form the main source of income from their fields. In the agricultural year preceding my visit, almost half the households in Kandewal (N=66) sold cotton. The average gross income from the sale of cotton was Rs 9934 (N=25 households). The maximum sales I encountered were by a female-headed household in Kandewal who made 2.8 times the average in that year. The amount that can be made from cotton exceeds the combined gross income from all the different income sources in the hill (although the costs as already shown are much greater in the plains). Now that the oustees have easy access to a market they can also sell any other grains or pulses from their fields as well.

This move to cash-cropping, in particular cotton cultivation, significantly reduces the amount of land oustees devote to growing crops for home consumption. A
number of the crops grown in the original villages do not in any case grow in the plains. The move has therefore resulted in a decrease in the variety of crops grown.

The other main component of oustees' livelihood strategies following resettlement can be described as maximising the potential from one's agricultural fields. Leaving aside consumption that is enabled by wages from agricultural labouring and off-farm employment, movement to the plains has meant an adjustment to a form of production and consumption that relies solely on production from one's field. The oustees' resource base has effectively shrunk to the boundaries of their fields because the forests and hills that provided vegetables, fruits, fuel-wood and grazing land are missing, as is the river.

For example, the provision of grazing land is limited and of variable quality in the vasahats. In Kandewal oustees do have access to the communal grazing grounds of the host village but this land was already overgrazed before the oustees arrived, rendering the resource useless. Oustees in Vadaj-1 & -2 also lack grazing grounds for their cattle. In the absence of adequate grazing land six alternatives are available to oustees rearing cattle:

a) *jarjuwar* can be grown specially for cattle on the oustees' agricultural land. The resulting crop, called *batu*, is used as cattle fodder. It can be sold as fodder as well;

b) cattle can graze on the grass borders separating one person's field from the next;

c) stalks of crops that have been harvested can be used as fodder, called *ra-ra*; the shell of *tuwar* is also used as fodder;

d) waste from the field, such as grass and weeds, can be used;

e) as a last resort fodder can be purchased. Households prefer to keep only as much livestock as they can rear by the first five methods, but during difficult years purchase may be necessary.
The maintenance of the household’s livelihood thus occurs purely within the boundaries of their agricultural land (whether owned, rented or shared). Even the last resort of purchasing fodder depends on income derived from selling cash crops grown on one’s field, for although income can be derived from other sources (see Table 5.17) the greater proportion of a household’s income in the vasahats comes from the sale of cotton. Sumantbhai highlights the way oustees’ livelihood strategies have changed:

In the old village life was good – moving around, getting wood, grazing for cattle, getting water. Here whatever you have at home [comes] from the field. The kutchero (waste) that you get; from that you give to the cows. Here you can’t keep many cows.

Whilst I have used the example of agricultural land now being a substitute for grazing land, the principle is the same for everything else that was once available in the forest, hills or river. For example, firewood for cooking, once available from the jungle, now has to be obtained from one’s fields. Whatever resource we are talking about it, the point is that oustees now have to manage their livelihoods from within the confines of their fields.

Having experienced these enormous changes in the domestic economy and oustees’ livelihood strategies it is important to ask whether or not they are better off after resettlement.

5.3 Are people better off than they were before?

World Bank guidelines require that the standard of living of those displaced by any development project that it funds should be maintained or increased following resettlement. Ensuring an adequate productive base lies at the heart of restoring or enhancing livelihoods and this section therefore aims to determine whether or not oustees are better off economically than they were in the hills.
5.3.1 Changes in number of animals reared

Despite their efforts to maximise fodder from their fields, oustees have not been able to overcome the disadvantage of inadequate grazing grounds, resulting in a decrease in the number of animals reared, as shown in Table 5.3. Whilst poultry can be raised without grazing grounds, oustees have found they die easily at the vasahats, although the reason for this is not known.

Table 5.3 Livestock held by households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Mean in DC* (N=9)</th>
<th>Mean before (N=51)</th>
<th>Mean after (N=51)</th>
<th>% of households with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxen</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cows</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Diary entry/informal discussion and Economic interview

* Refers to the average livestock held by households still remaining in Dhumna and Charbara; the other columns refer to those now resettled.

In this regard oustees are clearly worse off as they are no longer able to maintain the quantity of livestock they held in their original villages. Thus cattle cannot be the ‘provident fund’ of households that they once were. The rest of this section focuses on issues relating to a farmer’s most important asset – land.

5.3.2 Changes in tenure and operation of holdings

It has been argued that oustees are now better off by virtue of cultivating land that they legally own (or have formally hired) instead of encroaching on forest land which virtually all households previously relied upon to meet their subsistence needs. Ninety-one per cent (N=69) of present heads lived in households that cultivated forestland. However I believe this kind of reasoning overlooks the reality of life in the isolated hills where legal recognition had little relevance. Perhaps greater meaning can be found in the changes that have taken place with respect to the operation of land holdings.
It is often assumed that the household is the basic unit of the domestic economy. In the original villages, however, this was not necessarily the case and a variety of agricultural and living arrangements co-existed. Whilst some households occupied a single house and cultivated their own land, others may have cultivated some land with other households (usually legal land holdings) and some on their own (jungle land). Some households only cultivated shared land. In other cases a family may have cultivated on their own, and also lived in separate houses, but came together habitually ‘as a household’ for their meals.

Resettlement has introduced new combinations of living and cultivation arrangements, illustrated and explained in Appendix 5. Prior to resettlement 55 per cent of present heads of households used to live in households that cultivated entirely independently of other households (arrangements 1 and 4) i.e. 55 per cent were single cultivation units. Upon resettlement the percentage of households that cultivate independently has shot up to 87 per cent of households of the total sample, as shown in Table 5.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultivation arrangements</th>
<th>% before</th>
<th>% after</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not cultivating anything</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent (single unit) cultivation</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part independent + part jointly</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All land jointly</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Household survey

One reason for the high prevalence of joint cultivation in the original villages was that the amount of legal (khatidar) land was so small it was better to cultivate it jointly and then cultivate as much forest land as each household saw fit. Otherwise the land would have become too fragmented if they divided it each time a son moved out to establish their own household.

The large increase in the number of households cultivating independently came about when, on resettlement, every male above the age of 18 in 1987 was granted Project Affected Person (PAP) status and allotted 5 acres of agricultural land plus
a house plot. But why should they not continue to cultivate jointly? One possible answer is that resettlement released an existing, pent-up, demand for separated cultivation, suggesting that in this regard oustees are now better off. Alternatively separate cultivation may be understood as a response when land is perceived as a scarce commodity and people feel the need to stake their claims on what they can.

Whilst some resources can never be replaced regardless of the size of one's field, the fact that oustees have to meet their production and consumption needs from within the confines of their fields raises the question of whether or not they have enough land. Although even larger areas would not necessarily compensate for the loss of extensive land, a forest and a river, they should provide extra purchasing power compensating at least partially for the loss.

5.3.3 Changes in amount of land cultivated

One of the most frequent observations made by oustees is the decrease in the amount of land cultivated. Whilst the Centre for Social Studies (1994) reports no difference in the amount of land cultivated before and after resettlement the results from my own data for two vasahats paint a very different picture. Although data pertaining to the original villages is highly problematic it seems very improbable that there would have been no reduction in the amount of land cultivated. Even those less inclined to negotiate further benefits claim to be cultivating less land than before.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; quartile</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; quartile</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At villages of origin</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24.35</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At vasahats</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic survey

* All households are included, whether they operate their holdings individually or jointly (partial or fully). Area per household for fully joint cultivators = total cultivated divided by number of households cultivating this land. Area per household for partially joint cultivators = total (legal) land cultivated divided by the number of households cultivating this land (even though in practice the land was not divided up) plus area cultivated individually by the household. Usually the amount of legal land per household was so small it was almost negligible but nonetheless was added to that portion the household cultivated individually.
The proportion of small holdings increased, while there were fewer large holdings (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6 Reported distribution of holding sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>% of households with holdings that were:</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages of origin (before)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Vasahats (after)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandewal vasahat only</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandewal vasahat only *</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Small = 0.0001-5 acres, Medium = 5.0001-10 acres, and large = over 10.001 acres.

Table 5.6 shows that in their original village three quarters of the households in which present heads of household lived had large holdings and only a small minority (4 per cent) had holdings less than 5 acres in size. At the *vasahats* a greater proportion of households operate medium sized holdings. Yet following resettlement there have been changes in household composition ‘natural’ and resettlement-induced that need to be considered.

Table 5.7 Changes in household composition on resettlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of households which were:</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- without children</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- with children</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All types</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean size of households</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- without children</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- with children</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All types</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Household survey

There has been a reduction in the average size of household from 8.6 to 7.2 people. Given this change it is also useful to establish how much land is held in
relation to the number of people depending on that land. In calculating the land to consumer ratio I have counted an adult consumer as the equivalent of two under 18s. The mean ratio prior to resettlement was 3.2 (N=77 households), compared with 1.6 acres per consumer now (N=98).

It is worth noting that forth fifths of households having ratios greater than the mean land to consumer ratio manage to meet their food grain needs from their fields, whereas only half the households having ratios less than the mean are able to do so. The difference is significant as demonstrated by the chi-square test: 99.5% level of significance.

Thus it would appear that oustees are worse off given that households are in general operating smaller land holdings with less land per consumer and those with lower land to consumer ratios more likely to purchase their food grains.

However, this interpretation does not suffice, given that we are not necessarily comparing like for like:

a) although many households were unable to meet their home consumption needs without purchasing extra food grains, some of these households may have made a deliberate choice to devote more of their land to growing cash crops – a livelihood strategy that is only available in the plains where there is easy access to markets and a greater need for purchasing power

b) the land at the vasahats is generally more productive than that in the hills, as is recognised by oustees. I asked a number of households where they could expect to get more production by comparing an acre of land at the vasahat with an acre in the original villages. Of the 17 household heads that responded to this question, two thirds were of the opinion that production is greater from an acre of land at the vasahat.

Aside from a statement by Joshi (1983: 116) which appears to be more anecdotal than based on fact, that even twenty acres of land in the hills can not be equated with 5 acres at the resettlement sites, there is no basis on which to say one acre of
land in the plains is the equivalent of ‘x’ acres of land in the hills. Hence comparing change in the amount of land available for cultivation is useful in so far as it can determine the perception of being better or worse off (see Section 5.4).

An alternative approach to assessing whether oustees are better off or not, relies less on direct before and after comparisons of selected data sets as to an analysis of whether the requirements to ensure a household’s livelihood are being satisfied, as they were then. Joshi (1991: 49) writes:

Almost all the people live according to similar life standards. Some people have not risen above the ‘ordinary’ standards. [...] In the same way, nobody has come down below the ‘ordinary’ stratum. [...] in the context of satisfying the minimum family needs, the economic interests could well be described as similar...

In the absence of a developed market economy oustees in the hills cultivated only what they needed to support themselves, although the extent to which their minimum requirements were satisfied is debated. ARCH-Vahini activists say the declining productivity in the hills was in any case leading to some out migration from submergence villages (they cite 15 cases from Kadada, Ferakada and Turkhedha villages). The declining productivity, hence worsening economic condition, may have been a factor in *adivasis* from areas in Turkehda, Hafeshwar and Kunda (near Kadada) not affected by the submergence seeking ways to be included in the Project Affected Persons list. In Gujarat there were at least 450 such families whose cases were heard but finally rejected in 2000 by a specially constituted committee. For the purpose of this analysis, however, we need to look at the situation as it was, not as it would become. Aside from two cases of out-migration from Panderia there were no cases, as far as I was told, of people leaving their villages as a result of population pressure. Thus, if households at the *vasahats* are able to meet their basic needs (whether that be directly from the field or via the sale of cash crops) without accumulating debts, it could be argued that their standard of living is on a par with that prior to resettlement.
5.3.4 The five acre standard

The Narmada Tribunal directed the state governments to allocate a minimum of 5 acres (2 ha) of land to those from whom they were acquiring land scheduled for submergence. Five acres was regarded as a sufficient amount of land to support a household. According to a member of the ARCH team ‘our experience suggests that 5 acres of land is enough for one family – not only to sustain it but also to allow some surplus accumulation for the future. From a practical point of view it is also just the appropriate size for looking after thoroughly’. Resettlement experts from the World Bank, who were required to ensure that the Bank’s principle of maintaining or enhancing oustees’ standard of living would be honoured, did not question the area of land on offer; they only argued that the provision should be extended to ‘encroachers’. So how has this provision fared in reality?

One positive indicator of the successful transition from subsistence to a market economy is the fact that very few households stated that they were in debt, contrary to the predictions of writers such as Pallit and Mody (1992). In Kandewal only 5 per cent of households claimed to be holding any debts (N=61). Of the 36 households that had to purchase food only one claimed to be in debt.

Yet, what price (in the broadest sense) must households pay to keep their domestic economy balanced? For instance, do they forgo purchasing other food items (previously freely available) in order to purchase a sufficient amount of grains? A full assessment of nutritional status is beyond the remit of this thesis but I made a basic investigation of oustees’ diet, which revealed the following changes:
Table 5.8 Changes in non-grain food consumption post resettlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>% of heads reporting consumption in their household had:</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased/started *</td>
<td>Not changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goat</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic survey
Notes: *food type now introduced in oustees’ diet, **no longer features at all in oustees’ diet.

The consumption of non-grain foods such as fruits and fish have decreased in most households, implying that oustees cannot afford to purchase from the market items that they once ate or feel their money can best be spent on other things. In the case of changes in meat consumption (goat and poultry) some of the decrease is attributable to cultural change that have taken place following resettlement to the plains in that some oustees have become bhagats (devout persons), thus vegetarians, following the example of some hosts. But on the whole the decreases shown in Table 5.8 relate to the fact that the oustees no longer have a wide resource base from which to draw sustenance, including the lack of grazing land to rear animals.

Income from cultivating one’s fields may also have to be supplemented by labouring for cash on fields belonging to those outside the community, something which oustees from most Zone 3 submergence villages were not accustomed to doing. In Kandewal seventy seven per cent (N=43) of heads reported agricultural labouring as a source of income for their household. Over four fifths of households with adult males who are non-beneficiaries have members engaged in agricultural labouring, compared to just over a third of households where all adult males are beneficiaries.

The more non-beneficiaries in a household the less likely home consumption needs will be met without having to purchase grains.
Table 5.9 Households meeting consumption without grain purchase (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Households with:</th>
<th>% of them meeting needs:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 non-beneficiaries: all adult males received land</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 non-beneficiary</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more non-beneficiaries</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic survey

Notes: Results using chi-square test are statistically significant at the 97.5% probability level. DF=

Although a household may choose to grow more cash crops and purchase grains, I believe the observations in Table 5.9 suggest that the households in which all adult males are beneficiaries are better off than those who have non-beneficiaries.

Households with non-beneficiary males could be regarded as accommodating the equivalent of two households (or more, depending on the number of adult males) particularly if the non-beneficiary has a wife and children. Thus, if the 5 acre standard is regarded as suitable for one household it follows that those households with non-beneficiary members will be worse off than before (and compared to others) unless they can find some way to compensate for their situation.

5.3.5 Dependency and Distribution of land (degree of equality)

Although the Sardar Sarovar project authority has been hailed as offering the most liberal of resettlement packages, they have failed to consider women as autonomous individuals. Reflecting existing social norms, land titles are given in the name of male oustees (except in the case of households headed by a widow), thus reinforcing gender inequality (Parasuraman 1999, Singh 1992, Mehta 1992). However amongst the male population at least the resettlement policy would seem to promote equality amongst the oustees. The policy to allot 5 acres per beneficiary appears fair, particularly as all adult males got this minimum entitlement. Thus at both vasahats most households have at least one beneficiary.
However, over time, inequalities between households have started to emerge as the young men who were under 18 in 1987 (and thus not classed as beneficiaries) come of age. Table 5.11 classifies households according to the number of non-beneficiaries they contain.

Table 5.11 Households with non-beneficiary adult males (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vasahat</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kandewal</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadaj</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two fifths of households have adult males who are not beneficiaries. Some households are worse off than others are, with as many as three non-beneficiaries, with or without a family. Such households have more ‘dependants’ than others.  

To some extent the burden of dependency can be overcome by renting land from host Patels although there is no correlation between households renting land and households with non-beneficiaries. Over a third of households have rented land (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12 Mean area of land cultivated of different tenures per household (acres)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vasahat</th>
<th>Allotted land</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Rented land</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% renting land</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kandewal</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadaj</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic survey

Note: There is considerable variation between hamlets within each vasahat of the percentage of households renting land.
5.3.6 The final analysis – are they better off?

Given the unreliability of pre-resettlement economic data and the inappropriateness of conclusions based on direct comparisons of changes in economic indictors, I signalled earlier in this section the need for an assessment that establishes whether households are able to undertake a sustainable livelihood in their new environment in the plains. The most important factors to consider are the amount of land available to the household (including rented land) in relation to the number of adult males depending on that land. Thus, since 5 acres is considered a viable unit for one adult male and his family, I shall regard this as the benchmark for a household to be as well off as a ‘typical household’ before resettlement. Households with one beneficiary and one non-beneficiary fall into the same class if they are cultivating 10 acres (i.e. they have made up for the shortfall of beneficiary land in some other way). I have therefore classed households with a land-to-adult-male ratio of 5 as likely to be just as well off as they were before, those with a ratio higher than 5 as better off and those with a ratio less than 5 as worse off.

Table 5.13 Household Economic circumstances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic circumstance</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>Percentage of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than twice as better off</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to twice as better off</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 1 ½ times as better off</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same (just as well off)</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 1 ½ times worse off</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to twice as worse off</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than twice as worse off</td>
<td>2.50&gt;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Any</td>
<td>100% (N=97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic survey

The data shows that 70 per cent of households are operating viable amounts of land for livelihoods based on agriculture and can be interpreted as being the same or better off than a typical household in the hills, with one sixth considerably better off. The remaining households are operating less than the ideal amount, with one quarter considerably worse off than before.
Households can then be scored according to how many times better or worse off they are compared to the benchmark ratio, equivalent to the seven categories shown in Table 5.13. It is necessary to give due weight to the fact that households with non-beneficiary males are worse off than those in which all the adult males are beneficiaries, even if renting land (which has to be paid for). Thus, I have added the household's share of non-beneficiary adult males to the household score to produce an overall final score (between 1 to 10) for each household (Table 5.14).21

Table 5.14 Household economic status scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>1.0</th>
<th>2.0</th>
<th>3.0</th>
<th>4.0</th>
<th>4.5</th>
<th>5.0</th>
<th>6.0</th>
<th>7.0</th>
<th>8.0</th>
<th>9.0</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Hh</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic survey
Notes: Hh = Households. The household is better off the lower the score.

The merit of producing a final score for every household is that the households can be ranked to see whether satisfaction with economic changes relates to their economic position or to other things, as will be discussed in Section 5.5.

5.4 Do oustees feel better or worse off?

In this section I describe oustees' reported levels (measured by what household head says) of satisfaction with changes to the domestic economy as brought about by resettlement to the plains i.e. whether oustees feel better or worse off.

5.4.1 Satisfaction with consumption

In her doctoral thesis Hakim (1995: 58) argued that Vasavas22 define themselves 'largely in relation to those activities of production and consumption which directly or indirectly contribute to filling their stomach'. In keeping with this emphasis on food consumption I asked oustees about their different experiences in meeting their requirements in this regard, to shed light on satisfaction with changes in the domestic economy.
Table 5.15 Perceptions of food consumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where do/did you find:</th>
<th>At vasahat (% more satisfied)</th>
<th>same %</th>
<th>At original village (% less satisfied)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer grain shortages?</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It easier keeping the family fed?</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The diet better?</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic survey (qualitative component)

Table 5.15, documenting responses to questions from the semi-structured interviews, shows that none produced overwhelming majorities in any one category; this was most apparent in relation to grain shortages. Respondents who said their household now runs out of grain less often cited their ability to take two or more crops at the vasahat as the reason. Higher productivity is a change that is obviously welcomed by the oustees but perhaps not as much so as expected, because their satisfaction is tempered by other changes in production and consumption.

First, oustees are growing more cash crops. This appears to reduce production levels for the house is no longer filled with grains.

Second, in the original villages any excess crop, except perhaps tuwar, was stored for future use. In the vasahats the everyday necessity for cash means oustees are more likely to sell excess rather than store it. This again undermines any sense of increased production. However, the reason oustees are more willing to sell their excess is arguably that they feel more secure, as plains agriculture is less dependent on the vagaries of nature and because they can buy grains if need be. Even if money is short they can do agricultural labouring to pay for household consumption.

Third, oustees cultivate less land than before, so increased production per acre is ‘cancelled out’ in terms of perceived production.

Those who said shortages occurred more now either cited the smaller variety of crops grown for home consumption or the fact that there is no fall back when
excess crops are sold off as their reason. In the old village temporary shortages were overcome by borrowing grains from other households. In the vasahats oustees speak about having to purchase grain, as households prefer to sell their excess for cash (keeping enough for just one year's consumption) rather than ‘lend’ grains.

When agricultural land is limited choices have to be made as to how it is to be used. Oustees have to be selective in what they choose to grow. By and large the land is dedicated to the staple grain crops and cash crops. This has for one thing changed peoples’ diet considerably. From Table 5.15 we see that almost half the people interviewed said their diets were better in their old village; one third said they ate as well, and less than a fifth thought their diet was better now. The reason given for preferring the diet at the vasahat was that the shops are close by so one can easily go shopping and choose what to eat. The generally held view, however, is the opposite – that variety was greater in the original villages because more crops were grown and in addition you could go to the hills and/or the forest to select what you fancied eating that day. Damanbhai exemplifies the dissatisfaction with the lack of variety in oustees’ diets:

It was good there. Water was good there. We ate everything, ate banti, badhi, ate maize, ate rice. Here everyday it's jar rotlas. I don’t like eating jar rotlas all the time. Always eating the same.

This implies that oustees, even if not growing the food themselves, are not purchasing the same or equivalent foods to provide them with a varied diet.

From this discussion we see that whether oustees think themselves better or worse off with regard to food consumption varies, and this is also true of other aspects of production and consumption. Take the issue of wealth, and where oustees were wealthier, for example. On one occasion Kunwarbhai, from Kandewal, said while helping to build a pucca house for his relative Homobhai, that ‘ahim bharelu-ghar lage nathi’ – translated as ‘here the homes do not seem full’. The reason he gave for this was that people did not have as many cattle as they had kept in the old village. I later found out that the phrase ‘bharelu-ghar’ (full-house) has a special
meaning in Gujarat. When parents agree to give their daughter’s hand in marriage to another family they may be asked if the chosen home is a ‘bharelu-ghar’. In effect the parents are being asked whether their daughter will be going to a wealthy home. Since this was a phrase used by one of the oustees themselves I decided to use it in the economic interviews by asking people where they felt their home was more full (vadere bharelu).

Over half thought their home were less ‘full’ here, one third said it was the same as before and the remaining one-tenth felt it was more full at the vasahat (N=26). The most common explanation given for the home feeling less full was that oustees have fewer cattle.

It felt full there, we had cows, we had buffalo, goats and all the wealth. If you have money shortage there you can quickly sell a goat and get money. If you raise goats then it’s good. You can sell kids. It takes a while to sell cows or oxen. At the moment what can we sell? What can one do? (Sumantbhai, beneficiary, Kandewal).

Sudirbhai, living in Vadaj-1, expressed the same view ‘It felt full in the old home. Compared to here we had more goods there – goats and all ... here we have two oxen’. The absence of grain stocks was also commonly given as a reason for the house feeling less ‘full’ i.e. wealthy than it did before.

When we asked how they used to define a wealthy household in the villages, the top two responses concerned the numbers of cattle owned and the level of crop production. Therefore according to their old understanding of what constitutes a wealthy household oustees think themselves worse off since resettlement, given that they have fewer cattle and appear to produce less food for home consumption. However, the emphasis on what constitutes a wealthy household has shifted towards the amount of land cultivated, as I gathered from my discussions with oustees. The older definition of wealth has less relevance or is not as applicable in the plains, reminding us that determining where oustees were better off is not a straightforward matter. It is nonetheless appropriate to consider whether oustees feel they have enough land and whether or not they are satisfied in this regard.
5.4.2 Satisfaction with the five acre per beneficiary policy

Most people made reference at some point to the limitations of the 5 acres policy. This comment is typical of what they had to say:

Hmm ... that .... here we have to buy everything. If we have five acres land and five people, they are dependent on that land. Just from that much land only we get the grains and we have to buy other things and vegetables. Some people have five acres but some didn’t even get land at all. Now people have to buy everything, they are doing labour work and there’s so many people in the house so buying is very difficult (Raahibhai, beneficiary, Kandewal).

Raahibhai makes reference to the number of people in relation to land. Oustees from Kandewal felt the number of people that can be supported on five acres of non-irrigated land in the plains is 6 persons and those from Vadaj said 9 for five acres of irrigated land. Since the average number of people per household is 7 in both vasahats (with a median of 7 for Kandewal and 8 for Vadaj), without more land or other sources of livelihood the oustees in Kandewal, in general, perceive a squeeze on their domestic economy. It is hardly surprising, then, to find that the oustees in Kandewal are more likely to recall cultivating vast tracts of land in their original villages. Expressions of discontent in this respect are articulated less in relation to oustees’ present day conditions than as concerns for the future. Most households are worried about how their children and their children’s families will survive in the future. That dividing five acres of land between one’s sons leaves very little for each is the view commonly held, particularly in Kandewal.

The children will suffer. It’s good now – it is sufficient for two people. If someone has five sons and if he has five acres of land they will face a little suffering. What happens for the children? If they become educated and if they get employment then it’s good, otherwise nothing. The child who is educated will have to do labouring work to eat (Janubhai, beneficiary, Kandewal).

Ishatbhai (again from Kandewal) also expressed pessimism about his children’s future:
Where was your children’s future better?

It was definitely good in the old village. The land was more so the children can live on that land and in this 5 acres I have 5 children then how can they live here? Then what will their children eat?

What will your kids do in the future?

They’ll sit [be idle], they’ll do labouring and live – such things they’ll do.

Despite complaints regarding the perceived reduction in the amount of land available (now and in the future) oustees do not (explicitly) allege that the government should have given more than five acres of land per beneficiary. There are two possible explanations. The first is the historical background to resettlement, whereby oustees won their demand for five acres to be granted to all male adults regardless of whether or not they owned legal land. Having withdrawn their objections to resettlement when the government conceded to their demands, it is not surprising that these oustees do not convert their complaints about the amount of land available into arguments that the government should have granted more than five acres per beneficiary. The second reason may perhaps be about not bothering to complain about something that there is no hope of changing. With the exception of a few oustees who never left their original village or who have returned there, the resettlement of Gujarat oustees is complete and the vasahats established. There is no chance now of a change to the policy of granting five acres per beneficiary (and the redistribution of already allotted land it would entail), hence perhaps little point in claiming the government should be giving oustees more land.

However, people do express considerable dissatisfaction about the injustice of missing out on land just because someone was not quite old enough to qualify in 1987. There is universal consensus amongst the oustees that this needs to be redressed and oustees in Kandewal insist that those who missed out should be given land by the government.
5.5 Explaining levels of satisfaction

Having discussed satisfaction with particular indicators of the domestic economy (food consumption, ‘full house’, land) I have tried to compile a more general indicator of satisfaction with economic changes following resettlement. Oustees were asked where the household was more well-to-do. Seventeen per cent said in the vasahat, 61 per cent said the same and 21 per cent said in their original village (N=28). Why do one-fifth of respondents feel they were better off in their original village when the rest think themselves the same as before or in a few cases better off?

The proportions claiming to be more well-to-do, the same or less well-to-do after resettlement closely resemble the proportions calculated as being better, more or less the same and worse off from the analysis carried out in Section 5.3 (Table 5.13). On first impressions this suggests that satisfaction levels are a function of oustees ‘objective’ economic status. However closer examination of the data reveals that the two sets of variables – indicators of satisfaction and economic status – do not completely match. Whilst those who fare badly in economic terms do express dissatisfaction with changes to the domestic economy the converse does not apply.

Predictably, none of the respondents belonging to households with a final economic score in the bottom quartile said that they were more well-to-do at the vasahat. In fact all of these respondents bar one said their situation was the same as before. They often added comments like ‘the same – we were poor then and are poor now’. All those who said their household is more well-to-do at the vasahat are concentrated in the upper quartile (economic scores 1-3). Only those living in households that fared well (in terms of economic status) make statements such as this one by Dudakiyabhai:

[Now we are] Richer. There we didn’t build houses like this. With great difficulty we used to get Rs 400 to Rs 500 – we didn’t get more. Here Rs 20,000–30,000, some even get 40–60, 000. But there whatever we grew was kept for ourselves, but here we have more partners. Even so we are still wealthier here (Dineshbhai, Kandewal, Household Score = 1).
Tarunbhai, who has higher economic status than most with a household score of 3, said: ‘It’s good here. There only if you sold cattle could you get income’.

These results are to be expected but what is unexpected is the fact that there are some people from households in the upper quartile who believe they were better off in their original village. In addition, some respondents from the highest scoring households (1-3) express dissatisfaction with respect to the other economic indicators. These seemingly anomalous results require explanation. Three possible explanations are as follows:

1) there are other factors relating to a household’s economic status that have not been taken into account;

2) the analysis refers to current economic circumstances, yet satisfaction with the domestic economy is also influenced by concerns for the future;

3) satisfaction is a function not only of economic position, but of other things as well, such as people’s feelings about the changes – loss of the forests, cattle and river for instance.

The economic status calculation does not take into account the fact that some households have relatives, who would be household members but for the fact that they are living in the original villages (having returned or failed to leave). Although these potential members (usually non-beneficiaries) are using resources in the submergence villages, the oustees do not see things this way. They feel as dissatisfied as if the non-beneficiary were living with the household and dependent on it. In other words, in ignoring these non-members, the economic status scores are perhaps better than they ought to be. For example, Aakashbhai regards his son, who is living in the submergence village, very much as a household member:

There he has land but here he doesn’t have land. Here we only have five acres of land so how can we live? He is now the father of two or three children. We have decided to bring them here but I don’t know what will happen then. I hope it will be ok (Aakashbhai, beneficiary, Kandewal).
In addition the economic status calculation does not take into account the question of irrigation. There was a clear divide between the two vasahats as to children’s future prospects, with Kandewal oustees believing their children’s future would have been better in the old village, whereas almost three-quarters of those in Vadaj believed the reverse. The absence to date of irrigation must have a bearing on oustees’ perceptions of resettlement in Kandewal. Families who are perhaps only just managing are likely to be seriously worried about the future compared to their counterparts who enjoy irrigation and therefore increased productivity. Those with irrigation are logically more optimistic about the future.

The economic calculation only deals with oustees’ present economic status, but the qualitative material powerfully illustrates oustees’ concerns for the future which clearly shape satisfaction levels. In Kandewal the combination of poor provision for children’s schooling and the prospect of dividing a small area of land between sons worries oustees regardless of their present economic status. This pessimism is highlighted by Dinesh bhai, who belongs to one of the few households with the lowest (best) possible economic score:

People like us have got happiness here. But for the children’s children here, where will they get land? They’ll have to go to the original village. Those who want to stay will stay and those who want to leave will leave. The cultivation there is still superb (Dinesh bhai, beneficiary, Kandewal).

5.5.1 The uptake of family planning

One response to this situation is to take up family planning to reduce pressure on the land. The method of family planning adopted by the oustees is women’s sterilisation (men refuse vasectomies on the grounds that the operation will undermine their ability to work on the fields). Over one-third of households had a member who has undergone the operation (Table 5.16).

Table 5.16 Households with at least one member who has been sterilised (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vasahat</th>
<th>% of households</th>
<th>N (No. of households)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kandewal</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadaj</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Household survey
Note: Considerable variations exist in the uptake of sterilisation between hamlets in the vasahats.
Oustees are open to the idea of having fewer children because economic circumstances in the plains make it practical to have fewer children. Although bride price was paid in hills, the more sons one had the better, because the amount of land cultivated was a function of the available labour. Oustees also reported, that in the absence of legally recognised authority structures, the bigger one’s family the greater its influence.

Oustees have on the whole adopted a pragmatic attitude towards family planning; if convinced of its safety, they take it up as a response to the limitations of living with limited amounts of land.

5.5.2 External sources of income

Some households have other sources of income outside their own land. The most common one is agricultural labouring (Table 5.17). The oustees have mixed feelings about this. Some are glad of the opportunity to work, but others regard it at best as a necessary evil. In some cases, labouring is essential to the family’s survival. The other oustees pity these families, seemingly because of the association between labouring and poverty rather than a sense of its being degrading in itself. Under no circumstances would families use labouring as their primary livelihood strategy in place of cultivating their own land. It is only acceptable as an income supplement.

Take up of other sources of income has to date been very limited (Table 5.17), although there is almost certainly some under-reporting.  

Table 5.17 Kandewal households with other income sources (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income generating activity</th>
<th>Percentage of households (N=47)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labouring</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other labouring</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing a contract*</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid employment</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling products</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring out equipment</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherding</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling poultry</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling goats</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic survey  
Note: * Tendered by the government to carry out physical construction of vasahats
New initiatives to earn additional income are being taken up. For example, Mahantbhai asked a host villager if he could tap the villager's *tad* tree (a resource which the locals did not how to extract) in order to sell the juice and some fermented juice (alcohol), splitting the profits between them. One Kandewal family has bought a tractor, which they hire out to other oustees.

The government has set up schemes, aimed especially at non-beneficiaries, to train them for different kinds of employment. The training on offer includes driving and tailoring. Only one-fifth of responding households had, however, taken advantage of these schemes (N=72).

Oustees still focus primarily on agriculture. Only one household – headed by Nadishbhai (a non-beneficiary) – makes their main living from off-farm activities; they have a shop selling everyday goods. People's expectations for the next generation are, however, different. One fifth of the Vadaj households surveyed have sent sons to boarding school, and two of the more enterprising households have done so in Kandewal. This suggests that at least some oustees expect something different for their children.

5.5.3 Renting land and other strategies

Another common response is to rent more land. Just over one-third of all households rented land in the agricultural year preceding the survey. This is viewed as the best solution by far although it depends on ability to pay as well as availability of land for rent. On one occasion we bumped into three Kandewal oustees on their way back from Phata host village and one of them said to us ‘before you ask, we've been to Phata to see if anyone has any land available for rent, but no-one did!' The fact that oustees have actively been seeking land to rent is seen as encouraging by some NGOs including ARCH-Vahini, which feared oustees would have difficulties adjusting to cultivation in the plains and end up letting out their own land. Fortunately the reverse is the case. Some oustees commented that if they had more money they would use it to rent land.
Oustees are also making as much use as they can of resources in their original village. A two-way flow of produce occurs between oustees at the vasahats and their relatives either still living in the submergence villages or other villages in the hills. The volume of goods is not great because of transportation difficulties.

Some oustees in Kandewal are, as a last resort, threatening to return to their original village if they are not given new land. This is possible because even in ‘submergence’ villages a lot of land may remain above water either permanently or most of the year. Oustees would join those who either never left their original villages or have already returned due to problems at the vasahat. There were nine such families in Dhumna. For instance, Kavibhai was a young man when his family moved to the vasahat. Knowing that he would not be given beneficiary status and would therefore depend on the land allotted to his brothers, he decided to stay in Dhumna with his new wife and any children that came along. These families also act as caretakers, preventing outsiders moving into their former village. Some oustees say they or their children will move back to unsubmerged areas of their old village when the numbers on the vasahat land become too great.

If non-beneficiaries were to be given land and the plots of those allotted poor quality land replaced, it would go a long way towards improving satisfaction levels. However complete satisfaction is unlikely, given that even households faring well in economic terms express discontent with changes in production and consumption. I have proposed three possible reasons for this (two have already been discussed) but elaboration is required on the third. The most likely explanation is that satisfaction with changes in production and consumption relates to feelings about the changes experienced as much as the changes in people’s economic status.

5.5.4 Feelings about loss of forest

The absence of forests in the resettlement areas has major implications for the domestic economy, one of the most important being the issue of firewood. Previously women collected firewood cut from dead trees in the forest. At the
vasahats oustees use karata as their main source of fuel for cooking. Karata are the dried stems left on the field once the tuwar crop has been harvested. Oustees in Kandewal also scour the wasteland that is supposed to be the grazing pastures of the host village for bowar, a form of wood from shrubs. The limited supply of firewood causes a degree of unease, especially when oustees were accustomed to forest trees being a communal resource. One woman said 'here they don’t let you break off even a twig from a tree if it’s on someone else’s land'.

Nobody, however, reported having fallen short of firewood so at first the use of waste for this purpose seems a positive change. But for the women of the Narmada villages this environmentally efficient use of resources brings little comfort. The wood is hard to light (one woman said she can easily get through half a box of matches before the wood ignites!). Once the fire is lit it has a tendency to die out, meaning women have to fan the flames at regular intervals. In effect women have to be much more attentive to the stove than they were before. One described how it was no longer possible to leave the stove unattended and go off to perform other tasks whilst the food (usually dal) cooks. Sitting at the stove is not pleasant for the karata produces a lot more smoke when it burns than the forest wood did. Women were clearly unhappy with this change, although men also expressed their discontent with the lack of available wood (but perhaps would cite different reasons). One third of respondents mentioned the lack of wood as a disadvantage to living at the vasahat (N= 131, source individual survey). Equal proportions of men and women raised this issue.

Loss of the forest has implications for various types of production other than food. In the Chapter 6 I describe the way in which wood was used to build houses. Wood was also used for many other things such as baskets, brooms, bamboo flutes and agricultural tools such as the ploughs made of teak wood (see Pallit and Mody, 1992). Some oustees in Kandewal have planted bamboo around their houses and some may bring back bamboo or ask relatives living in the hills to bring some so they can continue to produce these items (Figure 5.1). On one occasion I found Janubhai had called a handle (a gathering of people to help with some activity) and five or so men got together to make the baskets that Janubhai
required, chatting and drinking as they worked. The supply of wood is, however,
limited now and whilst I was not aware of people buying items such as baskets,
oustees complain that they have to pay for all these things now.

Figure 5.1 Man making bamboo mat - Vadaj-1

The lack of forest materials at the *vasahat* has greater implications than monetary
considerations:

My village I remember but what to do? Going to the hills to collect wood. When
monsoon falls you go weeding then after you come back ... it’s good. Here sitting around, there’s no wood, nothing here. In the hills you
can move around, all the trees, all the baskets you make yourself. Here
each basket is Rs20, Rs40 – how can I buy that? You can only buy
according to however much money you have – to buy what you can with
the money you possess. Free ... frreee, you don’t get anything for free
.........
Can't you afford to buy the baskets?

I do buy them, now I don't make them. Baskets tear and you have to buy them - big, big ones. I do buy them. If I had bamboo then I'd make them myself but without bamboo what can I do? (Nivaben)

Nivaben is an elderly woman who feels redundant at the vasahat. When we asked her whether she likes her home she replied 'I'm in the home now, I don't go to the field. I just lie down in the home - what else can I do?' By collecting materials and making items used by the household the elderly could still feel useful in the past. Now this is denied them.

As if the lack of wood for day-to-day purposes was not bad enough, Nivaben points out: 'I liked it there. There's no wood here. Here even if you die there's no wood [for the cremation]!' Similarly Janyaben said she would rather die in her original village because at least there would be enough wood for a proper cremation.

Oustees' descriptions of their old home often included the trees they once had, either on their own fields or in the forest. Trees featured strongly amongst the things individuals missed about their old villages. Talking about them evoked an emotional response. One of the reasons Gagan Kaka returned to Charbara was to tend to his many fruit trees. We first met Gagan Kaka in November 1999 when he came to visit his sons at the vasahat for the diwali festival. He has six sons, three of whom are beneficiaries. He had returned to Charbara with his two youngest sons, allowing his allotted land to be cultivated by the eldest of the three landless sons. After a period of time the second youngest decided to return to the vasahat despite not being allocated land because in the words of his father:

The younger generation don't have as much attachment to their forefathers' land, they're more interested in a comfortable life - for example, if you want to go to the market you can get a bus, transportation is good. There you have to go everywhere by foot on steep roads (Gagan Kaka, Charbara village).
Whilst Gagan Kaka returned to Charbara village in order to give up his allotted land to one of his landless sons his main reason for returning was his dislike of life in the plains, devoid of the ‘riches’ of the original village. Gagan Kaka has seven tari trees, one mango, nine mahuda and several custard apple trees. In Charbara he can drink as much alcohol as he wishes without restriction (financial or legal). His son, Mahantbhai, described his father’s reasons for returning to Charbara:

One reason why my father went back to our old village was because he found life not to be as enjoyable at the vasahat, because he couldn’t drink as much. Not only that but here we have to think twice about doing anything ... think can I afford to buy this? My father said he would go back to his old land because it has served him well, given him everything he needs so why should he leave? He also decided to go back so that he could give some land to one of his sons who didn’t get land (Mahantbhai, beneficiary, Kandewal).

During our stay at Gagan Kaka’s home in Charbara one of his favourite topics of conversation were the many trees he has nursed. He even took us to his field to see his fruit trees. I was astounded, then, when he remarked that he would not mind leaving his trees if he were given compensation for them at the vasahat! It was surprising to hear this from someone who gave trees as one of his main reasons for returning to his original village, which perhaps suggests that in his case (and possibly others), given the right resettlement package aversion to displacement can be overcome. Figure 5.2 shows one of his many fruit trees.

Figure 5.2 Gagan Kaka in front of his tree – Charbara Village.
To address oustees’ dissatisfaction with the dearth of tree cover, the Sardar Sarovar Punavasahat Agency instructed the Forest Department to provide them with saplings. However a handful of trees cannot replace the vast forest where fruit and vegetables were freely available. All oustees, rich and poor, complained about this change. One can no longer go to the hills and simply collect what you feel like having that day – now one has to decide whether the items are affordable. A number of oustees also complained that unlike the vegetables of the hills, those of the plains need cooking in oil and flavoured with (purchased) spices to be palatable. Some things, then, are not about one’s economic status: you can purchase as many vegetables from the market as you like but you will still feel
dissatisfied if they do not taste as good as those you ate in the old village.

Sinhabhai, a member of a well-off household said:

In the hills we had segvi bhaji, muhki-bhaji and bhindi bhaji. Here I don’t like it. In our old village the leaves we had, the vegetables made from those are good. I don’t like the sag [leafy vegetable] of this side. The leaves of the hills aren’t the leaves of this side. The leaves have changed. There we didn’t need to put oil on the leaves. We’re not oil people. Just needed leaves, water, salt and chillies (Sinhabhai, beneficiary, Vadaj).

Sumantbhai highlights the issue of cost, although his household eats the same amount of vegetables as before:

Living, eating ... in desh [country of origin] we only needed to buy salt and clothes. There in desh we didn’t need to buy chillies, chillies were grown at home. Talia was grown at home. We didn’t need oil. Vegetables could even be made from the leaves of trees. Here in one day you have to spend about Rs40. If you have money then you get vegetables, there we ate for free (Sumantbhai, beneficiary, Kandewal).

Similarly, when asked about what she remembers of her father’s home in the old village Nivaben responded:

drinking cow’s milk, everything .... everything ... eating ghee, eating all the pulses, eating all the vegetables – I think about all this. Here however much money you have, that much vegetable you can get (Nivaben, beneficiary, Kandewal).

Loss of the forest clearly is a change to the domestic economy that will displease oustees no matter what their economic status. Short of resettling oustees on forestland (which is prohibited by law) little can be done to replace such a valuable resource.33

5.5.5 Feelings about loss of hills and grazing pastures

Just as the forest was a communal resource used by all, the hills were used as grazing pastures for cattle. The loss of the hills therefore affects oustees’ ability to keep cattle. They are deeply unhappy with this change. Whilst cattle acted as a form of insurance in the old villages the discontent cannot be explained in
economic terms alone. That cattle were not simply an economic resource has been shown in a number of studies on the Bhils (see Pallit and Mody, 1992). I would even say that cattle were integral to the concept of home. Badalbhai’s description of returning home in the evening reminded me very much of the welcome western domestic animal owners might enjoy:

There we have cows, oxen .... Late afternoon they go to the Narmada to drink water. Then they come back one by one [...] The cattle lick and smell me.

But to describe cattle as pets does not do justice to oustees’ strength of feeling for their cattle. Bhils refer to cows as ‘gai mata’ – mother cow. According to oustees’ their respect for their animals sets them apart from their host villagers. One oustee commented that, unlike the host villagers, they would never leave their cattle out in the rain because ‘they are kings’. Indeed, the bond between person and cattle is so strong that not only do individual cattle recognise their owners and vice versa, but one can ‘feel’ the joy and pain of the other. Bimalbhai told us a story about his first wife:

My first wife was a really lucky woman because she started off with two cows, but reared many from them. She died at an early age of an unknown illness and she was cremated on a funeral pyre. During the ceremony her cattle, tied up inside the house, were becoming more and more restless and making distressed noises. Eventually they barged through the walls of the house, breaking the wood down as they went. They then circled round the funeral pyre themselves!

Bimalbhai considered his wife a very lucky woman because she had so many cattle, even though she died at such an early age.

Bimalbhai also described an instance in which an ox that had been sold to another farmer refused to budge when it was time to plough the field. The purchaser complained that the ox was useless and he had been cheated. When the ox was returned to the original owner it performed its duties perfectly well. Bimalbhai felt this demonstrated the special relationship people have with their cattle.

Oustees also talked about cattle’s ‘homing’ instinct. One cow was said to have found its way back to the original village even after it had been transported by
vehicle to the *vasahat*. I often wondered whether the oustees were actually talking about themselves and not their cattle when they told this story. I often heard oustees saying their animals had died after coming here. When I asked why, the response was usually that ‘cattle do not like the change in atmosphere’.

Although NGO staff who worked in the submergence villages say that milk production in the hills was barely enough for a cup of tea the experience reported by the oustees with whom I spoke was quite different. Nivaben, for example, spoke of washing her hair in milk in Devdi. Whilst this account might be exaggerated, it underlines her nostalgia for the hills. It was when she started talking about cattle that she became tearful.

Cattle, are then, clearly associated with the home, Gunin Kaka said, ‘when I come home I like to sit with a *beedi* and smoke, whilst watching my cattle’.

I turn now therefore, to a more explicit consideration of how oustees’ (dis)satisfaction with the economic changes they have experienced relate to the home.

**5.6 Home as a place of production and consumption**

When I asked oustees to describe their old homes, they would often start talking about the resources available in the hills or some aspect of production and consumption there. For example, when we asked Nivaben ‘what was your father’s home like?’, her response was ‘It was big, big homes, we had mangos, there were *tadi* trees, there were mangos. My father’s was really nice. All that food as well – everything’.

My initial reaction was one of mild annoyance, or frustration at having picked the home as a subject when it did not seem to be of much interest or relevance to them. I also wondered whether the switch to talking about things ‘economic’ was an attempt to steer the conversation to highlight their plight and demonstrate that the government had failed to fulfil their demands.
My reaction was usually to say ‘no, not that ... what I mean is your *ghar* (home) ... we’re asking about your home’. What eventually became clear was that they were talking about home, just not one that was within the confines of four walls. That this was the case is, in retrospect, hardly surprising as what home means to a farmer may well be different from what it means to a non-agriculturist.

For agriculturists one may decide to draw a boundary around the house and the field, to delimit ‘home’ and, by a process of extrapolation, for the tribal people of the Narmada valley it is tempting to include the hills and forests. After all, the oustees talked about the trees they once had, the cattle they once had, the fruits and vegetables they once ate when one asked them about their old homes – all things that are to be found in this wider boundary.

Crucially, however, it is not the ‘contents’ within this extended boundary that constitutes home. The clue to the meaning of home lies in the constant reference to produce and resources of the old village being ‘of the home’ [*ghar nu*]. So, for example, if guests arrived they could be entertained free of cost because the chicken served would be ‘of the home’. The alcohol that would be offered to guests would be ‘of the home’ i.e. not purchased. Similarly, any milk used would be ‘of the home’ rather than purchased from the dairy. Aside from salt and clothing everything consumed by the household was ‘of the home’ including chillies, oil, vegetables, fruits etc. Geetiben said of her old village:

[...]

Geetiben mentions ‘home’ (*ghar*) no less than eight times in this extract. The English equivalent of this term is perhaps ‘home-grown’ or ‘home-made’, something that has not been purchased. Due to the more limited resource base, oustees now have to purchase most items they want. If they want to eat fruit they
have to buy it from the market or from vendors who bring fruit round on their carts. Later, when we asked Geetiben what she meant by ‘of the home’, she said:

You don’t have to buy them. If it’s of the home it’s considered good. If it’s not of the home, if you have money you buy, if you don’t have money then what can you buy?

The necessity to pay for things is undoubtedly a source of much discontent. The introduction of cash transactions within the sphere of consumption is perhaps the most profound change to the domestic economy. It is a change that causes unease and discontent amongst the vast majority of oustees in Kandewal and Vadaj. The disgruntled tone with which Raahibhai explained the difference between life then and now was typical:

Here whatever we want we have to buy it. In the hilly area ... the food – vegetables, for example – we got them free. We didn’t have to buy and here we have to buy everything (Raahibhai, beneficiary, Kandewal).

It is therefore apparent that home was not defined in terms of the sum total of all the things found in the space that one could call home (livestock, grains, trees, baskets etc); rather, home was experienced as a place of self-sufficient consumption. Hakim (1995) made explicit the link between Vasava identity and self-sufficiency but (perhaps being an anthropologist rather than a geographer) stopped short of making its association with the Bhil concept of home. The oustees’ own words make evident the everyday connections between home and consumption. When we asked them where they found it easier to run their home, they would usually cite the change to needing cash for domestic consumption as the reason for its having been easier to run the home in the old villages. Two thirds of those with whom we spoke felt it was easier to run the household before and the remainder, bar one, thought there was no difference. The explanation given by Ojayitbhai is representative of the former group:

There sometimes if we didn’t have food we could live on kaandia [onion] and here where you can you find it? I’m growing older so how can I work as an agricultural labourer? It’s difficult to manage and here – whatever you want you have to buy from the shop.
It was not, however, only the expenditure required for consumption of things once freely available that was a source of discontent. The expenditure involved in production is perhaps even more detested. Agriculture in the plains requires a considerable amount of expenditure on fertilisers, pesticides, seeds, labour and irrigation. Yashbhai (whose economic status was above average) said the financial burden was felt more acutely by those cultivating only five acres.

If you have 20-25 acres and then you have expenses that come to 5 acres’ worth and the remaining 15 acres is your profit that is when you are considered wealthy. Five acres worth would be the pesticides, fertiliser, water and labouring. Then if you get 15 acres worth of money coming out then you call those [people] wealthy. What happens on 5 acres is the same amount of cost going in but you don’t get more [output]. If you have two pieces of land – ten acres – five acres of it will be profit, and five acres worth of expenses: labouring, fertiliser, pesticides, everything. You wouldn’t say anyone there [in the original village] was wealthy – everyone was the same. After coming here what happens is only Rs6000 [worth of production] but you have Rs6 – 12 000 worth of expenses but you may have to buy further pesticides, do ploughing work and call labourers so then it comes to Rs20 – 25, 000 expenses...Compared to before there’s more expenditure here...The future was better in the old village. There we used to cut and cut wood and then cultivate. We [only] had to fill the forest officer with money Rs20-25 [bribe money]. It grows well there without expenses. Here we have to live off five acres and I’ve got three sons. Three sons means there will be three wives and then the ladies children and children’s children (Yashbhai, beneficiary, Vadaj).

Badalbhai and Chatura Kaka confirmed oustees’ dislike of production costs:

Here where are we rich? There if goats had goats then we would sell them. Here whatever crops you grow you keep some for consumption and you sell some, so what profits are there? Then when you sell one share goes for fertiliser, one share for pesticide, and half a share for you! [he laughs]. It gets shared 3 ways. (Badalbhai, score 6, Kandewal).

You have to buy water, buy seeds, buy fertiliser, so money tightness is greater here. We used to get all our production just from the rainfall.

**Where did you have more money?**

More in the old village because we can stay without costs. Here we have to put fertiliser, put water, buy seeds, you have to pay money to spread the pesticide, so here you can consider it bad. In the old village we used to sit around...used to sit around but [even] in this way we built our home (Chatura Kaka, insufficient data to calculate score).
Oustees are also aware that in addition to monetary inputs the new agricultural regime requires a considerable amount of toil and effort. Yashbhai explained:

It's harder here [to feed the family]. There we had *chori, bhinda, urad, mag* – we used to get more things there in our old village. Here we have to go to Dabhoi [the closest market] and then we have to buy things, whether we buy potatoes, or onions, or tomatoes. You can buy whatever vegetables you want but you need money. There how it was whatever you grew it didn't fail. If you ploughed once and weeded once then you got production. We didn't have pesticide or fertiliser or anything. Cows – had 20-25 cows. And for *tuwar* you don't need to spread pesticide. You don't need to hit *urad* with pesticide. (Yashbhai, beneficiary, Vadaj).

The discontent was voiced by all economic groups. I believe dissatisfaction with regard to changes in production and consumption is caused not so much by oustees' concern about whether or not they can afford to keep up consumption levels of the past, but a product of the notion of home.

5.7 Home as mother and father

Towards the end of my fieldwork I conducted an in-depth interview with Satyambhai, from Vadaj. When asked how he felt when their old village home was being dismantled, he replied:

[we] were moving forcibly – that is why – otherwise it was our mother, this is *masi* [mother's sister] and so you felt that living there was good.

In the event of the loss of your mother it is your *masi* [mother’s sister] who looks after you. Satyambhai describes living at the *vasahat* in the same terms. This sentiment seemed to mirror the Narmada Bachao Andolan rhetoric ascribing the hill villages the status of a motherland. However, this association of birth-place with motherland links back to the domestic economy:

...there we used to grow things. Things grew without spending. Here by spending money we can eat. Whatever you spend – that much will grow. There crops grew without spending ... if you have to spend money then you call it auntie! [we all laugh]. Whatever you spend [only] that much will grow. There it grows without money.
Satyambhai clearly differentiates between living at ‘mother’s’ (the old village) and at one’s aunt’s (vasahat). When we tried to find out why he expressed the difference in these terms, he raised two grievances. First, in relation to where he had a higher income, he said:

Income is nothing. Income happens but you give it to the doctors, to the water people [rate collectors], to the fertiliser people – that’s if you have income. But there in my hills you could see whatever you grew. You needed no pesticide, fertiliser or water.

Satyambhai’s use of the word ‘see’ implied that agriculture in the plains has hidden costs. Not only do you have to purchase inputs such as fertilisers and pesticides which in effect ‘disappear’ when you have applied them to the field, but once you have made money it too disappears because you end up paying for things. Thus in talking about mothers and aunts, Satyambhai is describing his version of the difference between living in a subsistence and a market economy. In a non-cash economy you barter for things and can see the goods being exchanged, whereas in market economies the value of commodities is ‘hidden’ in cash. This is a dramatic transition in a way of life.

The second point Satyambhai made was that:

If it’s your mother she gives you [a good serving of] rotlas. How does an auntie give rotlas? – I don’t know. How does your auntie give you rotlas and how does your mother give you rotlas – everyone knows [the difference].

In both quotes it is the way in which you get your food that is significant. Satyambhai implies that an aunt will not serve food in the same loving and affectionate way that a mother would feed her child.

The crux of the discontent with having to pay for things is, I believe, a sense of the conditional nature of livelihood at the vasahat: you have to put something in to get something out. This was clearly a problem for Badalbhai for example. He described how if you did not feel like working you could live off a vegetable called kandiya which grew freely in the hills, whereas here ‘if you don’t work then you can die’. The dissatisfaction with the imposition of condition explains Gunin
Kaka’s sentiment that ‘even if we didn’t get much crop there, we were more happy because we didn’t need to spend any money’. Thus oustees take issue with the fact that consumption is contingent on payment for inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides, and irrigation, and on labour. A mother on the other hand will provide for you regardless, they feel. A mother’s love, as they see it, is unconditional and disinterested – something that they enjoyed before.

Satyambhai described the vasahat by embodying the spirit of conditional provision as an aunt. For women, who on marrying leave their parental home to join their husband’s household, it is the mother-in-law who springs to mind. Sunandaben described how she felt when she married:

At your parent’s home you can go out freely – they give you food. Whilst at your in-laws if you go out they will say that you’re going out – not working – your mother-in-law will say like that … it’s like that. At your in-laws’ you have to do all the work. You have to go to the field. You have to do all the work. In your mother’s and father’s home … if you go for farva [trip] they ask where are you going? Where are you going for farva? [she laughs]. And at your in-laws’ they would ask – ‘where are you going? Stay at home!’ and will curse you. There is no set time for meals and if they give you food they would also curse you. It’s like that at your in-laws. At your mother and father’s it’s good … at your in-laws’ if you work then you get to eat rotlas well. If you don’t work then you have to make your own rotlas […] if you have your mother and father they say ‘come on’ to call you to eat. At your in-laws’ does anyone call you to eat rotlas?! Yes – it’s like that. We have some grinding to do. In the monsoon we have weeding to do, there is so much work to do. We have a lot of grinding work. If one day you don’t grind she [mother-in-law] will say ‘why are you not grinding’ she’ll say like that. There’s so much work at the in-laws’ – some day you eat and some day you go to bed hungry – yes it’s like that. [My emphasis].

Sunandaben never equated the vasahat with being at your in-laws, but she showed a similar dislike of conditional giving to Satyambhai. At your in-laws’ you only receive good food, or even any food, on condition that you work hard. Many of the women cited this as the hardest adjustment they had to make when leaving their parents’ home. The literature on the Indian home notes that the term ‘Sasar’ (the in-laws’ home) evokes images of loss and loneliness, whereas ‘Maher’ (the natal home) connotes warmth, nurture, care and mother. When I asked
Gaurangbhai if he could remember his parents’ home in their original village he
recalled that it was ‘nice’, when we asked ‘how?’ he replied:

I was very young so I had no responsibility so we would just go out to
play. When we felt hungry, we went home and asked for food, like these
children [pointing to his kids]. Even if we made our parents angry they
still had to give the food because we are very young (Gaurangbhai,
beneficiary, Kandewal).

So, in losing the unconditional support from the motherland oustees feel they have
paid a big price in moving to the plains.

Oustees ‘mourn’ the loss of their old way of life, but it would be wrong to assert
that oustees believe they were better off in their original villages. They recognise
that there are gains to be made in moving to a market-based economy. Oustees
accept that they must work hard in the plains, for they see the merits in this new
agricultural system as well as its pitfalls. Working hard can bring prosperity in
ways that would not be possible in the old villages however hard one worked. It
was the potential to improve their standard of living that led oustees to embrace
the new livelihood patterns in the plains. The fact that some oustees can see the
advantages and disadvantages of both places often left them unable simply to say
which place is better. When we asked whether he is sad that he is no longer living
on his forefathers’ land, Mahantbhai answered:

Why should I feel wrong? When we live here then I feel better here, and
when we were there then I felt better there. There were lots of amba and
other fruits. There we got things free, so at that time I liked it more there.
There if we needed to go out at midnight there were lots of difficulties.
But here at midnight also we get vehicles [there is transport at all hours] so
we can go (Mahantbhai, beneficiary, Kandewal).

Resettlement has left the oustees straddling modernity and tradition. Tradition
means the yearning for mother, one’s origins and unconditional care represented
by the original home. However, in this sheltered environment there is little scope
for branching out. It seems ironic that a place where people lived self-
sufficiently can, according to the ‘modern-thinker’, become associated with a
culture of dependency. In the plains, the converse of conditionality is opportunity.
Modernity represents the yearning for ‘a good life’ that can be achieved if one
works hard. In western terms, this is the Protestant ethic of capitalism. Under this system you pay your way — you don’t get anything for free. As Gaurangbhai put it, the government takes taxes for anything it gives, ‘you are charged to use electricity, you pay house tax, tax on the land and water rates’. This system emphasises effort — not so much collective effort, but the effort of the individual.

Can such a place (the vasahat) ever be conceived of as home by the oustees? Apparently it can. One day we asked Janubhai why people poured some alcohol from their cup onto the ground before drinking. The reason was because ‘you live off the land and the land is bigger than you. Making an offering to the land it will take care of you’, and so we enquired whether it made a difference that it was no longer his forefathers’ land? He replied ‘no’, the ritual was still necessary, but, to our surprise, ended by saying ‘this is now the forefathers’ land [bapdada-nu jamir].’ Oustees repeated the sentiment that ‘this is now our forefathers’ land because we have the red books, the legal documents for it’. One oustee even claimed that he would cut off anyone’s head should they suggest otherwise. The strong reaction alerted me to the fact that oustees felt they were here by right. The land they have now was not given to them out of government generosity. It is rightfully theirs in exchange for the land in the old village. Oustees felt secure in the belief that no-one could take it away from them because it is quite legitimately their own. Oustees’ words shed light on the way in which the concept of rights is entwined with the notion of fatherhood. This perhaps stems from the way that land is passed down from father to son. The inheritance from a father becomes one’s birth-right and the land at the vasahat has become the land that will be passed on. This practice will continue at the vasahats, although there is less land to go round. In short home is also where you rightfully belong, enabling oustees to feel at home in the vasahat.

This association of father with rights is in keeping with western constructs of masculinity as is the association of mother with care. Whilst researchers need to exercise caution not to impose a framework originating in the west to describe different cultures, it seems in this case such nervousness is uncalled for given oustees take on resettlement. In her evaluation of the World Bank’s
Environmental Impact Assessments, using the Narmada as a case study, Kurian (2000) describes how masculinity is identified with the morality of rights stemming from an ethic of justice based on the premise of equality. Femininity is identified with the morality of responsibility arising from the ethic of care. The way oustees have conceptualised the experience of resettlement matches these constructs.

Since home is often seen of as the place where one’s parents live, resettlement – which sees the ‘father’ moving to the vasahat and the mother staying where she was – is an abrupt change for the oustees. In effect resettlement has brought about a parental ‘divorce’. It is because they have come with their father that resettlement is acceptable, an act, which they believe, they got approval for from their ancestral Gods.

The process by which land at the vasahat became their forefathers’ land probably began when the oustees decided to accept the resettlement package. Prabal Kaka, an elder from Charbara village, described the day that the forefathers’ stone (rock representing the ancestors of Dhumna and Charbara) was moved to the vasahat. Prabal Kaka said all the men of the two villages gathered round the stone and he made offerings to it in order to appease the ancestors for suggesting they move. After these offerings and prayer the stone ‘allowed itself to be raised off the ground’ when the villagers lifted it. Had the ancestors felt displeased the villagers would not have been able to lift the stone even if they used all their strength. The stone was then carefully transported to the vasahat and then ceremoniously laid at a site (on the border of one of the oustees’ fields) decided by a priest (bhuaa). The story reveals how Dhumna and Charbara oustees justified leaving their original forefathers’ land; since the stone allowed itself to be moved there was no ethical problem with moving. The will of the people (once they had agreed to move) was transferred into the will of the stone, enabling legitimate engagement with resettlement. Oustees, therefore, have not abandoned their forefathers, for they too now reside at the vasahat. Implying otherwise – with questions such as ‘how does it feel not to be living on your forefather’s land?’ or ‘can it feel like home here?’ – can provoke the kind of reaction noted earlier.
However, although they came with their ‘father’ oustees are uncomfortable choosing whom they prefer. During the fieldwork my interpreter tried in many instances, to ask oustees ‘where was better?’ More often than not we were met with a standard response ‘The same. I liked it there and I like it here’. I wonder now whether we were asking a question that was too difficult to answer because an answer would have meant making (expressing to an outsider) a choice between father and mother. Oustees’ decision to move should not be viewed as an expression of preference for father over mother – they felt they had to move – they did not want to make a choice between their parents.

The theory that original village is associated with mother and vasahat now with father should not detract from the real differences amongst the oustees with regard to their economic circumstances. Some oustees are finding it difficult to make ends meet. It would be irresponsible/patronising to suggest that their only problem is that they mourn the loss of their mother. Resettlement has for some more than others entailed real hardships. Likewise it is not accurate to suggest that no matter how well oustees were doing at the vasahat they will always feel dissatisfied because they have lost their ‘mother’.

5.7 Conclusion

Securing means to an adequate living is the heart of the matter in reconstructing livelihoods. Accordingly ‘economic’ concerns are the focus of most investigations in resettlement and rehabilitation and the Narmada case is no exception. Although the SSP in Gujarat is recognised as offering one of the most progressive rehabilitation packages of any scheme in India, much of the existing literature paints a very grim picture of families made destitute as a result of resettlement. For example, Engineer (1990: 161) writes:

If the construction of the [Sardar Sarovar] dam is allowed to proceed, there is little doubt that a large number of poor people will be pauperised and condemned to a lifetime of destitution. A grim fate awaits a large proportion of the oustee population – futile wandering in search of work, toiling in the most exploitative conditions, begging on the city streets and scrounging around in rubbish dumps, shunned by all, and in the end reduced to such dire straits as to be forced to sell their wives and daughters. Such is the sacrifice being demanded at the altar of ‘progress’.
There is no evidence in Kandewal or Vadaj of people suffering from such destitution. Another description is provided by Roy (1999 cited in Hemadri et al. 2000: xvii) specifically relating to the plight of oustees in a Gujarat resettlement site:

The man who was talking to me rocked his sick baby in his arms, clumps of flies gathered on its sleeping eyelids. Children collected around us, taking care not to burn their bare skin on the scorching tin walls of the shed they call a home. The man’s mind was far away from the troubles of his sick baby. He was making me a list of the fruit he used to pick in the forest. He counted forty-eight kinds. He told me that he didn’t think he or his children would ever be able to afford to eat any fruit again. Not unless he stole it. I asked him what was wrong with his baby. He said it would be better for the baby to die than to have to live like this. I asked what the baby’s mother thought about that. She didn’t reply. She just stared.

The place where this man has been resettled is Vadaj. The purpose of my research is not to confirm or dispute previous accounts of the economic conditions at the vasahats, rather to look at these issues through the lens of the home and literature on the home-place, something hitherto missing.

The first thing to note is that one of the most important meanings of home for Bhil adivasi is as a place of production and consumption, yet there is minimal recognition of this in the literature, save for a reference to home being a place that supports work. No doubt the reason for this is that the literature on the meanings of home discussed in Chapter 3 referred to western culture where the work-place (place of production) is conceived as separate from the home (place of consumption). Defining home as a place of production and consumption has implications for its boundaries. For Bhil adivasi the sphere of home extends well beyond the boundaries of the house to include the locale from which they draw their sustenance: the river, the hills and the forests – reminding us that the thresholds of home vary between cultures as shown in Chapter 3.

However, the home is shown to mean much more than what is contained within this extended boundary. It is a place in which people can enjoy unconditional provision by ‘mother’. All oustees have lost this aspect of home, which is why the change from having forty-eight kinds of fruit on the doorstep to some or none
(depending on one’s ability to pay) is so severe. For this reason oustees may feel dis-placed, out of place (Robinson 2002).

This echoes the Indian literature on home that describes *maher* (a place of love and belonging) versus *sasar* (place where one feels confused, lost and lonely), although in this context it relates to being at parents’ home or in-laws’ place.

Showing incredible adaptability, oustees have nonetheless mitigated feelings of confusion and loneliness that arise from being in a new environment where market economics prevail by invoking the spirit of father in their new place, enabling them to feel partially at home. Recalling Dovey (1985) on *genius loci*, the fact the oustees managed to transfer the forefather’s stone without any backlash seems at odds with the image of home being place-bound for groups such as the Narmada adivasi. It seems that because home is also perceived as somewhere people have the right to be (through the male lineage), some reconstruction of home is possible at the vasahat for oustees gained their right to this land in exchange for forgoing their right to land in the original villages. This seems to have policy implications. In both case study sites adult men were more likely than women to say the vasahat feels like their place. Perhaps men draw on the ‘rights-based’ meaning of home in a way that women are not generally able to do because they are not given land entitlements in their own name (except those whose husband’s died before 1987). Perhaps if women were given a greater ‘stake’ in their new environment they too could start to view the vasahat as home, drawing on the meaning of home a place they can be by right. Although ultimately this is a failure of the government, Silliman (2003) is critical of the NBA for their failure to lead the anti-dam campaign from a platform of women’s rights.

The absence of an outcry against the handling of land rights to male members only is particularly disturbing given the importance of land rights for women on the subcontinent (Agarwal 1994). Land is the single most important asset – landownership determines economic well-being, social status and political power in rural South Asia. Agarwal, in her book *A Field of Ones’ Own*, cogently argues that women’s lack of effective property rights, especially land, explains their social, economic and political subordination (Silliman 2003: 75).
Instead the NBA have focused on other issues, including fighting the cause of young men dependent on the land of their father or elder brothers because they were not quite old enough to qualify for the resettlement package in 1987. This is of course an important issue, given that ‘in the normal course the sociological process of societies and families turning to other occupations from that of farming requires a span of at least two generations’ (Hemadri et al. 2000: lxxi). By all means non-farm alternatives should be supported but there is a case for providing land for oustees for whom ‘cultivation is their only skill and at the heart of their social, economic, and cultural lives’ (Morse Committee 1992 cited in Hemadri et al. 2000: lxxi).

Furthermore, policy planners have not given enough regard to the fact that cattle are an integral part of the home. Adequate grazing lands could have been provided in both the vasahat areas to enable oustees to keep more cattle. This would have gone a long way towards minimising the sadness occasioned by their loss. It would also help reduce the prospect of tensions arising with hosts who are unhappy about sharing grazing land that is already over used. The fact that there is no provision for grazing land in the resettlement and rehabilitation policy demonstrates the unfortunate trend of common property resources continuing to be unaccounted for in the process of displacement.

So, although the land-for-land policy for adult male oustees is a step in the right direction, this chapter shows that had resettlement policy been formulated with full consideration to the home, resettlement outcomes would have improved further.
Notes to Chapter 5

1 It is difficult to establish the length of Bhil residence in the Narmada valley. Archaeological evidence reveals that rock shelter inhabitants lived in the Vindhya and Satpura hills (see Deegan 1997). Their paintings at Bhimbetka (north of the Narmada at Hoshangabad) depicting a hunter-gather economy, date back to the mesolithic period (UNESCO 2003). Mythological and cultural connections between the pre-historic inhabitants and hill adivasi suggest the latter may be descendants of the former, but this is impossible to determine. As noted in Chapter 1, what we do know from recent history is that Bhils lived across the entire Narmada region, but that many took to the hills at the beginning of the 17th century.

2 Ninety-three per cent of the people they surveyed in the submergence villages of Zone 3 were cultivators (Centre for Social Studies, 1983).

3 Literally ‘tea and water’.

4 Oustees talk of some years when the forest officer would inexplicably harass them for cultivating jungle land, but then allow them to resume cultivation later. My guess is that they did this every now and then to remind the oustees who is in charge.

5 Vadaj oustees talk of jungle land that had been cleared with the consent of the Forest Department by Muslim contractors who were allowed to cut trees to sell wood. Once these Muslims finished with the land they helped the oustees to acquire legal land rights over the government waste land so it could be used for cultivation.

6 Pro-dam activists view the reliance on the forest negatively, interpreting it as a sign of the deficiencies of land in the hills whereas anti-dam activists view it positively.

7 It must be stressed that the need for income was limited.

8 Not only do they have to make multiple rounds, but also the effort that goes into each round is greater. The lightweight oxen of the hills are inadequate for agriculture in the plains and so stronger oxen are required, and a heavier plough. However the resettlement package includes one pair of oxen per beneficiary, free of charge.

9 Some suggest that the problem in Kandewal is not a lack of grazing land, but rather the lack of irrigation and therefore low productivity of the pasture.

10 One would expect the figures for the number of livestock held before resettlement to be similar to the number owned by households still in the submergence villages. However, the mean number of oxen held by current households was reported as six, whereas my trip to Dhumna and Charbara revealed that households hold on average three oxen. The discrepancy need not suggest that figures for livestock held before have been inflated. The figures for livestock currently held in the original village maybe unrepresentative of households that have now moved. The uncertainty surrounding where they are to live meant that many currently in Dhumna and Charbara have given up much of their stock.

11 The Centre for Social Studies (1994) states that for every acre owned in the submerging villages, project affected people cultivated another acre in the form of encroached land.

12 In the absence of legal land rights over forest land the concept of formal ownership did not exist. Getting title deeds changed on the death of a household head, for the small amount of legal land that they did cultivate, seemed an unnecessary and arduous business in the isolation of the hills. These villages were neglected by the authorities due to their isolation and villagers were pretty much left to their own devices.

13 These arrangement challenge the usual definition of household based on western assumptions that one group of people share all or at least some of several household functions.
People with P-A-P status are described as beneficiaries in the rest of this thesis. Based on a sample of 74 sites, the CSS report claims that households from Gujarat submergence villages cultivated 5.83 acres on average (including legal and encroached land) and that at the vasahats they also cultivate on average 5.83 acres. That the two figures are identical seems an extraordinary coincidence.

The changes observed in Kandewal (between 1994 when the CSS data was collated and 1999 when my survey was conducted) are encouraging, as a large proportion of households seem to have moved into the medium sized land holding bracket. Generally speaking productivity is higher in the plains, but some beneficiaries have received land of poor productive quality. Some oustees complain of wide gullies running through their fields. Others have tried cultivating their land year after year only to be faced with successive crop failures. Goralbhai got tired of listening to government officials saying they find no fault with his land and returned to his original village in Charbara saying ‘only someone that tries cultivating it will know that it’s bad’. Where there are individual land-related problems, oustees can send their complaints to the Grievance Redressal Authority. In Kandewal one third of the sample of households had sent in a complaint to the GRA.

Families have made different arrangements for accommodating non-beneficiaries. For instance, Syonbhai is a married non-beneficiary in his early thirties and a father of three children. As Syonbhai did not receive land, his father and older brothers decided to cultivate the land they received with him. Shivabhai therefore has access to land but has established his own household (eating separately) meaning his household is classified as one without a beneficiary. Patel is the highest caste group in the host villages. In most cases this simply involves adding on the number of non-beneficiaries in that household. Where a family has pooled its resources (cultivating jointly) to share the burden of dependants, the number of households in this unit is divided by the number of non-beneficiaries amongst them to get the household’s ‘share’.

The term that Bhil adivasi from Makadkhada original village use to describe themselves.

The actual question asked was ‘tamare guna gam-ma kone maaldar ko’ (In your old village who would you call wealthy?). Thirteen people cited cattle as the indicator of a wealthy household; a further 13 mentioned the amount of food/production and 5, the amount of money a household had.

An alternative view would suggest that five acres is more than enough for one family to handle when they get irrigation. ‘Partners’ are people who get a share of the profits from cultivation, such as those who supply fertilisers, pesticides etc.

The purpose built school in Kandewal was unused and in a state of disrepair and the teacher rarely visited the vasahat. Children therefore attended the school of the host villagers. In contrast the school at Vadaj-2 is a showpiece school and oustees are proud of it. Children attend classes daily in both Vadaj-1 and Vadaj-2.

Women’s contribution to the domestic economy is, as is often the case, underestimated. It also reflects the fact that whilst tribal communities are considered to treat their women with greater equality (Pallit and Mody, 1992; Mehta 1992), significant inequalities between men and women do exist.

For example, Gunin Kaka is part-owner of a jeep with Manabhai’s household. They have employed a driver to charge fares for people wishing to travel to and from the market. In the economic survey he did not declare this even though my interpreter and I had used the jeep ourselves! Similarly Raahibhai secured a contract with Anand Niketan.
Ashram to build a road in the area. Although he employed oustees as labourers, only one household reported income from this work.

This became a running joke amongst the oustees for they knew that if we came across them the first thing we would ask is where they'd been and why!

According to the Narmada Valley Development Authority (NVDA) a village is considered affected even when the water level touches the farm or hut at the lowest level. Permanent submergence refers to that which occurs for 10-12 months in a year, whilst temporary submergence occurs for a few hours to couple of days during very heavy floods. In Gujarat only three villages come fully under permanent submergence.

It is not possible to bring back large quantities as the law forbids the removal of forest materials. Small amounts are brought back surreptitiously.

A group of oustees rejected the government's offer, claiming the payment for planting the saplings (including digging ditches and putting up the protective fencing around each plant) was too little.

Originally one group of oustees had selected land in the area with nearby forest. Anand Niketan Ashram staff persuaded them to resettle in Kandewal instead.

Incidentally, when asked about possessions, oustees answered that they had brought all the contents of their houses, nothing was left behind except the tiles on the roofs.

During the in-depth interviews I asked women about their experience of moving to their in-laws' home as a way of entering into discussion about their experience of resettlement. Bhil women are the least talkative (to outsiders) of the Narmada tribal groups and so approaching the discussion in this way was a useful strategy. Most women described their marriage as a worrying time; they were apprehensive about how they would be treated by their in-laws.

This is not to say they did not work in the hills, but the intensity and duration of work is greater in the plains, leading oustees to feel as though they are having to earn their keep at the vasahat.

Whilst I did not come across the concept of divorce as we know it, it is not uncommon for married couples to separate and the stigma associated with a woman who leaves her husband is not as great as it would be for non-ādivasi (non-tribal) women.
Home as dwelling place

6.1 Introduction

Although Chapter 5 demonstrated that home has meaning beyond the house that does not mean dwelling places are insignificant. This chapter shows dwelling spaces are very important and examines the consequences of changes in housing, beginning with a description of the different dwelling types before and after resettlement. To do this I consider satisfaction with their new dwellings and the importance of housing to oustees. I then examine how these changes influence the experience of resettlement. Dwellings are then shown to be a measure of the changes oustees are experiencing. Finally the relationship between house and home is analysed from which I deduce changes in oustees’ meaning of home are likely.

6.2 Changes in oustees’ housing

6.2.1 Houses in the submergence villages

Approaching what remains of the submergence villages from the Narmada River it takes some imagination to picture what the view would have been like before work on the dam started. My companions on our trip to Charbara village, all of them previous inhabitants of Charbara and Dhumna, described how mass deforestation has left the hills looking barren. The starkness of the view is compounded by the fact that only a handful of homes are visible; the rest were all dismantled at the time of resettlement. At the time of my visit there were only five homes remaining in Charbara and six in Dhumna. The five homes in Charbara belong to villagers who went to live at the vasahats but returned for various reasons. The returning oustees rebuilt their houses and so they are all relatively new. In contrast most the villagers presently living in Dhumna
continue to occupy houses that were built before the resettlement of their fellows. Nevertheless, whether built before or after resettlement, they are all ‘kutcha’ houses – houses built by hand with natural materials found in the forest. Figure 6.1 is an example of a kutcha house typical of those found in the hills of the Gujarat section of the Narmada Valley.

Figure 6.1 Side view of house - Charbara village

The frame of the house including the central pillar is made from the trunk of sag trees [Tectona Grandis], a valuable hardwood commonly known as teak. Strips of bamboo are woven together to make the walls of the house. Hand-baked earthen tiles are used on the roof and the floor is plastered with cow dung. Figure 6.2 shows how the barrel shaped tiles are arranged to form a watertight roof.
When we asked some oustees to recall the size of their original village house they ranged from 59 sqm to 110 sqm. The average was 25 x 16 hath (79 sqm). The house shown in Figure 6.1 measured approximately 65 sqm but the owner pointed out that it is smaller than the one he lived in before he moved to the vasahat.

Whilst the internal layout of the village houses was built according to individual household preferences all the houses were open plan with a partitioned kitchen. Within the open plan living and sleeping area a space for cattle is demarcated with a wooden frame.
Figure 6.3 Internal layout of a house - Charbara village

The kitchen lies behind the plastered walls on the left and the cattle area is seen on the right hand side of this photograph.

Another common feature is the *mada* – effectively a high shelf covering a significant proportion of the floor space creating an attic area. The *mada* is sturdy enough to take a heavy load as it is made of teak pillars sunk into the ground in the same way as the pillars for the frame of the house. Bamboo poles, held together with hand woven ropes, create the surface of the shelf. Villagers prefer to store their grain baskets on the *mada* for protection from rats and animals. Figure 6.4 is a photo of the goods found in the *mada* of the house shown in Figure 6.3
The restricted camera angle only allows us to see a fraction of the goods stored on the *mada*. The largest bamboo basket, behind the pillar, stores *jowar* grains. Alcohol is produced in the black pot (purchased from Naswadi market). Yellow cobs can be seen hanging from the roof, stored to supply next year’s maize seeds.

Other features of the Bhil house include the water *madi* – a shelf on which water pots are stored, wooden beds and clothes rails. There are very few, if any, consumer goods.
Drinking water is collected from the Narmada River using the steel vessels and then transferred (to keep the water cooler) into the earthen pot stored on the madi – out of the reach of young children as well as animals.

In my opinion the kutcha houses of the original villages are beautifully constructed and sophisticated structures. See for example the entrance porch of a family house in Dhumna village (Figure 6.6).
Whilst sitting in these houses you can see outside through the gaps in the bamboo walls creating what felt like a permeable barrier between the space inside the house and that beyond the walls. This seemed indicative of the way in which space is used. During our trip to Charbara original village we spent a day dedicated solely to documenting the activities of Gujiben. Although she had given her consent we were keen to ensure we kept our distance so she could carry on her activities without distraction. It was lucky therefore that there were two of us, so one could sit outside and another inside as the number of times she went in and out of the house was easily more than a dozen per hour. The space around
the house – the yard – was an extension of the house itself, making the definition of house as something confined to the four walls almost meaningless.

The ‘permeable’ nature of the kutcha house also reminds me of another noticeable feature – the housing blends into the surrounding landscape so much that looking at a lone house in the distance one could almost confuse it for a small hill-top. This is in sharp contrast to the houses in the vasahats as described in the next section.

6.2.2 Houses of the vasahats

A variety of housing is found in the two case-study vasahats. On arrival at the vasahats oustees were housed in sheds made of corrugated tin, provided by the government. Although these were supposedly temporary dwelling units some oustees are still living in them over five years later, but the length of occupation of the temporary housing varies considerably depending on a number of factors, including the vasahat to which oustees have been relocated. As part of the resettlement and rehabilitation package oustees are guaranteed a house – understood to mean a pucca house. 6 This may be built by the government (via a contractor), or a project-affected family (PAF) can opt to build their own house with the use of a government grant.7

In Kandewal the majority of oustees from Panderia took up the offer of having their houses built by Anand Niketan Ashram.8 The Ashram received a grant from a Canadian NGO to build pucca housing using eco-friendly breeze-blocks. Although Devdi oustees were offered this housing, some households opted to make their own houses with government funding having decided the Ashram housing was of inferior quality to red-brick housing.

This NGO managed to build a total of 500 houses across 19 vasahats (Anand Niketan Ashram 1998) but by the time the Dhumna and Charbara oustees arrived in Kandewal the Canadian grant money had expired, thus late arrivals who have pucca houses built these themselves using the government grant.
The Ashram houses all follow a standard design, measuring 18 x 40 x 7.5 ft. The floor space is therefore 66.6 sqm. Two dwelling units - to accommodate two separate households - are built on a single plinth. Each dwelling unit is divided into three rooms which the oustees can use as they see fit (typically one room is the sleeping/living space, one is the kitchen and another for cattle).

Kandewal vasahat was established 11 years ago with all the oustees arriving within a two-year period and so nearly all are now living in pucca houses.

In Vadaj too a variety of house types exist. In Vadaj-1 all but one household agreed to forgo their government grant in favour of having their house built by the Diamond Jubilee Trust (another NGO contracted by the government). These houses are also designed to accommodate two households but only one room for each is provided. If oustees want extra space they are expected to make their own extensions (adalis) to their house, which many have done to create a separate kitchen area. Figure 6.8 shows the rear view of an extended house. The ‘core’ floor space is approximately 42sqm, but the owner has added an extension, which can be seen in the photograph.
In Vadaj-2 there are a few NGO/government-built houses but most oustees have opted to build their own houses. Oustees in Vadaj arrived relatively recently and so most are still living in temporary accommodation. However, rather than remain in the tin sheds whilst awaiting completion of their pucca house, oustees have recreated their original village housing, substituting the tin-sheets from dismantled sheds for bamboo walls and using wooden pillars from their old houses to recreate the frame.

To summarise, four different house types are found amongst the oustee population of the two case study vasahats. In Table 6.1 we see the dwelling type of the 103 households surveyed. This gives a comprehensive record of the dwellings in the two sites, comprising their five hamlets.
Table 6.1 Dwelling types (as percentages) in the case study *vasahats*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Pucca Dwelling</th>
<th>Kutta Dwelling</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self made</td>
<td>NGO made</td>
<td>Re-made Kutcha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red-brick</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kutta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-Panderia</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-Devdi</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-Dhumna/Charbara</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadaj-1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadaj-2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All sites</td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Household survey

Note: Dwellings of households in Vadaj-2 that did not participate in the above survey are excluded.

The figures in Table 6.1 will now be out of date as many oustees in Vadaj-2 were constructing their pucca houses during the fieldwork period. I expect most of those that were under construction are now complete and the households will have moved out of their kutcha dwellings. Nevertheless the table shows that a significant proportion of oustees had already built their own pucca houses using the government grant. The grant is only released in installments, the first being given when the family has started constructing the plinth of the house. A grant of Rs 45,000 in total is available, although the government discounts the cost of materials it provides.9

6.3 Housing and its affect on oustees' experience of resettlement

To understand how changes in housing effect the experience of resettlement we need to know whether oustees like their new dwellings. Moreover we need to establish how important housing is to them, thus learning whether it is a significant measure of the success or failure of resettlement.
6.3.1 Satisfaction with housing

Thirty per cent of oustees were more satisfied with their house compared to their original village house, 27 per cent felt the same level of satisfaction and 38 per cent were dissatisfied with their house (N=141). Only a tiny minority was either very satisfied or very dissatisfied — less than 5 per cent of the sample in both cases.

In themselves these figures do not tell us very much until we look at how satisfaction varies amongst the oustee population. Attributes such as gender often influence satisfaction with different aspects of resettlement, but in the case of housing, satisfaction is mainly a function of the type of dwelling one occupies.

Table 6.2 Satisfaction with new dwelling compared to old village dwelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction (% of oustees)</th>
<th>Pucca Dwelling</th>
<th>Kutcha Dwelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-made brick</td>
<td>NGO made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Re-made Kutcha</th>
<th>Shed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Individual survey

Much to their relief very few families live in the original tin sheds. Most had lived in them for months, even years, and it is clear from oustees’ descriptions that they found this period extremely difficult because of their poor housing. Although only one person responded formally, oustees residing in the shed now were much less satisfied with it compared to their original village dwelling because of the heat inside in summer months and because they were considered unsafe — ‘likely to fall like a pack of cards’ — in windy weather.

Table 6.2 shows that most people living in re-made kutcha dwellings were also less satisfied with their housing (compared with their housing prior to resettlement). Although modeled on the original village dwelling, the kutcha dwellings in the vasahat are inferior in some way. Walls, which used to be made
of woven bamboo, are now tin sheets, which create ‘oven’-like temperatures inside during the summer. Even when kutcha dwellings have been built using material from the original house, the pillars that make the frame have to be shortened to remove the partially rotted section (i.e. the portion that was in the ground). This reduces the height of the kutcha house in the plains unless the household managed to bring virgin wood to the vasahat for this purpose.

Those living in pucca housing are more likely to be more satisfied. This can also be demonstrated by other means. Taking those who said they were more satisfied with their new dwelling (42 people), 48 per cent said it was because their pucca dwelling is longer lasting, 28 per cent said their pucca dwelling offers greater protection from the elements, and 13 per cent did not specify an exact reason - only that their dwelling is pucca. Thus 89 per cent of those more satisfied with their dwelling compared to before, felt so, virtue of their pucca housing.

Having a pucca dwelling, however, does not guarantee increased satisfaction, demonstrated by the fact that 25 per cent of those living in NGO made housing and 12 per cent of those living in self-made housing were less satisfied with their dwelling. There are three explanations for this, the first two being the main factors.

First, oustees compare their housing and some are perceived to have better pucca houses over others. Thus, despite being asked to express their satisfaction in relation to their previous dwelling, many oustees, particularly those living in Ashram made houses, cited the inferior quality of their dwelling compared to red-brick houses as their reason for being less satisfied. Some of the Ashram built houses occupied by Panderia oustees, have developed cracks in the walls, illustrated in Figure 6.9.
Second, the smaller size of housing in the *vasahat* - irrespective of the house type - was a primary source of discontent amongst those who were less satisfied with their dwelling. But this issue is also a concern amongst the oustee population generally: seventy-seven per cent said their present house is smaller than the old one (individual survey, N=138). Of these, 65 per cent said the decreased size was a problem, and 35 per cent did not report any difficulties arising from the smaller living space. Typically for those who reported problems the main difficulties were lack of storage space, having insufficient room to move around freely and not having space to accommodate guests.

Finally, a minority of people did not like their pucca house as much as their old village kutcha dwelling because the former house-type does not allow a pleasant breeze to enter inside and the roofing is not as good.

Nonetheless Table 6.2 overwhelmingly illustrates the popularity of pucca housing amongst the oustee population. But in establishing this we should recognise that housing preferences are context-dependent. For example, over a third of oustees said they would prefer to build a kutcha dwelling in the *vasahat* had there been a
forest available. There are three reasons why a kutcha dwelling is impractical in the plains:

(a) The absence of forest materials means dwellings made of kutcha materials cannot easily be repaired. In time complete replacement is necessary. Teak wood, used for the pillars, is too expensive for oustees to afford when it has to be purchased. Only when they were living in the hills was wood of this quality available to them, even though they had to hide the cutting of new timber from forest officials. In the plains it is not cost-effective to make a dwelling out of materials that will need to be replaced periodically.

(b) Ground conditions in the plains are unsuitable. In the hills stony ground provided a firm, secure, bedding into which to sink the wooden pillars. For the same reason, heavy loads cannot be placed on shelves (adalis, as described earlier).

(c) In the hills rainwater would quickly drain away due to the sloping gradients and the stony ground. In the plains water gathers, causing wooden pillars to rot faster. In addition, the floor of kutcha houses are level with the ground outside, and they are therefore less suitable in the plains where monsoon season rainwater collects rather than drains away. Pucca houses are less vulnerable to flooding because they are built on a plinth, such that the floor level is approximately 50 cm off the ground.

Pucca houses therefore assume a greater level of desirability in the plains than they perhaps would otherwise. The most common reason for preferring pucca housing is that it lasts longer. Mahantbhai explains, ‘I don’t have to look after this kind of pucca house for up to seventy years. I can live a bit more happily. After building this house you don’t have to touch it. In that [kutcha] house after two or three years pass it needs changes’. Likewise, Chatura Kaka says ‘the other [kutcha house] isn’t for life. It rots. If it breaks you have to bring in other wood, then you have to build another house – all that is a problem’.
It is not only the physical environment, giving rise to practical concerns, which shapes preferences, hence satisfaction levels. The cultural environment also plays a role. Only a tiny minority of people, when asked, said that they had daydreamed about having a pucca house (like the ones they had seen on trips to Kawat market) when residing in the hills. This was not just due to the impossibility for constructing a pucca house (lack of shops to purchase the necessary materials, absence of roads suitable for bringing in the materials, lack of money etc.) but also because the cultural environment did not require such material possessions. This concern for the material is explored further in the next section.

6.3.2 The importance of housing

In this section I examine how important housing is to oustees, including its significance in the original villages. Although Chapter 5 demonstrated that home for oustees was not confined to four walls, this should not suggest dwellings were unimportant. Housing was ascribed with meaning as illustrated by a number of practices performed around the home as dwelling. For example, rituals were conducted when dwellings were constructed. Before inserting the central pillar of the house into its hole in the ground, mango tree leaves, a clay pot of water and 10 to 15 paise coins were first placed inside. Five men (an auspicious number) would then lift the pillar into place and five leaves were tied to the pillar with nadacadhi [special coloured threads]. A coconut or even a chicken would be sacrificed and offered to God. Those who helped build the house would be given a feast of goat.

Once a year, to ensure a good harvest a puja (ceremony of worship) is conducted in the kitchen around the okly, the small hole in the ground where rice is husked by hammering it with a samel (figure 6.10). It is significant that the ritual is carried out in the space of the dwelling, which reinforces the link made in Chapter 5 between home and economics, as do the rituals performed during diwali. During this festival villagers made white-hand prints using flour on the walls of their house, on cattle and on their flour grinder. Whilst the symbolism of this was
not explained to us, it is apparent through their actions oustees regarded dwellings as important.

Figure 6.10 The okly in Gujiben’s kitchen

The type of dwelling in so far as the material used, however, was not important – after all, there was only one type. There was limited scope for difference except that some villagers were more house-proud than others, making greater efforts to maintain the house well, for example by repairing broken sections, replacing tatty-looking material, and re-plastering the floor more regularly. Essentially inequalities in housing were not a feature in the hills where everyone used the same materials and had equal access to the forest resources.

With resettlement the type of housing has become important, with oustees (generally) purporting to have a preference for pucca housing. This is a result of the cultural environment found in the plains where there is greater emphasis on the material: on material possessions. It is the importance attached to material
prosperity in the plains where market conditions prevail that contributes to the valorisation of the pucca house. Housing is becoming a marker of social differentiation, a reflection of one’s social status. Oustees are therefore becoming increasingly conscious of the quality of their own house.

In this market orientated environment there is significant variation (one could say inequality) in housing - a function of the amount of money expended on the house - which creates a concern for the material, activating a desire to compete. Chatura Kaka’s motivation to ‘keep up’ means he would prefer a pucca house over a kutcha dwelling even if forest resources were available in the plains, ‘watching everyone else having a pucca house you want a pucca house – that’s how you feel’. Similarly Kewalbhai says, ‘everyone is building them so one has to build one now’. Even though most of the host villagers live in kutcha houses and only a few rich Patels live in pucca houses, Haroonbhai’s reason for preferring a pucca house is that ‘the whole world lives in pucca houses’.

Yet some oustees with pucca houses have a tendency to play down the importance of the house. Three factors seem to be responsible for this.

First, is the pivotal role the domestic economy plays in the meaning of home, as described in Chapter 5. There is a strong interest in keeping the focus on agriculture in discussions with outsiders. Oustees are intent on getting the government to provide land for a significant number of landless men. It is therefore logical for them to stress the importance of land and downplay the significance of housing. This is why, for example, Mahantbhai asks rhetorically ‘what do we need a pucca house for? Did we live in pucca houses before? [No], we all lived in kutcha houses’. He implicitly challenges the government by implying that it will not do to placate oustees with material goods because they did without them before and could do so again. Yet, he admits elsewhere that the prospect of living in a pucca house enticed him to the vasahat.

Second, oustees’ are more inclined to talk about ‘we’ rather than ‘I’, affirming the strong sense of the collective in Bhil culture. Given this cultural background it is perhaps embarrassing to speak of one’s own ‘success’, especially in the face of
emerging inequalities. Perhaps this is why Mahantbhai shifts the credit for his having a pucca house away from himself. 'It's difficult to explain to these people. Whatever is in our fate - that will happen. We were living in a hut, but now we are living in the pucca house ... what we get, what we have to eat, for how long we are going to live – God decided our life'.

Related to the second factor is how some oustees try not to attract attention, to avoid falling victim to the 'evil eye' i.e. the gaze of a jealous person, usually described as a witch. However only the oustees from Devdi seemed obsessed by the prospect of being 'eaten' by a witch. Those with better housing will be keen not to fuel the kind of sentiment described by Sabalbhai that ‘when others get rich they will no longer be concerned about me’. To maintain one’s good relations with people who are less wealthy, oustees need to quell the feeling that whereas before everyone looked after each other, now each looks after their own. Rightly or wrongly people have expressed this feeling to wealthier oustees who feel the need to respond to this criticism. Although there is some doubt over whether Mahantbhai is appeasing fellow oustees or friends living in the hills in the following quote; it is notable how he pleads that the house is not important:

Everyone says ‘you’re a big man now. You don’t eat maize or corn chapatis now, you eat wheat chapatis’. Whether we eat corn, wheat or maize we are the same person. Can changing the food change the people? - That’s what I’m saying. Some people say ‘oohh you’ve become a big man now’. It’s not important for me to have a pucca house – it’s the land. You can’t eat your house. You need land. Some people in the old village say ‘now you’ve become a big man you have everything’, but I’m the same. Whatever I eat I’m the same human being. Whatever you eat you are going to be the same. It’s whatever nature has decided for you.10

Mahantbhai’s appeal is likely to fall on deaf ears, as the Bhils apparently believe ‘you are what you eat’ or, it seems ‘where you live’. The way Mahantbhai interchanges between talking about the house then his body substantiates the theory described in Chapter 3 that the house is a metaphor for the body, hence the relevance of this quote despite its primary focus on consumption.

The insistence that housing is not important is not altogether convincing and carries overtones of ‘the lady [oustee] doth protest too much’. This is
substantiated by the fact that most oustees strive to build pucca housing and actions, as is famously argued, speak louder than words. Any embarrassment caused by having better housing than your fellow oustees is overridden by the embarrassment one can feel in front of outsiders if not having a pucca house. So although Mahantbhai tries hard to play down the importance of the house, he finds himself in something of a dilemma:

> When I'm going to give my daughter away [upon marriage] it doesn't matter whether the house is pucca or kutcha. It's no good looking at the house, but how her life will be. Do they [in-laws] work hard — that's what I have to look at. If they are hard working they will get good food — then I'll allow her to be given away. If the home is kutcha then that's ok. It's the land that will be useful for living ... for food and drink. If there is a pucca house but no land then can you eat the house? This is a pucca house, but can you eat it? It's not necessary for them to have a pucca house like mine [my emphasis].

The reference to his house is telling. If the material nature of the house is so inconsequential why then has he built one of the ‘best’ houses in Kandewal vasahat? Mahantbhai realises the folly of attaching importance to material wealth but the challenge only goes so far in that he is not prepared to live in a kutcha house himself. He cannot help but internalise the significance attached to the house. On more than one occasion Mahantbhai expressed dismay about his vagabond cousin (who left the vasahat) saying ‘there is no reason for him to be wandering the hills like a shepherd when he has been given a farm and a nice pucca house by the government. What else does he want?’ suggesting that housing is important, and thus a significant measure of the success or failure of resettlement. Clearly, housing is important to oustees even though they do not acknowledge this openly.

The significance of housing, however, extends beyond a mere index of the functional success or failure of resettlement – it is a measure of the broader changes and their impact on oustees’ lives.
6.4 Dwellings as a measure of change

The dramatic changes oustees are experiencing are expressed through/in terms of the dwelling/dwelling spaces. In this section I outline some of these expressions under three headings – valorisation, permanence and integration.

6.4.1 The valorisation of dwellings

As alluded to throughout this chapter, dwellings have become a measure of one’s wealth and a status symbol. The size and type of house one builds is now largely a factor of the amount spent on it. Two houses in Kandewal and one in Vadaj-1 have been built with terraced roofs to enable another storey to be constructed when the households have enough money. A dwelling with a terraced roof is clearly more expensive than one with a tin-sheet roof. The fact that all building materials now have to be paid for automatically places a value on the house. By contrast, dwellings in the hills were made of freely available forest materials.

The importance attached to material prosperity as expressed through dwellings is perhaps unremarkable in a market economy, but the change for the oustees is remarkable. Raahibhai describes the social stigma attached to having now a kutcha house in the plains:

If someone comes like you, or other good people come to my house, at those times I feel it’s better to have a good pucca house. It looks better, it feels better. When we see others then we also say ‘look! His house is so beautiful’ ... in the same way. When people see my house I want them to say the same thing, so for that to happen I need a pucca house. Personally I don’t think one needs a pucca house. If we have money then a pucca house is good, if not then that’s ok too. If it is pucca then I don’t have to see to it my whole life whereas if it’s kutcha it breaks so many times. So if I build a pucca house it would be good for my children. They won’t have to worry about it. My children will think, ‘my father has given us a pucca house’. If I earn a good amount of money yet don’t build a pucca house my children would say ‘my father has got lots of money but he hasn’t built us a pucca house. He has done nothing for us – we have to do it all. He earns a lot of money but he hasn’t even built the pucca house. He just spent all his money and didn’t do anything for us’.
It is clear that whether Raahibhai likes it or not, he sees the house as something by which he is now judged. Value judgements are being made in a way that did not occur in the original villages, even by your own children.

Furthermore the fact that the house is thought to be the focus for would-be inheritors illustrates how it is regarded as a valuable asset in the plains. Previously the asset passed on to children was land. Given restrictions on the amount of land available in the plains, the tradition of passing on land to sons will very soon become unsustainable. Thus to achieve a sense of continuity, material possessions – the house being the most important – have become the main focus of inheritance instead of forefather’s land, albeit in a limited fashion as it is only the youngest son that inherits.\(^\text{11}\)

The valorisation of the house has had a profound impact on oustees, as shown by Sabalbhai’s story about the death of his eldest brother Kushanubhai. Kushanubhai was a healthy man in his late thirties, but after attending a festival one evening he started having convulsions and died later that night. Although the doctor diagnosed alcohol poisoning as the cause of death, Devdi oustees know the real cause was that Kushanubhai was a victim of the evil eye. The proof of this was that a red brick was all that remained on the altar where Kushanubhai was cremated. The brick, which killed him, had been inserted into Kushanubhai’s stomach by a witch (dhakan) who was jealous of him being the first to build a red-brick house in the vasahat. This anecdote shows that the house is a status symbol, for the object of the witch’s jealousy was Kushanubhai’s house. Moreover, it suggests that emerging inequalities are causing resentment amongst the oustee population.

Bimalbhai feels he is being victimised by oustees for doing well and having the money to build a large, terraced roof house (considered the best in Kandewal vasahat). Oustees, from his original village, pick fights with him in order to cause a commotion requiring the police to be called out. Bimalbhai is blamed by his people for causing the disturbance and fined by the police. This, Bimalbhai
claims, is the villagers’ way of making him poorer because they cannot stand to see him economically well off.\textsuperscript{12}

A witch will cause the death of someone from a wealthier household because the cost of ‘sending off’ the deceased (for the cremation, the cost of twelfth-day ceremony etc) will be a drain on the households resources. Simply making your enemy ill means they will have to spend money on doctor’s fees and medicine.

According to some oustees, the built environment exacerbates the problem of jealousy. Apart from the Panderia oustees everyone is living in much closer proximity after resettlement. Half of all oustees preferred living closer to one another because they feel safer and enjoy the social interaction.\textsuperscript{13} Those originally from Devdi, however, expressed a strong dislike for living closer to their neighbours. They blamed each other:

\begin{quote}
Our people can’t stand to see each other doing well. [Kushanubhai] died because he was a good man. In our culture they also eat good people.\textsuperscript{14} If you work hard, they’ll eat you. If you produce more they’ll eat you. If you’re doing well, they’ll eat you’ (Geetiben, Kandewal).
\end{quote}

Geetiben goes onto explain the effect of living closer together:

\begin{quote}
Here everyone lives together whereas there we lived apart. Here we all live together and so you can see if someone is doing well, someone not doing well, someone having more income, someone not. Some have built a nice house and they [jealous villagers] don’t like that, some produce a lot – they don’t like that either. If someone has good yields from their farm others may think, ‘why haven’t I done so well?’ People are like that.
\end{quote}

Inequalities, it seems, are more obvious when they are on your doorstep. It is because differences are now ‘in your face’ that makes people more susceptible to the evil eye. Sabalbhai, for example, lamented that the aroma of good food from his wife’s kitchen, wafting into Nadishbhai’s (his younger brother’s) adjoining house would naturally upset his impoverished brother. In this illustration it is the up front nature of the inequality which makes the difference significant.\textsuperscript{15}
6.4.2 The permanence and consolidation of dwelling(s)

Beginning to build a pucca house is a statement in itself. Only recently have oustees in Vadaj-2 started building their houses after accepting that they will settle in this vasahat. In a handful of vasahats oustees are engaged in protracted arguments with the resettlement agency and will live in kutcha houses until their future is clearer. During my fieldwork some oustees in other vasahats were demanding to be moved to another location, whilst in other vasahats oustees were threatening to leave for their original villages unless the government addressed their complaints, concerning, for example, building drainage channels in flood-prone vasahats. Delaying putting down ‘roots’ in the form of a durable house is a bargaining tool. The anti-dam activists capitalise on this approach, whilst the Gujarat government criticises it. The Commissioner of the Sardar Sarovar Punavasahat Agency commented that by encouraging oustees not to build permanent houses, the anti-dam groups were deferring the possibility of oustees feeling at home in the vasahats. This he felt was for the benefit of their cause but to the detriment of oustees.\(^\text{16}\)

The immobility of pucca housing can be problematic for some oustees. Mohitbhai (father of Raahibhai, leader of Kandewal vasahat) filled in an application some years back requesting that Devdi oustees be allowed to move to another vasahat. He argued that an excessive number of people, including young, fit and healthy villagers, had died in Kandewal. A possible reason for these excess deaths, according to Devdi oustees, is that the housing land is not agreeable.\(^\text{17}\) Resettlement Agency staff replied that the government could not move them because they had already had pucca houses. In reality it is unlikely the government would have moved the oustees because of what seems like superstition, but the justification that they could not be moved because they had already built their pucca houses was reluctantly accepted by the oustees.

Oustees’ houses become ‘fixed’ at the resettlement site not only because they are pucca, but also because people have been allocated house-plot land from which they are unlikely to be able to move. All land in the plains already has an owner and there is therefore little scope for movement, particularly if oustees wish to
remain with people from their original villages. Oustees have to become accustomed to being tied to a fixed location.

Here where can you go? The government has given us a plot, on that you build your home. You can’t go [anywhere] from here. There in my desh [country] - in the hills - you can go here, you can go there, whichever side (Sunandaben, Vadaj).

Contrary to the impression given by Sunandaben, it was not common to change one’s house-plot in the original villages, but they could do so if they wanted and this was sometimes necessary – for example, when they believed their misfortunes were the result of living on dudin land. One woman explained:

We can only build on the place measured out for us. In desh [in the hills] we didn’t have to think about the measurement. We would build our home on whichever place felt good. If we feel the place is unsuitable then we would just take it [the house] to another side. There no-one measures and gives [allocates space], there’s no government space and no survey [plot] numbers.

Luckily for most their house-plot land has not shown any signs of being problematic (dudin land is believed to be more prevalent in the hills than in the plains). This belief again displays how oustees have adjusted their practices to circumstances in the plains. This is crucial if they are to feel at home in their new environment. They cannot simply do away with the concept of dudin land; to do so would betray the knowledge of their forefathers. Instead they deal with the problem of integrating two different ways of life (belief systems) by saying a component of one is less relevant in the plains. Oustees have to believe that problems they are experiencing are caused by some other factor – one that can be remedied – otherwise (given the inability to move elsewhere) they would render themselves in a permanent state of ‘homelessness’ i.e. they could never feel at home in the vasahat. Thus oustees can take refuge in the belief that if they do have problems it is for some other reason, such as the actions of a witch, who can be identified and chastised. As if to justify the belief that dudin land is uncommon in the plains, some oustees tested their house-plots by building a kutcha house first and residing in it for some time before constructing their pucca house. If nothing happened whilst they were living in the kutcha houses they can be sure future problems have another cause.
The adjustment oustees have made is vividly illustrated by the fact that whereas in the hills bhuas (religious wise men) blamed dudin land for people’s suffering, they now increasingly point the finger at witches. If they were to advise their ‘clients’ to change their house-plot, when that is clearly unrealistic now, they would risk being abandoned by the oustees.

Extreme misfortune can, however, lead oustees to revert back to and rely on their hill-based knowledge systems, making it impossible for them to continue living in the vasahat. For example, after two of Kushibhai’s children died he moved back to his original village (in Dhumna) to avoid losing any more of his remaining children.

The sense of fixity oustees can feel, is also expressed through the house in other ways. Dwelling spaces are becoming more ‘solid’ or ‘set in concrete’ in more ways than one. For example, furniture found in the plains is less mobile, whereas old style self-made string cots can easily be moved around. Most people still use these for seating and bedding but Mahantbhai is the first person in Kandewal to have hired a carpenter to make wooden beds with headboards, which are heavy and very difficult to manoeuvre. These kinds of beds are found in the local Patels’ houses. Mahantbhai’s reason for commissioning the new furniture was that ‘it is better to have good furniture when visitors are coming to the house’. When speaking about visitors Mahantbhai is referring to host villagers, government officers and people like Deepa and me. These people who are not ‘of the home’ are much more likely to visit than they were in the hills, where villagers were isolated from the outside world.

Also, kutcha houses were open-plan which promoted a flexible use of space. In the pucca houses of the vasahats the spaces of the home are becoming more rigidly defined such that each room has its own function. Feelings about this change are mixed. For instance, Bijalben, who was seven when her family moved to the plains, prefers this separation and ordering of space. She no longer feels uncomfortable when her father’s male friends come to visit as they are seated in the ‘front-room’ and she is away from their view whereas before she would have
felt shy and embarrassed whilst they were around. Whereas Gunin Kaka’s main concern is that there will not be enough space in any one room for larger social gatherings.

Some [people] can sit in this room and when nobody else can fit [in] others can go to that room. People in here will talk about one thing and in another room people will be talking about a different topic. There all of it was open so people could talk together. I told them [the builders] to keep this place open, we don’t want the wall. But they said ‘the government is building this for you so we have to build it according to their measurements’. [...] In this house all the guests would have to be seated separately and all the guests would talk on different topics.

Others are more amenable to the idea of separate rooms but only because they are planning ahead. Sons who were under 18 at the time of resettlement have no obvious place to go after they marry and have to stay with their wife at their parents’ house. Whilst the proportion of households having one or more married sons is relatively low at 29 per cent (N=103, Household survey), the figure will inevitably rise. Although not an ideal solution, roomed houses are seen as a way of accommodating larger households under one roof, giving each couple a degree of privacy.18 Nevertheless this confinement to the in-laws’ home compromises the ability of women to feel ‘at home’. Lalitaben from Vadaj spoke about how she has to remain on guard all the time, making sure her head is always covered in the presence of her father-in-law.

Twenty per cent of heads report that they are living with more daughter-in-laws than they did prior to resettlement and this proportion will also rise with time, with some households accommodating more than one daughter-in-law, if not already. This is a difficult adjustment for existing household members. Mayaben is wary of living with her future daughter-in-laws:

Women fight with one another if they’re in one kitchen ... some daughter-in-laws are nice, some are argumentative so being separate, separate is far, far better [laughing]. Some daughter-in-laws turn out to be good, some daughter-in-laws you get like this – that’s why. In Kapil’s house they often argue. One day it will be the daughter-in-law saying things, other times the in-laws say this and that – it’s like that.

Some men too have reacted badly to being confined in the same dwelling space as their daughter-in-laws. During one of our many afternoons on Mahantbhai’s
veranda (a popular gathering place), we encountered a debate between him and a
guest from a nearby vasahat. The visitor argued that it was wrong for people to
opt for sterilisation, but Mahantbhai did not hesitate to point out that it is a
sensible strategy for people like his guest, who are violent towards their daughter-
in-laws, just because they can not handle living with them.

The lack of free space has implications for social relations (the subject of the
following chapter) beyond the problems caused by the inability of young couples
to establish an independent household. Consolidating one’s ownership of space
can assume greater importance when it is limited. In the hills every household
had ample room to carry out its activities, so there was no need to mark out
boundaries. In the vasahats, however, space is limited and every square metre
counts. In such circumstances, rights to space have to be demarcated and agreed
upon in order to avoid conflict. Some oustees have begun to fence off their house
space using plants as borders. Where the borders are not agreed by both parties
conflict arises as is the case between two of the households in Kandewal. This
kind of dispute between neighbours would not have arisen in the past. Conflict
can also occur with hosts but to reduce the chances of this happening oustees have
modified some of their practices relating to dwellings as shown in the next
section.

6.4.3 Integration – normalising practices around housing

Oustees homes have become an indicator of their level of integration with
mainstream Gujarati society. In a display of eagerness to fit in with the norms of
the plains oustees have abandoned ‘unsuitable’ practices. After a house was
erected in the original villages a goat would be sacrificed as an offering to God for
the welfare and prosperity of the household. On the advice of hosts and local
building contractors, most oustees have now dropped this practice. In the eyes of
high-caste hosts (who are vegetarians), shedding the blood of an animal is an
impure act which soils the house. Instead oustees have adopted the rituals of the
hosts who call a brahmin priest to the house to perform a special ceremony. 19
Oustees make a distinction between pucca and kutcha dwellings in this respect. Although they do not call for the services of a *brahmin* if building a kutcha dwelling, they fear that a pucca house will develop cracks in the walls and eventually break if the appropriate rituals are not performed. Their reasons for adopting the new practice for pucca housing but not kutcha ones are mixed. For some the adoption of local practices was explicitly acknowledged as a strategy to fit in with their new surroundings. However, most take the attitude that it is ‘better to be safe than sorry’. This is perhaps only to be expected amongst a group who were already accustomed to the concept of making an offering to the Creator on completing a new dwelling. If the accepted wisdom in the plains is that pucca houses require additional rituals to be performed for its protection why argue against that?

This notion postulated by higher castes, that pucca dwellings need special attention, helps give pucca houses their higher status (making them more desirable). Oustees are ‘taught’ reverence towards pucca houses – dwellings that cost money – symbolising the value of money in the plains.

Other practices relating to the house have been dropped such as stamping handprints on the walls during diwali. Yet practices such as *samel* and *okly puja* continue to be performed as before. Oustees explained the discrepancy by saying, ‘we have abandoned those practices that are no longer useful to us’, in the same way, for example, they have stopped burning money with the dead. As Raahibhai explained:

> There we had no one to question or ask us about it so we carried on doing it without thinking just as our forefathers did. After coming here hosts would ask us why we wasted our money and sure enough we asked ourselves and realised it wasn’t useful to do that.

Considering the incessant need and/or demand for money in the plains it made sense to take on board the hosts’ opinion. It is as if the oustees have done some ‘spring-cleaning’ after resettlement, discarding practices that are best left behind. Clearly money was valued in the hills, precisely why it was burnt with the dead in the first place, but now the need for money – for the living – is more pressing in the new environment.
The circumstances in which oustees now live are very different and it has been shown that their houses have become symbolic of the processes of change being experienced.

6.5 Relationship between house and home

In their original villages Bhils did not make a distinction between house and home – all dwellings were referred to as _ghar_ (home). Although the tin sheds oustees initially lived in did not feel like _ghars_ (due to the physical discomfort of living in them during the summer), all dwellings in the _vasahat_ are also regarded as homes. When asked whether her house feels like home, Geetiben said:

> Your own house feels like your home. Another’s [house] feels like another’s. I live here and so it feels like mine. In another village, in another’s house I wouldn’t feel. This house is in our village and we live in it, hence it feels like ours – it doesn’t feel like someone else’s. Wherever you are you live in your house, assuming that it’s your own. You won’t like it in another’s house. However it is, it is your house – whether it is small or big.

In the plains Gujarati’s have two words for dwelling places – house (_makan_) and home (_ghar_), reflecting a cultural difference between people living in the hills and those living in the plains. In trying to make sense of this new term, oustees have come to two conclusions as to how _makan_ should be interpreted. Some think there is no difference whatsoever and offer no explanation as to why there should be two words to describe the same thing. Alternatively, they may think there is no difference in meaning and that the plains term for ‘_ghar_’ is ‘_makan_’. Some others thought that _makan_ refers to pucca structures, whereas _ghar_ refers to kutcha structures. Although confusing at first, Satyambhai’s words on this topic are useful:

**What is the difference between a _makan_ and a _ghar_?**

A _ghar_ is well ... it’s built like this [pointing to bamboo mat] – it’s kutcha. A pucca house is called a _makan_.

**What do you call this [referring to his pucca dwelling]?**

This is a _makan_.

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So if you want to invite someone do you say come to my *makan* or my *ghar*?

You don’t say come to my *makan*, you ask people to come to your *ghar* [he laughs at the ridiculousness of inviting someone to your house rather than home].

**Even if you now say this is a *makan* because it is pucca?**

You never ask people to your ‘*makan*’ [we’re all laughing]! [Yes], this is called a *makan*. If it were kutcha – made of wood – then it would be a *ghar*, but if you come across someone you say come to my *ghar* [even if it is a *makan*], that’s what we say. You don’t say come to my *makan* .... a *ghar* is a *ghar*...nobody says come to my *makan*. Nowhere do people say come to my *makan* [now we’re all in hysterics].

**So is there a difference between *makan* and *ghar*? What does *ghar* mean to you?**

*Ghar* means *ghar*, what else? [he laughs at the silly question]. All my people understand that *ghar* means *ghar*. In our language we understand *ghar* to mean *ghar* – what else is there to understand?

**This English girl [my interpreter refers to me to justify the ‘silly’ question] doesn’t understand the meaning of ‘*ghar*’, so could you explain it to her?**

What else can I explain? Home means home. What else can you explain about the home? We have only one *ghar*, that is why it is called *ghar*, what else can you call it? You don’t have to give a long explanation [we all laugh]. (Satyambhai, Vadaj).

In short all dwellings are *ghar* – hence it is a silly question to ask its meaning – but pucca dwellings can also be houses (*makans*), although you would never say ‘come to my *makan*’. Signs that this may change are found in responses to the question ‘does your new house feel like your home?’ which was asked to ascertain oustees’ meaning of home. Almost everyone said that it did feel like home but people gave a variety of explanations.

Gunin Kaka says ‘of course it feels like home. I brought everything from there to here so it feels like my own home’. The inclusion of free transportation within the resettlement policy enabled oustees to bring their possessions and wood from the old house, which was clearly a good measure.
In Chapter 3 we saw how one of the meanings of home identified by Despres (1991) was as a place of permanence and continuity. I explained home was experienced through the passage of time. Over the weeks, months or years, the home becomes a familiar place providing the dweller with a sense of belonging somewhere. Tanvirbhai illustrates this, particularly by his opening line, ‘Of course it feels like home. Now we have been here about eleven to twelve years. In the beginning I wasn’t comfortable here. Now I am living here that long so now I am comfortable’. For Mayaben the permanence of her pucca house provides her with a sense of it being home ‘We can’t change this house time after time so it feels like my home’.

Supporting the notion that your dwelling is home no matter what its material structure, Geetiben says:

Your own house feels like your home. Another’s [house] feels like another’s. I live here and so it feels like mine. In another village, in another’s house I wouldn’t feel. This house is in our village and we live in it, hence it feels like ours – it doesn’t feel like someone else’s. Wherever you are you live in your house, assuming that it is your own. You won’t like it in another’s house. However it is, it is your house – whether it is small or big.

Likewise, Sheelaben says ‘yes, we’ve made it our home – what else to do? This is our home so it feels like home to me. I can’t say that another’s home is mine. You’d be embarrassed to say that. Whatever your home is [kutcha/pucca], this is what I’d call home’. However, the response from Tarunbhai when asked whether his house feels like home, suggests things may change:

Yes, it does. You can’t say another’s home is yours. Whatever it’s like, your home feels like yours, doesn’t it? If my house doesn’t feel like mine I can’t say I like [want] somebody else’s house. However it is, whether it’s small or big, it feels like your home. It does feel like home.

There is a sense that in the future only pucca houses may qualify as ‘home’ (ghar), which is directly at odds with the current situation, whereby all dwellings are homes and there is no distinction between them i.e. material values may displace traditional ones. There is already some evidence to support this hypothesis:
Yes, it feels like my home, because we made it with our hands. Because it’s made by hand and more [than before] has been spent and so I like it don’t I? Why wouldn’t I like it? Before less money was spent and now we’ve spent more on it [the house].

After all, this is where English borrowing of pucca to mean ‘proper’ comes from. In time kutcha dwellings may not be seen as homes (ghars) but huts in which poor people live. Mahantbhai, the first to ‘modernise’ his house by way of commissioning new furniture, already employs new expressions to describe different kinds of dwellings:

The way that your kutcha house felt like home, does it feel the same with his house? Does this feel like home as well?

Not like there. This is like a bungalow.

It’s like bungalow? What was it like there?

That was, like a hut only [just]. There were no pucca houses, you saw there.

I saw. Ok. So did that house [in the old village] feel like home?

In that District everyone’s was the same, so when I built my home it will feel the same won’t it? [District and same said in English]. After coming here the homes are no longer wooden. My people came with me, making it [like] home (Mahantbhai, Kandewal).

So, even though for people like Hemdevbhai the dwelling feels like home because he built it himself, in the future oustees who for some reason are unable to build a pucca house may not feel like their dwelling is a proper home.

Finally for this discussion on house and home I wish to highlight the resigned feeling, which is always present in the thoughts of some oustees, thus also appearing in conversation relating to housing. Mohitbhai laments ‘it [the house] does feel like home – what else to do? Where else to go?’ Recalling that it was Mohitbhai that submitted the unsuccessful application for his people to be resettled in a different vasahat, one senses his discomfort in feeling ‘grounded’, like a child who has been punished for behaving unreasonably. One could argue that the authorities perceive oustees to be childish, demonstrated by the dismissal of their request to be moved elsewhere onto land that is not occupied by bad
spirits. Oustees' claims are rendered unjustified because they lack 'reason'. In the adult [read modern] world these superstitious beliefs (traditional knowledges) are 'out of place'.

6.6 Conclusion

For a dwelling to be regarded as a home it must serve its most basic function - that is to provide the occupiers with shelter from the elements, enabling them to live in some physical comfort. The tin sheds that oustees lived in for the first few years did not fulfil this function adequately and so were not regarded as homes. This reminds us of the comparison made by Polk (1973) between housing and clothing: if it is not the right design, style or size it will feel uncomfortable. Indeed, one of the problems was the small size of the tin sheds, a deficiency that critiques argued would persist even with the construction of more permanent dwellings, due to the smaller size of the proposed house plots compared to the original village dwellings.

Different dwelling types have now emerged and pucca housing has become the preferred type, to the extent that most people living in these houses say they prefer their new dwelling to their original one. This is partly because kutcha dwellings are not easily repaired in the plains due to the absence of nearby timber and their vulnerability to flooding. All such considerations relate to the meaning of home as material structure, identified by Despres (1991).

More significantly, however, the preference for pucca housing is reflective of the increasing importance attached to the material from a cultural perspective. Oustees are grappling with the notion that material things are in a sense immaterial, reflected for example in Mahantbhai's comment that 'you can't take your house with you when you die'. This resonates with attitudes towards house and home in Indian philosophical literature described by Laine (1998), although I am not suggesting that such philosophical considerations are the cause of oustees' dilemma. Rather, I refer to the everyday dilemmas oustees face, for example, in deciding how much to spend on their house. Whilst aware of the pitfalls of
attaching too much significance to the material, they cannot escape its importance in the new environment, giving rise to mixed feelings about the home and more broadly about resettlement. This is echoed in the remark, 'when I’m there [in the original village] I like it there and I don’t feel like coming back; when I’m here I don’t like the thought of going there'. Thus the home is a measure of the changes oustees are experiencing for better or for worse. Now that the quality of one’s dwelling reflects the amount of money spent on it, it has become an indicator of personal status — another meaning of home identified by Despres (1991). Oustees are also thinking about the future, not just their current status. Houses have become assets, something to be passed on — another new meaning for home.

Whereas the literature on resettlement and housing suggested that oustees are unlikely to identify with new dwelling forms and houses that they have not built themselves, resulting in a sense of placelessness as seen in many resettlement schemes, this is not so for oustees in Kandewal and Vadaj. On the whole the failure to identify with housing (featuring in the descriptions of resettlement in other countries by Fathy, Fahim 1983, and Tadros 1982) is absent. All oustees described their houses as homes. In fact oustees aspire to live in pucca houses now. Whatever the reasons for this (practical or otherwise) one could not argue that oustees feel ‘out of place’ in their new dwellings. Rather, those living in kutcha houses in the plains may begin to feel ‘out of place’ given the new emphasis on the material i.e. pucca housing may no longer be just a preference, but increasingly a requirement for feeling that one’s dwelling is one’s home.

Space is also an issue for oustees and the reduction in living space in and between dwellings and in the vasahat is problematic for some. As the Centre for Social Studies (1987: 32) noted ‘the oustee now has the feeling of being bottled up’. Changes in the built environment can give rise to social disarticulation. Rappoport (1981) asserts that if group identity was traditionally conveyed through environmental cues which cannot be recreated in the resettlement sites then the group can be damaged. However oustees have reacted differently to changes in the spatial organisation of their dwellings, so we must either dismiss the idea that Bhil adivasi expressed their identity through environmental cues or consider the possibility that some displaced groups have applied ‘defensive restructuring’ more
successfully than others. In either case it would be valuable to investigate the higher incidence of illness reported by Devdi oustees. They blame the proximity of dwellings or dudin land for their illnesses, leaving some (particularly those who have fallen victim to the evil eye) feeling alienated in their new environment. Matters are made worse by the fact that in this new place oustees cannot take control by shifting their dwelling elsewhere: the authorities dismiss their concerns and they are effectively ‘grounded’.

This research shows that ‘staying where you are’ is a phenomenon now experienced by newly married couples, who have to share the home of the groom’s parents for longer than they otherwise would. There is inadequate provision at the vasahats for population changes. Thus for newly married women home as a place of control (Despres 1991) is becoming increasingly unlikely.

On the other hand the interventions by the authorities and NGOs to promote good house-keeping and improved hygiene, which could be viewed as an obstacle to perceiving the home as one’s area of control, produces little if any resentment. This is because oustees are keen that they should maintain their homes well, particularly as it now reflects on the household (what kind of people they are). Despres (1991) found one of the meanings of home to be a reflection of one’s ideas and values. Mahantbhai has already begun to define himself through his house and others are likely to follow suit, supporting Cooper’s (1974) theory of the home as a symbol of self. Whilst he wants to be known as a ‘one of the people’ he is keen to demonstrate his sophistication to outsiders. To achieve this he had to employ the skills of carpenters. So not only the house but also the furniture is now built by others. In neither case does there seem to be a problem with the house not feeling like home. Instead of feeling that a dwelling is home because it was built with ones own ‘sweat and blood’ it is home because the family spent their money on it. To build a pucca house in the first place requires a considerable amount of money, but it remains to be seen whether or not oustees will continue to invest in their houses, decreasing the proportion of spending on group-orientated displays such as feasts. This would support the arguments by Duncun (1981) and Pratt (1981) that individual or household identity assumes relatively greater significance than group identification as societies become less
collectivist orientated. They argued that the most efficient way to seek status when individual identity holds greater importance is through the house instead of communal expenditure. Raahibhai indicated that oustees will begin to spend their money differently when he said:

There we had no-one to question or ask us about it [their practice of burning money with the dead], so we carried on doing it without thinking just as our forefathers did. After coming here the hosts would ask us why we wasted our money and sure enough we asked ourselves and realised it wasn't useful to do that.

His tone conveyed the difficulty for oustees in making these adjustments. One can sense his dislike of being questioned and asked to account for his actions, alerting me to the fact that as a (western) researcher I am part of the problem in my incessant quest for reasons and explanations for everything they say or do.
Notes for Chapter 6

1 The literal translation of kutcha is raw (unprocessed i.e. made of mud or earth).
2 Factory-made tiles of this shape from western countries are called Straight Barrel Mission Tiles.
3 Where 1 kath is the length of the fingertip to the elbow. Referring to adivasi people who will be displaced in Maharastra, The Tata Institute for Social Sciences (1997: 194) reports 'People reside in spacious and comfortable houses made of teak wood, thatch, mud and bamboo. These are not the stereotyped village huts. The size of houses range from 50 to 100 sq.m'.
4 Following deforestation it is harder to find teak wood of the quality and size needed for house construction and so those who returned from the vasahat are building smaller houses.
5 An outsider’s view like mine needs to be tested against the specific characteristics of the house that are valued or disliked by the occupants. The attributes of kuthca housing that are valued and not so valued by oustees are gleaned in Section 6.3.1.
6 Pukka [note the different spelling] refers to structures built with concrete, stone, or bricks. Thus both houses and roads are said to be pukka, as opposed to katcha [again note the difference] made of earth, mud, or wood, etc. (Morse and Berger 1992: 110).
7 Obviously if the government provide the house themselves oustees are not given the grant.
8 An NGO contracted by the Sardar Sarovar Punavsahat Agency to facilitate resettlement whose remit included the building of oustee housing.
9 The government actually reduces the grant for providing roof-tiles, tin sheets and sometimes even drainage. This leaves in most cases a sum of Rs 23,000 from which to purchase the bricks, cement, sand, iron rods and labour for house construction.
10 Hakim (1995) documents a grain hierarchy in the region whereby the grain one eats is an important indicator of status in the plains. The hierarchy is based on the consumption preferences of communities in the plains. There is little or no demand for the coarse 'hill' grains, those consuming such grains having lower socio-economic status.
11 Amongst Bhils of the Narmada Valley the youngest son ordinarily enjoys inheritance of the family property. In his anthropological study of Bhils of Western India, Deliége (1985) describes the role of the youngest son, who after marriage remains at his father’s home and on the death of the father, inherits his land and implements and is chief mourner at the funeral. This is a-typical for India as a whole where the majority of people are governed by the Hindu Succession Act of 1956, which sought to bring greater (gender) equality in the inheritance system. However, it is customary for the eldest son of the family (if anyone) to be the next responsible person after the father.
12 It is worth noting that until the time we asked Bimalbhai to talk about his house, he had always claimed to be struggling economically because of his dependent landless son. This demonstrates the home is a useful tool to use in researching resettlement.
13 Fifty two per cent were positive about living closer, 33 per cent were indifferent and 15 per cent were negative about living closer to one another (N=109 as this question was not applicable to Panderia oustees).
14 The literal translation of the phrase used to describe how a witch finishes a person off is to say she (invariably female) eats you.
15 In reality, despite his landless status, Nadishbhai, is relatively well to do as his widowed mother has given him her five acre plot, which he rents out. He also gets income from his vending business.
16 This is a circular argument because ultimately if oustees are suffering it is because the dam was sanctioned by the government not the anti-dam activists. This comes back to
argument in Chapter 2 that the anti-dam activists want resettlement to fail in order to strengthen their case that large scale dams should not be built.

17 Land unsuitable for human habitation, referred to as dudin land, is occupied by unwelcoming spirits. Health practitioners often warn oustees they die young because they drink too much.

18 This is preferable to the situation in Phata vasahat where oustees report that in a number of households the father-in-law sleeps outside the house in the extension (adali).

19 Highest caste in Hindu culture. Only Brahmins can perform religious ceremonies.

20 I cannot claim the analogy is culturally appropriate, as I am not aware of the forms of punishment levelled at children who misbehave. Incidentally I never witnessed a child being physically chastised by their parents for misbehaving.

21 Earlier writers also documented the difficulties oustees faced in these temporary shelters, (see Bhatia 1997).
7 Home as social relations

7.1 Introduction

In her literature review Despres (1991) identified relationships with family and friends as one of the meanings commonly identified with the concept of home. Resettlement can be paraphrased as ‘changing home’. It follows when considering the meaning of home described above, that ‘changing home’ results in most cases in changes to social relations. In this chapter I describe the changes to/changing social relations, how those changes have come about and what they mean in terms of oustees’ ability to feel ‘at home’ in their new environment.

The chapter is divided into two sections: the first dealing with the impact of resettlement on established social relations under the theme of continuity versus disruption, and the latter examines new social relations under the theme of bonding versus detachment.

If there is one message that I have taken from my fieldwork it is that home, in the eyes of the oustees, is about social relations. Good social relations combined with strong support networks evoke a sense of belonging, which creates a feeling of being ‘at home’. In this chapter I argue that most oustees do feel ‘at home’ in their new environment and that this is largely attributable to the ability to continue established social relations. Continuity is not however enough in itself to establish a sense of belonging in the new environment. The development of good new social relations with the host community is I argue equally important.
7.2 Continuity versus disruption

7.2.1 Togetherness

My fieldwork suggests the main factor enabling oustees at Kandewal and Vadaj to feel ‘at home’ is that they were able to relocate to a site with the grouping of their choice. Allowing oustees to form their own groupings has proved very successful. In the case of Panderia villagers this includes the entire village population, and for those coming from Hafeshwar and Makadkhada the hamlet populations.

We asked Tarunbhai, from Kandewal vasahat, how he felt when his home in Panderia was being taken down. He diverted to talk about how he feels in his new environment:

At the beginning I didn’t like it, but then later all the brothers have gathered here and so I like it. If all the brothers weren’t together and we were separate, separate then right up until now you could say I wouldn’t like it. But how many people were there are here. All the homes were taken down and so it’s like as it was there and so to me it feels the same. If some of us were put in different, different villages on their own then we/I wouldn’t like it but everyone is together and so it looks good. That’s why it feels the same, same ... Yes, because of everyone it feels like village. It feels like there, Panderia here – what to do? If you are a little on your own then it feels different, but because all the brothers are all here it feels the same. It feels the same. Because we [were there] from the start it felt like my village, feels like village. Then everyone came here so this also feels like village (Tarunbhai, Kandewal).

For women too, continuing to live with their fellow villagers is important.

If these people of our village were separated from us and we were living alone - we wouldn’t be comfortable. Now in the hills I wouldn’t like it on my own. If all the villagers went then I would like it, but I won’t like it on my own. I’d feel scared. I wouldn’t like to move around, I wouldn’t like to stay ... Everyone is here and so I wouldn’t like it there on my own. I like it here living together ... All the villagers move around together and so I like it. There also we used to be together, here also together. You have come here to sit, if you had to sit somewhere on your own you wouldn’t like it - you wouldn’t (Geetiben, Kandewal).

Home for the oustees, then, is about social relations. It is the place where your kin are residing. So strong is this notion that it seemed almost ludicrous to the oustees to suggest that the new village might not feel like home: ‘Because we are all living here so
it feels good here. All the people have come altogether and so why wouldn’t it feel like my village? – it feels like my village’ (Tanvirbhai, Kandeval).

This is different from urban or western concept of home, which is much more confined, encompassing a single household rather than a group of households:

Now everyone of the home lives here. If they left us separated then, then you would feel ‘where is everyone of our home’? I would feel that ... I would feel that. All people of the home are living in one place. It feels like home – it feels like that (Sunandaben, Vadaj).

Eighty-six per cent (N=125) of oustees reported that this village felt like their own: 21 per cent gave the fact that their people were living with them as the reason for this response. This was the second most popular response after length of time spent in the new place. Typically oustees would answer ‘yes, since they broke up our village and we came to live here and so it feels like my village. It feels like my village’ (Sajaniben, Vadaj).

One of the greatest objections to resettlement raised by opponents to the dam is that it will result in the erosion of communal activity and the support networks that were a feature of life in the hills. I found, however, that many oustees feel there is no difference within the community in this respect, although others are less optimistic.

The majority of oustees (68%) claim to have the same number of individuals to turn to as before (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Support from individuals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you have individuals to talk to?</th>
<th>No. of oustees</th>
<th>% of oustees</th>
<th>Summary Change</th>
<th>% of oustees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes do now, not before</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, more than before</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, same as before</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, same as before</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but less than before</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, but did before</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (Total)</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Individual survey.
It is fruitful to consider other kinds of practical support where again we see oustees can more often than not, expect to receive help as readily as before (Table 7.2)

Table 7.2 Comparison of practical support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is help as available as before?</th>
<th>For construction* %</th>
<th>Financial** %</th>
<th>Food*** %</th>
<th>Agricultural labour**** %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes it is, wasn’t before</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes it is, more than before</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, same as before</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, same as before</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, less than before</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, but was before</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 (N=127)</td>
<td>102 (N=132)</td>
<td>100 (N=132)</td>
<td>100 (N=134)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Individual survey.
Notes: Percentages have been rounded up/down, therefore totals do not equal 100].
*house/adali construction, **loan/donation of money, ***loan/donation of grains, **** manual service

Whilst levels of practical support remain high, it is useful to examine the reasons given for those reporting loss of support as they may signal future trends. Most of those who said that help with building was no longer available were constructing their pucca houses at the same time as others, so the opportunity to give and receive help for house construction was not (rather than no longer) available. A handful of oustees (originally from Panderia) feel support of this kind is not available now. The chances are that it is a result of the internal division that is emerging amongst them.

Financial help is as readily available as before in the eyes of most oustees. Those who think not say oustees have started saving money in bank accounts and are therefore less willing to loan money because they will lose interest.

One-tenth (N=100) respondents said they were less likely or would not at all now get help when grains are short, because oustees are growing more cash crops and therefore
people hold reduced stocks of grains. Extra grain is usually now sold to get cash rather than stored away.

The greater of the decreases is with respect to receiving agricultural help. This, the oustees believe, is largely the result of two factors: a) the timely nature of cultivation in the plains means there is less scope to help others as people are occupied in their own fields at the same time, b) if oustees have free time they would rather be paid for their agricultural labour as is the norm in the plains. As oustees buy into the market-driven agricultural system they may increasingly show reluctance to offer their services for free.

One needs to bear in mind the extent of support may also not be as high as reported. In their eagerness to act and speak collectively (or at least be seen to) some oustees may downplay any changes that indicate a deterioration of communality.

Although the lifestyle in the plains gears households more towards individualism (as indicated by the reasons people gave for reduction in financial, food and agricultural support), this has not (yet) undermined perceived levels of support. There has perhaps been little change because the main support networks (from the paternal side at least) remain intact. Those oustees who reported no change in the readiness to help said, for example, ‘why wouldn’t it be the same? – it’s the same people here’. Although changes may be on the horizon, the opportunity to continue living with the same people has I believe, enabled oustees to feel ‘at home’ in their new environment.

In short, oustees feel a sense of togetherness at the vasahat similar to what they enjoyed previously which enables them to feel ‘at home’. If home, then, is defined by social relations with kin, why do separations (a feature of the Naramada resettlement) appear not to impact oustees’ ability to feel at home in the new environment?
7.2.2 Separations

Resettlement often leads to the unravelling of social networks and this disruption has been the downfall of countless resettlement schemes. The Narmada oustees have experienced separations from: household members, family, other villagers and the woman’s parental home. In this section I describe the impact of each of these forms of separation in turn.

**Household splits**: The physical separation of family members in the Narmada resettlement is one of the most significant changes with regard to social relations. In this section I address changes to household structure, which in the main comprise household splits/separations rather than amalgamations. Sixty-one out of 103 households surveyed had undergone a change to household structure. Only four out of the 61 households were classified as showing ‘amalgamation,’ since which the head of household was living with new household members. Changes to household membership as a result of a daughter leaving upon marriage, the arrival of a daughter-in-law and increases or decreases in population due to births and deaths are not included. These changes would have occurred whether or not resettlement took place.

Of greatest interest therefore are the 57 households in which the head is no longer living with people with whom he/she lived prior to resettlement. Table 7.3 shows the frequencies of different types of household split. So for instance, only in one household is the head separated from only his parent(s) [or her in-laws] who are residing in the original village. A more common situation is to find a household where the head has been separated from his/her son(s) or unmarried daughter(s) who are living in the original village (as occurs in eight households).
Table 7.3 Frequencies of different types of household split

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of separation</th>
<th>Location of separated relation</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Parents only</td>
<td>Original village</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another vasahat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same vasahat</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Brothers only</td>
<td>Original village</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another vasahat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same vasahat</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Original village &amp; same vasahat</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Sons un/married or unmarried daughters only</td>
<td>Original village</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another vasahat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same vasahat</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Parents and Brothers</td>
<td>Original village</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same vasahat</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent(s) in original village &amp; also Brother(s) living in same vasahat</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brother in original village &amp; Parent in same vasahat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All types</td>
<td>All locations</td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Household survey
Notes:  
a) If a female headed household the type of separation refers to in-laws instead.

b) Same vasahat means the former householder lives in a different household within the vasahat.

c) Although purals have been used the separation may refer to either separation from an individual e.g. one brother or brothers.

Some household separations are more significant than others. For example, in three households we find the present head no longer living with their parents/in-laws but still residing in the same vasahat. These splits generally result from each adult male’s being granted his own land. Having been given ‘project affected person status’, most adult sons were in a position to set up their own household on resettlement. I regard these splits as insignificant for three reasons. First, adult sons were accustomed to setting up their own households anyway. Once married an adult son would think about building his own house, separating from his parents upon the birth of children. Except for the youngest son, who remained with his parents even after marriage, the separation of kin in this way was acceptable and customary. Second, in most cases the separated kin are
living next door. If we consider all those splits where kin live in the same *vasahat* we see that the majority of splits are ‘insignificant’.

Figure 7.1 Household splits

![Household splits diagram]

Whilst most household splits are not of any great significance, a sizable proportion give some cause for concern. In forty per cent of the households the head is separated from kin living in the old village (Figure 7.1). This kind of separation is significant on a number of counts. The journey between the resettlement sites in the plains and the original villages in the hills involves time, effort and money which has severely curtailed the amount of contact between kin.

The causes of separation vary between households. Table 7.4 provides a break-down of the reasons why former household members are living in the original village.
Table 7.4 Reasons for separations where relatives are in original village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for split</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
<th>% of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kin did not receive land</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kin still waiting for land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kin received poor/unproductive land</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kin able to cope in the plains</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kin caring for cattle in the hills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kin taking double-benefit*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not know</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total = N</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>99%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Household survey and informal discussions

Notes: *Oustees has been allotted land at the vasahat, which they lease in order to free themselves to cultivate unsubmerged land in original village as well.

The results show limited or inadequate resources as the most common reason for separation from former household members who return to their original village to cultivate unsubmerged land. These include kin not receiving, still waiting for, or receiving unproductive land. There are only two cases of separation (since two of the three affected household heads are referring to the same kin) for which the government are not responsible: Sumantbhai and Shoorbhai’s brother returned unable to cope with resettlement due to his alcoholism. Bhandubhai’s brother returned to Panderia to take double-benefit.

Household separations are an inevitable outcome of the policy to grant registered oustee status to men over the age of 18 in 1987. Given their background in agriculture and familiarity with the lifestyle of the hills, the Bhil find it easier to make use of the land in the original village than to take up/find alternative livelihoods in the plains. The ten households where former householders are living in the original village due to being landless have all reported that unless there is a change in policy to grant land, their relatives will remain in the original villages permanently.

**Family (non-household) splits:** It is, or at least was, customary for all generations of the male family line to live in the same village. Even though households separated as a result of population increase, grandfathers, fathers and sons were almost never separated by more than a walk to the adjacent hilltop. In this section I deal with family who were living in the same village prior to resettlement, but not in the same household.
Following resettlement the separation of family members has been not uncommon. In 28 of the 103 households surveyed, the head now lives in a different village from members of his paternal family (Table 7.5). The rationale for recording separation of the male lineage is that women move to their husband’s village, which is usually not the same one as their parents’ anyway. Women are affected in a different way and that will be examined latter in this section.

Table 7.5 Types of family splits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of separation</th>
<th>Location of separated relation</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Brothers only</td>
<td>Original village</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another vasahat</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Original village &amp; in another vasahat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Sons un/married or</td>
<td>Original village</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unmarried daughter only</td>
<td>Another vasahat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Parents and Brothers</td>
<td>Original village</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another vasahat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another vasahat &amp; brother in original village</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Parents, Brother &amp; Son</td>
<td>Parents in original village, Brother in another site</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; son in original village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Household survey

Notes: a) If a female headed household the type of separation refers to in-laws instead.
  b) Same vasahat means the former householder lives in a different household within the vasahat.
  c) Although plurals have been used the separation may refer to either separation from an individual e.g. one brother or brothers.

Taking the incidents of double-counting into consideration, the most prevalent forms of separation to affect households are ones where the brother(s) of the head are living in the original village. Table 7.6 documents the reasons for the separation of brothers who reside in the original villages. Notice that although 15 households had heads where their brother is living in the original village, this actually amounts to 9 cases because cases of double counting have been omitted.
Table 7.6 Reasons for separation that involve brother living in original village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Reason for separation</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not resettlement related</td>
<td>Brother received land, but in original village regardless</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brother driven away from vasahat due to family dispute</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resettlement related</td>
<td>Brothers did not receive land (not a registered oustee)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brother donated his land to landless son</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brother received poor/unproductive land</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sub total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Household survey

It is interesting to note therefore that there are four cases where the separation is 'avoidable' in that the brothers who are living in the original villages have been given land at the resettlement site and therefore need not be living in the hills. What is of even greater interest is that three out of four are villagers of Panderia original village. Spurred on by the NBA movement we know that landed oustees have returned to Panderia original village to support the cause of the landless males who are calling for the government to give them project affected person status.

Without exception, separation from former household members and non-household family was regarded negatively, and with sadness. As Mahantbhai of Kandewal said, 'I do miss my father. He's living over there. In this way he fed and gave drink to us and brought us up but I'm left here and he is left there'.

Oustees expressed concern for the well-being of their kin and a fear of not being there to help should the need arise. When asked how he feels about some of his family members living in the original village Badalbhai replied:

How can I feel good? If someone falls ill or something happens then how are we to know? It's better if we're living altogether. If you are living here and they are living there ... if you are living together then how do you feel? - You feel nice. You will like it then. If there's a relative's house then it's good but otherwise how can they get food? (Badalbhai, Kandewal).
Those left in the original villages echo this concern. Kavibhai from Dhumna village spoke of the relief he would feel if he were granted land at the resettlement site because he could then re-join his family. He saw of no other advantage to living in the plains, always returning to this one issue:

It’s nice if everyone were living in one place. In monsoon if there is water you can’t go out. Nobody from there will come here in monsoon ... I will like it if I get land in the vasahat because everyone is there – my father, my uncle. Because we are living in two sites that’s why I don’t like it .... If we are living together in one place then it’s nice so we don’t have to think one person is living here, another person is living there ... If son and father are living together then we don’t need to worry about each other – father won’t worry about what his sons are doing ... If you’re not living together and someone dies and falls ill you have to run in the night also.

OK, but aside from being with your family what else would be good about living there [in the vasahat]?

Nothing else. Living together, going around together. Working on the fields together.

One of the oustees’ greatest fears, particularly for those separated from their elderly parents, is of not receiving news of a relative’s poor health. In the time it takes for a messenger to bring the news and the oustee to journey to the original village, the relative may have already died.

In many ways separation is harder for those living in the original villages than for oustees because most of the people they once lived with are now in the plains. Those left behind are somewhat vulnerable in the hills. Whilst on a walk to the Charbara village border we spotted two men crossing the river from Maharastra. They were coming over to chop wood illegally from Charbara and take it back to their own villages. Although villagers object to outsiders taking their resources they are powerless to do anything. On one occasion when they did confront the outsiders they were told ‘if you try to stop us we’ll kill you with this axe and throw you into the water. You won’t even have the chance to tell anyone we have come over to cut wood’. Prior to resettlement these outsiders would not have dared threaten Charbara villagers, as there were so many of them.
Separation is not only a physical separation, but eventually becomes a separation of 'minds' as a result of the different lifestyles in the hills and the plains. Hakim (1995) observes the emergence of two groups who are beginning to experience different lifestyles stemming from differing environmental experiences.

At present the numbers affected by separation are not great enough to have much impact on the homeliness of the vasahats. During my stay in Kandewal, however, some landless oustees warned that they would return to live in their original villages if they were not granted land. If some individuals do indeed return to the original villages, oustees may feel differently. In addition I also heard it said that some villagers are living in the original villages to prevent the remaining land from being colonised by outsiders so that in the future oustees can return when pressure on the land at the vasahats becomes too great. Whether or not at that time the return of their kin to original villages will undermine the sense of being 'at home' or whether oustees would become so used to living in the plains that this would have minimal impact in terms of home is difficult to predict.

Village splits: We have seen that family splits are not an inevitable outcome of resettlement. Nonetheless the populations of the 19 submergence villages of Gujarat are now resettled across 117 resettlement sites, representing a significant break up of villages. This scattering is the result of: a) resettling people as and when land became available through the voluntary sale of private property to the government and b) allowing villagers to choose with whom they want to resettle. Hemadri et al. (2000: xix) present a widely held view that:

Communities of oustees are often fragmented and randomly atomised, tearing asunder kinship and social networks and traditional support systems. The Gujarat government in settling displaced families of Sardar Sarovar has depended mainly on voluntary sale of agricultural land. Therefore, closely knit tribal communities have been dispersed into tens of villages in the unfamiliar Baroda region. Official reports confirm that displaced families from 19 affected villages in Gujarat have been resettled in over 150 locations, driven by open-market availability of agricultural land.
To recap from Chapter 4 the oustees in Kandewal and Vadaj originate from Panderia, Hafeshwar, Charbara, Dhunna and Makadkhada. The entire population of Panderia village is relocated in Kandewal. Inhabitants of Hafeshwar are spread across 21 different vasahats in four geographical blocks. Charbara and Dhunna villagers are spread across three vasahats, although all of them are within walking distance in the same block. Makadkhada villagers are scattered across seven vasahats - with the exception of five families all are located in the Dabhoi geographical block (Table 4.3).

As might be expected many oustees were unhappy that people from their original villages were scattered across many different vasahats. Of a sample of 87 oustees living in the Vadaj vasahats, 12 per cent preferred being split from former villagers, 40 per cent were indifferent and 48 per cent disliked being split. However, the fact that such a large proportion should be indifferent to being split from former villagers, or even prefer it, reflects, I believe one of two things.

**The importance of hamlet over village:** In large villages identity and affiliation were not necessarily based on village boundaries. Hakim (1995: 124) notes that in this region:

> [...] it is the hamlet and clan rather than the village that functions as the unit of reference in the regulation of daily activities and peer relationships. The village as a unit traditionally assumed most importance at village festivals. Vasavas rarely refer to each other as inhabitants of Mapali Village, but tend to identify with their hamlets instead ...With resettlement, the village as a unit of identity has become increasingly important and useful for the community. This is largely because the village of Mapali (comprising six hamlets) has become an object of bureaucratic classification.

The argument being made is that the break up of large villages is not as alarming as one might initially think. When the hamlet remains intact and its population resettled together, oustees can still feel ‘at home’, as demonstrated in Section 7.2.1. Vadaj oustees are relocated together with members from their two hamlets. Likewise the entire population of Devdi hamlet, Hafeshwar were relocated together in Kandewal. This type of wholesale relocation is generally desirable, but it is important to note that even the hamlet is not inviolable, demonstrated by the subsequent split of Devdi oustees (after resettlement to Kandewal) at their request. Some Devdi oustees moved to another
vasahat due to rivalry amongst themselves. It was often said that resettlement provided the opening for factions who had been engaged for many years in power struggles to break away from one another. This example challenges the assumption that communities are based on spatial contiguity. Finally, Dhumna and Charbara were too small to have hamlets. The Dhumna village population separated through choice, leaving only those from Charbara scattered against their will. Even then there is no need for excessive concern as the other villagers are resettled in closeby.

The proximity of vasahats: Any adverse effects of original village scattering are in any case minimised because kin are living in nearby vasahats. That oustees should be relocated so that kin are living in nearby vasahats was less of a prescribed policy than the outcome of a resettlement process that relocated villagers in stages - those living closest to the dam going first - as and when land became available. Nevertheless relocation of kin (either from a different hamlet of the same original village or from other villages in the same submergence zone) in nearby vasahats has, provided enough continuity to enable oustees to feel at home. This is evident from the words of Raahibhai, who suggests not only is there continuity, but a strengthening of relationships with people from the original village.

The first two years nobody was coming to our house and we weren't going to anyone's house. If somebody was going outside the vasahat it would only be to our old village. All the vasahats are nearby, all those old villagers who were going to be submerged, all those people came nearby. Even with them we have friendly relationship. Although we are not going to the original village we are going to vasahats. They are closer to us, our relations are stronger. Those people from submerging villages they came this side, meaning close by, that's why I like it here (Raahibhai, Kandewal).

Table 4.3 showed that with the exception of Panderia villagers, oustees are living in the same geographical block as people with whom they once shared a village. This has profound implications in terms of being able to continue daily and non-daily sociocultural practices and traditions. Relocating large numbers of people is an undesirable outcome of development projects on the positive side it increases the viability of sustaining previous features of their social life. Table 7.7 takes the frequency of being a guest, an observer at a marriage and spectator of a babri ceremony and compares it with
the frequency when they were living in their original villages. Expecting a marked decrease in the frequency of all social activities, I was initially surprised to find that ‘same’ came up in higher proportions compared to other categories, especially women. Although, some oustees had I felt a tendency to respond ‘the same’ to questions to avoid then having to give a reason for change, oustees probably are able to maintain similar levels of social activity because plenty of Bhil kin live in nearby vasahats.

Table 7.7 Frequency and enjoyment of activities before and after resettlement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of occasions in the last year</th>
<th>Being a guest %</th>
<th>Participant* at a marriage %</th>
<th>Participant* at a babri %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 times</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 times</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7 times</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 plus</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency compared to before</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased/ started</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same**</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased /ceased</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of fun compared to before</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More fun</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same fun</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less fun</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Individual survey
Notes: * including spectators, **same includes the minority of those who took part in the activities neither before or after resettlement.

Oustees were also asked whether they had been to other villages in the last year to attend festivals as was customary in their original villages for Holi and Diwali. Fifty seven per cent had not been but 43 per cent had attended at least one. Comparing the situation before and after resettlement we see from the data in Table 7.8 that the majority (61 per cent) have experienced no change in the amount they go to see festivals in other villages. I would assume this is because they now go to the vasahats in the same geographical blocks.
Table 7.8 Comparison of festival attendance in other villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of attendance compared to before</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Started going</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go more than before</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same amount</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same – never went/go</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go less than before</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopped going</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N = 111</td>
<td>101*</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Individual survey
Notes: *Percentages have been rounded up/down therefore do not total 100.

Not until there were sufficient numbers of people to celebrate festivals properly, did Badalbhai start to enjoy, hence feel at home, living in the vasahat:

When I came here for three years there was no one here. Only the Panderia people. And then gradually people came here. I came from Dhumna first. First Iravan and Edi and then Layak’s father who is drunkard those two people and the Amshu - we four were here. The day didn’t pass and night didn’t pass it was so boring. Now I feel good. That when we go with the cattle that time only we four people. When we come home that time there are only us four still. Then how would I like it here? I feel that I want to go back. Then the Panderia people came. Then we met each other and talked so I started to feel good. Then other people came so it was better. Now we go to each other’s house. That time only those four people and few children so what could we do? How would we like it here? When it comes to dancing and singing or when it comes to dancing for diwali and sitting down to eat, it’s not nice with only four people. Now it’s good...In the beginning there were only few people who were doing Holi, but now there are a lot of us. Some people play the drums and some sing so now we like it (Badalbhai, Kandewal)

Oustees from Dhumna and Charbara living on the smaller of the two sites in Kandewal, however, made the point that the only obstacle to holding celebrations in their vasahat was the lack of space for such events. Mostly they use the space in front of Mahantbhai’s house, which although the best spot, is not large enough to allow everyone to dance together.

Women’s parental home: Although it is customary for a woman to leave her parental village upon marriage, resettlement has increased the scale of separation, in terms of both distance and lifestyles. What was once typically an hour’s walk to the parental
home is now a journey involving considerable time, effort and money for in most cases the woman’s parents continue to reside in the hills.

In total 185 female adults live in Kandewal and the two Vadaj vasahats. Of these 58 per cent were married prior to their resettlement of the husband’s family, 27 per cent had married after resettlement and 15 per cent were unmarried living with their parents. The main subject of this section is the 108 women who married before resettlement. Women who married ‘after resettlement’ are generally in a more favourable position because the woman’s parents have often themselves been resettled and therefore live in nearby vasahats.\(^8\) Some parents living in the hills, however, gave their daughter’s hand in marriage to people who had been resettled in the plains, resulting in a more significant separation. But for these women marriage rather than resettlement of Bhils from submergence villages is the focal reason for the separation from the parental home, for the parents could quite easily have decided to give their daughter’s hand in marriage to someone living in the hills.\(^9\)

The obstacles these women encounter in maintaining a close relationship with the parental home are evident from the fact that out of a sample of 35 women 54 per cent reported they see their parents less often than before, or not at all.

Figure 7.2 Comparison of women’s visits to parental home before and after resettlement.
Table 7.9 shows the frequency of visits to the parental home. It is clear that women who have parents living in the hill area (*dungar vista*) see their parents much less frequently than those whose parents were also resettled from a submergence village and are living in nearby *vasahats*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of parents home</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Once a year</th>
<th>Twice a year</th>
<th>Once every few months</th>
<th>Every month</th>
<th>Once a week or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Village in the hills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vasahat</em> in Maharastra</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vasahat</em> in Gujarat</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Individual survey.
Notes: * An unlikely frequency so either there was an error in communication or data recording.

I also asked men how often they are visited by daughters who married prior to resettlement when they were both in the hills and all, unsurprisingly, said they were visited less often.

For those women who married before resettlement the move to the plains takes on a much greater significance than for men, yet on the whole it was more difficult to get women talking about their experience of resettlement. One of the ways I tried to encourage them to speak about resettlement was to ask them to compare what it was like moving to their in-laws on marriage (a change with very vivid memories for most) with moving to the plains.

Virtually all the women I spoke to found the move to their in-laws much more difficult to deal with. It was the difference between being at *maher* (parents' home) and being at *sasar* (in-laws' home) that featured in conversation as the most difficult thing to come to terms with.

That in itself does not tell us much - only that resettlement was experienced as the lesser of the two evils! What is of interest, however, is the subsequent discussion about how
another degree of separation from 

"mother" (i.e. in addition to moving out from your parent’s home upon marriage) influences women’s lives.

As documented in the literature (Pallit and Mody 1992) ties between the families of a married couple are strong within Bhil culture and women enjoy a high degree of access to their parents’ home. This provided an essential support network for women, making more likely that they could feel at home with their in-laws even though the initial move was traumatic.

The decreased access upon resettlement has adverse implications for women. The loss of readily available support can severely undermine women’s ability to feel at home in their new setting.

I came to know of two women in Kandewal who are regularly subjected to violence by their husbands. Neither spoke about it with us - on one occasion when we asked one of them what had happened to her bruised face, she made up a story to explain away the bruising. Other women told us that the two men were lashing out at their wives more often as they no longer have to answer to their brother-in-laws. Before resettlement if the brothers caught wind of their sister’s being beaten they would be over within the hour to beat the husband. If a husband was being particularly abusive a woman could make her own way to her parents’ home and stay there for however long was needed. In the plains, however, women rely on their husbands to provide them with the bus fare for the trip to their parents’ house. Not surprisingly abusers are not going to provide their wives with money for this purpose. As only one-third of the women surveyed had any money of their own they will most likely have to stay put.

I was also told that women are much more likely to commit suicide if in trouble at their in-laws because of their desperation about not being able to get support from their parents. Ironically the only suicide in the case study sites during our fieldwork was a young married man who killed himself by drinking pesticide. His wife was blamed for his death, the day he was found dead, and was beaten severely by four men. In
sympathising with this young woman one oustee said ‘that poor bitch didn’t have anywhere to go’ – because her parents are living in hills.

Whilst separation from household members and non-household members is hard for oustees there are not a sufficient numbers of cases to affect the sense of togetherness and belonging in the \textit{vasahat}. Neither does the break up of the large submergence villages prevent oustees feeling at home for lines of affiliation and identity were based on smaller populations (hamlets) and in any case the other villagers are still living close by. Therefore even after resettlement, despite these separations, continuity remains. However the scale of separation of women from their parental home does undermine women’s ability to feel at home. Other factors too undermine the ability to feel at home in the new environment and these are explored in the next section.

\subsection*{7.2.3 Social disarticulation}

Although relocation with kin at the early stages of resettlement provides the kind of continuity needed to feel at home in the new environment, new forces change established social relations. Some sections of the oustee population are showing signs of ‘social disarticulation’. Table 7.10 documents perceived changes to the level of fighting amongst villagers with whom they lived before.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
\textit{Vasahat} & N & \textbf{Increase} & \textbf{Same as before} & \textbf{Decrease} \\
& & (\% of respondents) & (\% of respondents) & (\% of respondents) \\
\hline
Kandewal & 42 & 50 & 45 & 5 \\
Vadaj & 91 & 11 & 57 & 32 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Perceived changes to number of fights}
\end{table}

Most oustees perceived no change to the level of fighting, or in the case of Vadaj many seeing a decrease. However, the fact that 50 per cent of Kandewal respondents reported an increase is, I believe, a reflection of discontent – the result of emerging inequalities. The presence of landless adults (non registered oustees) amongst the resettled population – for not all landless oustees return to their original villages - is creating tensions within the community. Leaders, in particular those perceived to be doing well, often bear the
brunt of oustees’ dissatisfaction with their economic circumstances. During our stay in Kandewal we witnessed a fight break out which began with a number of landless oustees saying to their leader, Raahibhai, ‘you’ve become a big man, you don’t care about us’.

Essentially the disharmony is about tensions that arise when resources are perceived to be limited. For example, Nadishbhai, the youngest of seven brothers, was the only one not to receive land in his family. It was therefore decided that he should inherit the 5-acre plot of their deceased father, yet whenever his half-brothers get drunk they argue the land should be divided up between all their sons (i.e. grandsons of the deceased oustee). The divided opinion is effectively dividing the family and placing a strain on Nadishbhai who feels insecure, not knowing whether his brothers will eventually claim back the land.

Families who have taken in their non-registered landless kin have done so as a matter of course but I detected a sense of concern that doing so would make it difficult in the future to go back on the arrangement to share the land when eventually all of it is needed for grown up sons. Although a problem for the future it plays on their mind at present. Without question the unified voice supporting the argument to grant land to non-registered oustees is partly a product of the anxiety landed oustees feel about having dependent kin. All the men who share land with their non-registered brothers declined to admit they had entertained the thought of asking their brothers to make their own way despite being landless. Instead they would say the ‘uncharitable’ stance belonged to their wives ‘my wife keeps telling me to tell my brother to make his own way – what to do?’. I was not surprised therefore when Raahibhai took advantage of an argument between his wife and that of his younger sister-in-law, claiming that the latter did not show enough respect for her elders and so ties between the two families would have to be cut. Men often say they ignore the arguments women have amongst themselves, preferring to stay out of them, yet in this scenario Raahibhai capitalised on the first opportunity available to cut ties with his landless brother’s family.10

This is not the only way women are characterised as uncharitable. As stated in Chapter 6 a handful of women in Kandewal were thought to be witches – women who were
jealous of others doing well hence causing the illness and sometimes death of whom they are envious. The supposed increase in these cases reflects the social disharmony forging as a result of emerging inequalities. Moreover, the way in which these cases are dealt with reflects oustees’ changed circumstances. Prior to resettlement *bhuas* (spiritual men) would name witches at the request of the villagers and appropriate action against them would be taken. Following resettlement into *vasahats* with mixed populations (more in Section 7.3.1) *bhuas* are asked to counteract the ill affects of a witches’ deeds, without naming them. This I am told is because identifying a witch causes arguments now they are living in mixed *vasahats*, as a group may not accept the accusations from another that a woman of theirs is a witch. Support can no longer be assumed if you are living amongst strangers – people who were not ‘of your home’.

7.3 Forming relationships versus staying detached

In this section I explore what it means to live with people who are not ‘of your home’. For oustees this means living with other oustees from a different village as well as living in close proximity to host villagers. Curiously the reaction to living with both types of strangers is different to what one might expect.

7.3.1 Mixed *vasahats*

*Kandewal vasahat* as we know is represented by people from four villages – 43 projected affected families from Panderia, 15 from Charbara, 13 from Devdi-Hafeshwar and 11 from Dhumna. The Vadaj sites are homogeneous (barring a handful of people from Gadher). *Kandewal vasahat* is therefore the subject of this section.

The NBA has questioned the wisdom of creating *vasahats* with mixed populations i.e. from different villages. They cite recent disturbances and a murder in Pansoli *vasahat* as being primarily the result of locating different groups together. In *Kandewal vasahat* issues of this nature have arisen in the past. During the early years all the oustees were living in temporary tin sheds in the same area. Panderia and Devdi oustees got on well as they knew each other prior to resettlement and similarly Dhumna and Charbara villagers were united in everything except name. Tensions grew between the Panderia and Devdi oustees and those from Dhumna and Charbara. The groups accused each
other of anti-social behaviour. Complaints included accusations such as kids going to the toilet next to their houses, or women sweeping dirt onto other house plots. Following a number of deputations to the SSPA the Dhumna-Charbara oustees were moved to a site separated from the others by a field (no more than 200 ft in width), but still in the same vasahat.

On the surface there seems nothing untoward about the relations between the two groups of oustees in Kandewal. On one occasion, however, Mahantbhai (unofficial leader of the Dhumna-Charbara) lamented how he wished the site they were moved to had been declared a separate vasahat, with its own facilities. Although most of the amenities including the school, sitting platform and dispensary are located on the main site they are no more than 2 minutes walk away. I detected what Mahantbhai actually wants is to be independent from the Panderia and Devdi oustees. However, his may not be a widely held view, as I did not hear other Dhumna or Charbara oustees expressing the same sentiments. Table 7.11 shows that 32 per cent of oustees in Kandewal prefer living in mixed vasahats, 50 per cent would prefer to be living in a vasahat comprising people from their own village only and the rest did not mind either way. Whilst the number of respondents is low, it is no surprise to find 78 per cent of Devdi oustees surveyed would have preferred to live by themselves, considering their pre-occupation with other's jealousy.

Table 7.11 Feelings about living in vasahat of mixed population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village of origin</th>
<th>Prefers mixed (%)</th>
<th>Indifferent (%)</th>
<th>Prefers non-mixed (%)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devdi</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panderia</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhumna-Charbara</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Individual survey

Given that so many oustees would prefer to live independently of those from other submergence villages, one might expect the close association of host villages to vasahats problematic for oustees. This is shown to be quite the contrary in the next section.
7.3.2 Hosts

The decision to resettle oustees in the vicinity of well-established rural villages and associate each vasahat with a ‘host’ village is one of the most significant when talking about social relations and what that means in terms of the development of a sense of home in the new setting. As already stated each vasahat takes on the name of its host village and eventually – once the Sardar Sarovar Punavasahat Agency is wound down – the host village and vasahat will be treated administratively as one unit. Oustees will have to deal with issues through normal government channels. In this chapter we see that the linkage of vasahats to host villages has by and large proved successful. I believe that it is a crucial element in facilitating the creation of a ‘sense of home’ for oustees relocated to the plains.

The importance of new relationships can not be underestimated. My fieldwork strongly supports the finding that good relations with host villagers are an equally primary basis on which oustees feel at home in the new environment:

I wasn’t comfortable for the first two years. I felt like I had come to this side as a guest. I felt like I had come as a labourer [for temporary work] and I wanted to go home – I felt like that. Then slowly, slowly it felt like home and village. At the beginning I thought what kind of place is this, who is living here? Now everyone recognises me and calls me. At the beginning no-one called me (Purubhai, Kandewal).

It was not until oustees felt assured their presence would be accepted that they felt they belonged. Anxiety about how they would be received by the hosts was initially universal amongst the oustee population. Mahantbhai was asked whether Kandewal village felt like his own from the start. He responded:

Not from the beginning. How would it feel like my village? How are the people here? How many problems will be laid out here? They might say ‘is this your father’s village? It’s not your village. Why did you come here? It is not your village. Go [back] to your village. This is our village’. That’s why I was worried.

What the hosts would be like, how they would respond to oustees’ arrival, and what oustees’ treatment at the hands of the hosts would be, dominated oustees’ thoughts prior to and during the first year of resettlement. A representative of one of the NGOs
involved in facilitating resettlement described how one of the greatest fears for similar agencies and the government was that host and oustees would clash, with potentially disastrous consequences. In reality, to everyone’s surprise troubles are in the main between oustees rather than host-versus-oustees. Ninety-three per cent (N=120) said that they have never had any trouble from the hosts or been teased by them, in either site. There was also no difference in this respect between men and women, with less than 10 per cent of either group reporting trouble or harassment from hosts. Furthermore when asked their opinion of the hosts 94 per cent of the oustees described them as being ‘friendly’. Again there were no significant differences amongst the oustees in this respect. For some oustees, like Raahibhai, the relationship with host villagers goes beyond familial bonds, creating a sense of extended belonging, ‘At the time [shortly after resettlement] nobody from nearby [host] villages knew us. “From where did these people come” – that’s how people from nearby villages were talking about us. But now we have a verwar relationship with people from nearby villages’. In this context Raahibhai uses the word verwar to mean a surrogate family, people with whom you would be prepared to give your daughter’s hand in marriage.

The absence of host-oustees tensions comes as a surprise considering the deep prejudices held by high-caste Patels towards the Bhil tribal population. The very first day I set off with my interpreter to conduct fieldwork, we were stopped on our way to Kandewal by some Patels who asked us the nature of our work. When explaining that my main sources of information for this thesis would be the words of oustees one Patel replied ‘what kind of a PhD is that just asking the vasahat people? They don’t know anything so how can they tell you anything useful?’.

Most of the Patel prejudices concerned hygiene. One afternoon one of the Patels in Phata spontaneously mentioned what he thought was one of the most unfortunate traits of the Bhil oustees and a barrage of similar comments were thrown in by others relaxing in the afternoon heat: ‘They don’t wash with soap’, ‘They wash their clothes perhaps once a year’, ‘They have fleas in their clothes not just in their hair’, ‘If they cleaned their children they would look very cute’, ‘You’re spending all your whole day in adivasi houses – don’t they smell? Why don’t you give them a bottle of perfume spray?’ My
most stark memory of the prejudice faced by oustees comes from an incident that took place when we took Shuravbhai to see the resident doctor at Kandewal host village. Shuravbhai's ox had charged him, leaving him severely bruised on his chest and arms. After a sleepless night, Shuravbhai decided he needed to see the doctor for some pain relief. Deepa and I offered to accompany him. When we went to fetch Shuravbhai we found him sitting up for the first time since the accident so that his wife could bathe him, something we thought unnecessary, especially when we saw the expression of pain on his face every time she touched his torso. At the doctor's Shuravbhai was given a pain-relief injection and his chest was bandaged up. I asked whether he could take the dressing off the next day to bathe, to which the doctor replied 'you don't need to worry about that because these people don't bathe for weeks'!

Patels also criticise oustees' home management skills: families do not eat together, they allow their children to lie on the ground, they do not look after their possessions and mishandle goods - that is why their furniture breaks. One man said, as if addressing an oustee, 'the government has become poor spending money on you, yet you still keep the inside of your house dirty. You can't manage your money properly'. Another claimed that 'although their lifestyles have changed their culture hasn't. Even though they have more things [material goods] they are still the same people'. Another argued that the reason the handpumps at the vasahats were breaking down was that the oustees did not know how to operate them properly (when in fact, inferior quality pumps had been purchased in the first place).

The supposed waste of money particularly grates on the Patels. They believe oustees waste their money by frittering it on alcohol, weddings and melas. As they see it, the majority of oustees do not know how to manage their finances, with the exception of Bimalbhai who put his money into the bank and took advantage of a government subsidy to invest in a tractor. One Patel complained of oustees dependency: 'there was no incentive to work for the first three years because oustees got cash from selling the teak wood they brought from their original villages and they were living on a government stipend of Rs 800 per month for 3-5 years. Some wasted this money and became lazy'.
The Bhils supposedly lack both table manners and etiquette in general. ‘They use swear words and have no respect for anyone. They will speak in the same way to a small man or a big [important] man, including the Prime Minister’. ‘They do not honour or respect their elders and refer to their father as ‘the old man’’. In a more bizarre statement one of the Patels said ‘they don’t have any tension. If they want to go to the toilet they will just get up and go. They won’t wait for the conversation to finish and then say excuse me. Their children even wee inside the house. It’s because they are carefree and have no tensions that they are healthy’.

The perception that oustees lacked manners and were uncultured was sometimes expressed in even stronger terms. One host villager said of the Bhils ‘like animals they fall in love so easily – a man stares at a woman and then has the marriage feast without any proper ceremony. They’ll have kids by the age of 14 or 15’. The vet from one host village spoke of his embarrassment about having to go to the vasahats because the women walk around bare-breasted.  

The oustees were also described as physically strong and tough. I heard it said they have ‘iron stomachs and can digest anything’, ‘a bone fracture would normally take one month to heal, yet a Bhil will recover within 10 days and start work again. They don’t bother going to the doctor if they cut or fracture themselves – they just drink more’.

Oustees’ alcohol consumption was particularly frowned upon amongst the high-caste host villagers. Gujarat is a ‘dry’ state and the production of alcohol is prohibited yet most oustees continue to drink, as it is an integral part of their social and cultural life. For one high-caste villager, ‘the Bhils have spoilt our [low caste] villagers. We spent so many years teaching the villagers it is not good to drink and they weren’t drinking much. Now they’ve joined in with the Bhils and all that effort has gone to waste’. Rahulbhai of Phata host village once said, ‘Patels and people like us always want to better themselves. We give priority to becoming “higher and higher”, forwarding ourselves’. The priorities of the Bhil adivasi by contrast were ‘drinking – that’s what they give importance to. Some adivasi are lazy. Those that drink don’t do well in agriculture’.
In short, hosts hold the general belief that oustees are, as one villager put it, ‘carefree and fearless’. How and why then have the host villagers and oustees forged good relations with one another?

**Proximity:** Locating the *vasahats* and host villages in such close proximity has maximised interaction between their populations. Kandewal *vasahat* is located on the doorstep of the host village. Oustees need to walk through the host village to get to the road that connects Kandewal village to the main highway. The main shops are also in the host village. Whilst oustees in Vadaj-1 do not need to walk through the heart of the host village to get to the bus stop many functions need to be carried out there. For instance, the centre for either buying or selling milk is located in the host village. Vadaj-1 is located approximately 5 minutes away from the host village, whilst Vadaj-2 is a 20 minute walk away. Not surprisingly those from Vadaj-1 come into more frequent contact with the host villagers than their counterparts in Vadaj-2.

**Mutual benefit:** Maximising interaction increases possibilities. Both populations come to realise they can benefit from one another through mutual co-operation. Although high-caste host villagers think tribal characteristics need changing they do acknowledge some of the ‘Bhil traits’ also provide advantages. Their apparent quality of fearlessness has helped the higher castes in their battle against gangs of thieves who periodically raided Kandewal and nearby villages, stealing goats and fowl. When the oustees arrived they began night patrols of the fields and housing areas with host villagers. Host villagers believe that the fact oustees brandished their bows and arrows and did not fear encountering the thieves was enough of a deterrent to would-be thieves. Prior to the arrival of oustees the villages were vulnerable, as the younger members of high-caste families had deserted the area in favour of city life, leaving only elderly people to look after the family property. This initial period of joint cooperation and working together towards a common goal seems to have helped the oustees and hosts to bond.

There are other examples of bonds formed through working together for mutual benefit. For example, knowing that the hosts cannot scale trees, Mahantbhai suggested to one
man who had a _tad_ tree in his backyard that he collects the juice and they split whatever he manages to collect.

Oustees also turn to high-caste villagers for help, especially when it comes to doing anything that involves reading and writing. So form filling, making applications to the Grievance Redressal Authority, responding to letters and all other official business (usually something to do with SSPA) is done with the help of the literate high-caste group. Even though the oustees have initiated adult education classes through the help of Anand Niketan Ashram, at the moment they are still highly dependent on the hosts and it is in oustees' best interests to maintain good relations with them. Krishna Mama, the elected _Surpanch_ of the Kandewal-Phata _panchayat_, is the person oustees usually turn to for administrative help (and no doubt in return he gets the oustee vote). The oustees also seek help with written work from the _vasahat_ school teacher. The downside to such high levels of dependency is that oustees are not in a position to upset their helpers. So for instance, the fact that the school teacher does not turn up to lessons, preferring to make social visits to the _vasahat_ instead, cannot be challenged by oustee parents for when he does turn up oustees ask for his help. Similarly I also learnt that Shoorbhai had bought some land off the _Surpanch_, but despite repeated requests Krishna Mama is unwilling to hand over the titles to the land or provide a receipt for the purchase. He says the title deeds are best kept in his house where they are safe rather than Shoorbhai’s house where they might be eaten by rats. Shoorbhai is not in a position to challenge Krishna Mama or demand his papers as to do so would suggest he is questioning Krishna Mama’s integrity.

One of the questions I asked oustees was whether they had ever received help from the hosts: including advice, practical and/or financial help. Forty two per cent (N= 132) said they had received help from hosts of one sort or another, although the results vary amongst the oustee population.

Fifty seven per cent of men claimed to have received help from hosts compared with only 23 per cent of women. This result is to be expected in that if there is, say, paper
work to be done it is almost always a male member of the household who would deal with such work and therefore be the person to approach the hosts for help.

Although much of the contact with the host villagers has a purpose such as buying food from the shop, working on their fields, seeking their help to fill out a form, or hiring farm equipment, I also observed much integration of a purely social nature – just sitting around chatting. Oustees were asked about the most common nature of their contact with hosts (Table 7.12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of contact</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No relation - never speaks to any hosts</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relationship eg. when they meet by chance</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship – visit to chat or socialise</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When in need of something e.g. to hire a tractor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N = 128</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Individual survey

It should be noted that interaction with host villagers will be structured by the caste system that still operates in rural areas. So whilst the relationship between high-caste hosts and oustees is a good one, it is couched very much within a caste hierarchy that places oustees in an inferior position. So what Indian villagers might describe as friendship is likely to be very different from what a westerner might think. For instance, high-caste host villagers invite oustees to family weddings, but would never eat at functions held by oustees because of their lower-caste status. Similarly oustees do not eat at the houses of hosts who have lower caste status than they do.16

Acceptance of social orders: One of the reasons oustees feel a sense of home in their new environment, I would argue, is that unlike many cases of migration the oustees are not at the bottom in terms of status. The arrow in Table 7.13 indicates where the Bhil oustees are ranked in relation to the other groups.
Table 7.13 Caste structure of Kandewal host village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castes of host village (ranked in descending order)</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patels/ Bhagats (Patel equivalent)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barias</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tadvis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harijans and Bangi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naiyaks</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohits</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>84 households, 540 people</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Figures supplied by a Rohit host villager, not census data.
Notes: It is worth noting that there is no definitive, universally acknowledged caste hierarchy, in fact 'there are probably just as many hierarchies as there are castes in India' (Gupta 2000: 1). Theoretically tribal people are not included in any hierarchy as the caste system only applies to Hindus. That oustees observe caste practices based on notions of purity and pollution, such as only consuming food that has been prepared by castes of equal or 'higher' rank, demonstrates the process of sanskritisation which has taken place in tribal communities. The hierarchy in this table is based on rules of consumption applied locally.

Table 7.13 shows the largest proportion of host villagers are by far those from the lower castes, particularly the Naiyaks yet my discussion regarding the relationship of oustees with hosts has focused on the top end of the caste groupings. This is because the Patels, (known as Bhagats in Kandewal), exert the most influence in terms of setting social and cultural standards. It is however important to consider the relationship of oustees with lower caste groups, especially because they make up such large numbers.

Oustees’ relations with the lower castes were generally good, although oustees seem to hold the same sorts of prejudices against these castes as the higher-caste villagers hold against them:

You know the Patels? - They don’t eat the food in our house. We are not eating at the Naiyak’s home. We don’t eat [the food of Naiyaks] because the surname is different. You know the untouchable people we don’t eat their food either. For a long time [generations] we haven’t eaten their food so why should we eat it now? Nothing happens but we haven't eaten it for a long time then why do we have to eat it now? Naiyak people are thieves. They steal goats during the night. They also cut [sacrifice] goats after they’ve built their house.

You said that the Patel people don’t eat your food then how do you feel about that?

We drink alcohol but they don’t. Patel people can’t eat goat meat but they can eat poultry.
But they don't eat in your house so don't you feel upset?

No I don't – why should I? If they invite us to dinner we just eat and come back. They come to our house, sit and talk and sometimes they drink water but they can’t eat food. If there’s some rotlas left over we roast it and eat it in the morning. Patel people throw it away if there’s any food left from the evening, or they give it to the dogs or cattle (Tanvirbhai, Kandewal).

There are two interesting points about the extract. Tanvirbhai levels the same charge against the Naiyaks that was used against them by higher castes when they first came to Kandewal – that they are inferior because they sacrifice goats for the house construction ceremony. Second they are accepting of their own position in the caste structure and therefore do not see a problem with the high-caste hosts not eating at their own houses, which in turn provides justification for abstaining from eating at the houses of lower castes to themselves.

One potentially serious problem is that people from the lower castes are landless and rely on agricultural labour for their survival. One group of Naiyaks told me that less work is available since the oustees arrived. Previously agricultural land in the area was concentrated in the hands of a few Bhagats and Barias. They needed to employ a sizable work force for tasks such as cotton picking, weeding etc. Now that the government has purchased land and allocated it to oustees labourers have less work because the oustees mainly carry out the agricultural tasks themselves. Although the Patels still hire labourers on their fields and the oustees sometimes hire extra help, the labourers claim they are struggling more than before. This raises questions about the carrying capacity of the area and the consequences for social relations.

It is not enough to put different populations within close proximity and hope that they integrate with one another. The government has to ensure the carrying capacity of an area to prevent tensions over resources which can undermine the ability to forge good relations with hosts. For example, the communal land in both Kandewal and Vadaj is overgrazed, rendering it useless. The hosts could begin to resent the oustees for placing an extra burden on their limited resources. There are already tensions about oustee cattle not being supervised properly and grazing on other people’s land. As a Patel from Phata
host village said, ‘before all the original village [host villages] had boundaries, but now
the vasahat people have broken the boundaries’. The host villagers from Kandewal
have employed a guard to patrol the fields on horse-back to stop crop thefts and capture
straying cattle, enforcing a fine before the cattle are released back to the owner. Oustees
find it very difficult to adapt to this kind of regulation, having lived in the hills where
most of the year cattle were free to roam around. Irvan Kaka, for example felt
particularly aggrieved about the fines he paid. Similarly Swatiben and Haroonbhai from
the Vadaj vasahats have found it difficult to adjust to the strict control of resources.
Particularly noticeable is the fact that Swatiben describes her new environment as a
place that belongs to and is the country of the Patels.

Here there’s no jungle, no teak, nothing. These [pointing to logs of wood in her
house] we had brought from country. Here you can only get bawar. If it is our
country they would allow us to cut bawar. It’s the Patel’s and so they don’t
allow you to cut bowar, so what to do? That is it, these were the ones we brought
from our country and used here (Swatiben, Vadaj).

[...] but here they won’t allow you to cut even this much wood [indicating the
length of his finger] ... they catch you and take you into the office and fine you –
just take more money (Haroonbhai, Vadaj).

The government also needs to ensure synergy in provision. Hosts have raised the issue
of differential levels of service between the oustees and themselves, leading to
expressions of concern that it is creating a culture of over-dependency: ‘the government
takes care of them like they’re babies’. Another host villager described oustees as the
government’s son-in-law – a reference to their special treatment. Thus, the government
needs to ensure the hosts do not begin to resent oustees’ favoured treatment.

7.4 Conclusion

Social impoverishment is now recognised as ‘the most conceptually intractable’ of the
gamut of resettlement problems and according to Downing (1999b: 1) ‘mitigating social
impoverishment begins by reconstructing, in a culturally appropriate manner, the social
geometry of the displaced’. Social geometry, I believe (put simply), can be read as
home, serving exactly the same purpose. Home, for oustees, is clearly about social
relations and the opportunity to reconstruct these at the vasahats had gone a long way
towards creating the social milieu to which Bhil adivasi are accustomed. The fact that

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most oustees felt at home in the new environment for this reason was somewhat unexpected given that the Narmada literature suggests immense social impoverishment.

With the destruction of community and social bonds, the displaced are mired in anomie and a profound sense of loneliness and helplessness. The inflow of money creates greater pressure on family bonds. The outcomes are psychological pathologies and alcoholism, common among displaced populations. As one despairing oustee remarked to the Independent Review led by Morse: ‘Our society is not here. We are like dead people. What is the purpose of living like dead people?’ (Hemadri et al. 2000: xix)

In Chapter 5 I described how some elderly people feel helpless and redundant at the vasahats because they no longer have the opportunity to engage in activities using forest resources (collecting fruits, basket weaving etc). However, oustees in Kandewal and Vadaj did not convey an impression of feeling a ‘profound sense of loneliness and helplessness’ caused by the destruction of community and social bonds and this is supported by the quantitative data (often absent from research on this issue). Although my case-study sites are larger than the average vasahat, my fieldwork shows that one can not assume that resettlement of families from 19 villages across 150 resettlement sites will automatically lead to an unravelling of social support systems. This is because important networks remained intact despite the fragmentation of the village, enabling oustees in the case-study vasahats to recreate many of the socio-cultural orders that are crucial to feeling ‘at home’ (see Dovey 1985 and Chapter 3). Thus my findings emphasise the significance of social networks, but also show that communities are not necessarily based on spatial contiguity. The example of Devdi oustees requesting separation from members of their hamlet challenges the overly static and romanticised version of home found in the anti-dam literature. My work, approached from the angle of understanding ‘home’, identifies those networks that should be re-created in the new environment.

This chapter has also shown that despite inherent prejudices in rural Gujarat towards those belonging to lower castes, oustees (particularly in Kandewal) have a good rapport with host villagers, which facilities oustees’ ability to feel at home in the new environment. However, this fortunate outcome appears to have happened by chance rather than being the result of any positive action by the government. Hemadri et al.
describe how little has been done to look at the socio-economic impact of resettlement on host populations. They cite an investigation by the NBA which revealed 'that some 100 tribal families of village Malu in district Baroda were left without land and jobs after 750 acres of land was purchased by SSNNL from their landlords to resettle oustees from Vadgam and Gadher, two of the Gujarat villages under submergence'. Any problems that could undermine host-oustees relations need to be identified and addressed.

Sensitive resettlement with regard to the 'home' can go a long way towards recreating the social geometry of displaced families. However resettlement of the scale and type found in the Sardar Sarovar Project poses some intractable problems, such as the separation of women from their parental home, which ultimately brings us back to questions about the nature of development.
Notes for Chapter 7

1 In her study of the home place and community among the Lumbee (Native Indian) people in Carolina, Blu (1996) found that their sense of community was less dependent on the built environment or physical features of the land, rather it was the quality of human relations that defined space. Their focus was on places where ‘our people are living’.

2 For example, see work done by Behura and Nayak (cited in McCully 1996) on social impoverishment following displacement by the Rengali dam.

3 This result was established using the present head of household as the reference point. What was actually measured was the number of households in which the present household head was no longer living with people s/he lived with prior to resettlement (referred to as a split) or is now living with people s/he did not live with before resettlement (referred to as an amalgamation).

4 Not only are the numbers small but the reasons for those amalgamations further prove their insignificance. In three cases the household head had taken in family members (mother and younger siblings) on the death of his father. There was only one case of household amalgamation resulting from resettlement per se – Chandaniben of Kandewal welcomed her son and his family into her household as he was still awaiting his agricultural plot i.e. it was a temporary situation.

5 In some cases the person who returned to the original village may not be the person denied land. For example, a father receives land yet returns to the original village in order to give his land to one of his sons.

6 I recorded the instances of household heads being separated from their parents, brothers and sons. Whilst three generations of a family are common, grandsons were not old enough to be household heads.

7 A household conducts a babri ceremony (where offerings are made to God) in return for a request to the Divine. For example, if a child falls ill, the parents promise to hold a babri if their child is cured.

8 With the exception of Panderia oustees who do not have any family resettled in Gujarat.

9 In fact the willingness to give their daughter away to a family living so far from themselves suggests that disadvantage of separation is outweighed by perceived advantages of living in the plains.

10 This was easier to achieve as Raahibhai’s brother Syonbhai lived in his own household. Although dependent on family members with registered oustees status, some landless males live in their own households. Within Kandewal and Vadaj vasahats there are 10 such households.

11 One would expect landless oustees to be the ones accused of being witches but curiously there is no such correlation.

12 Interview with Rajesh Mishra, ARCH-Vahini.

13 Out of a ranking that used very friendly, friendly, hostile and threatening as the options.

14 They might have done so when they first arrived in the plains but we observed that women generally wear blouses now in the vasahats and those that don’t make attempts to cover themselves with their shawls when outsiders arrive.

15 Surpanch (leader) and Panchayat (first tier of local government).

16 It is customary in rural India for higher castes to invite the whole village to family weddings and feed them all there.
8.1 Introduction

In previous chapters the degree of change in oustees’ livelihood, housing and social relations as a result of resettlement from the hills to the plains has been explored. It amounts to no less than a transformed lifestyle for displaced Bhil adivasis, whereby inter alia activities associated with subsistence agriculture are replaced by those associated with input-orientated agriculture, regard is given to the home in a way that was unnecessary when they lived in isolation and occasional contact with non-adivasis is replaced by living with them side by side. The significance of the overall change is captured in the words of oustees who describe themselves as now living ‘in the city’ (saher-ma), when in fact they have been relocated to a rural area. Oustees use the word ‘city’ in all kinds of contexts, for example, describing how in the city they want to outdo each other when staging a wedding, lamenting that they can no longer get wood in the city, justifying why they must now build a pucca house when living in the city, delighting in being able to go the market frequently now that they are in the city, fearing being in the city with strangers, laughing that a journey on foot goes on and on in the boringly flat landscape of the city. Hakim (1996) found that the adivasi people she lived with prior to displacement commonly used the terms dungri (hill) and deshi (plains), and so it is interesting to find oustees in this study using the word ‘city’ rather than ‘plains’. This penultimate chapter, therefore, explores what it means to live ‘in the city’, how well oustees have adapted to/copied with ‘city’-life and their pre-occupations now that they are ‘city’ dwellers. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the Bhil adivasi in this study show an immense capacity to make the best of things; to create opportunities for themselves, wherever possible removing barriers to opportunity; and as far as possible manage change rather than be victim to it. It also explores what they regard as the disadvantages or pitfalls of ‘city’ life. Thus the chapter returns to the debate presented in Chapter 3 as to whether or not resettlement represents opportunity or constraint. For oustees the
‘city’ may be the equivalent of the cosmos described by Tuan (1996) as something to be explored and space to encounter new experiences and opportunities. Tuan also argued that the hearth (the home) is an equally important space, providing nurture and renewal, to return to as and when needed. He suggests development should focus on enabling people to pursue new possibilities, whilst retaining their hearth. It would seem the anti-dam lobby take the view that resettlement provides very limited scope for oustees to enjoy the ‘cosmos’ given their poor socio-economic status and only serves to destroy the hearth. Instead they would prefer to see the provision of schools, electricity and transport in the hills. However, others, including the government argue that the hilly terrain of the Narmada valley prevents ‘development’ of the region, as it would be impossible to lay down infrastructure such as transport links. Resettlement therefore gives oustees an opportunity to enjoy a modernity which would otherwise be denied to them.

The views of different groups involved in the development debate are well known. Less well known are oustees’ views on these matters, their interpretation of life in the plains – ‘city’ living as they put it. This chapter argues that oustees do feel that life in the plains has its rewards, or perhaps more accurately, that it has the potential to be rewarding. Six relevant themes emerged from my fieldwork, indicating some of oustees’ pre-occupations: a) becoming sudhrel (civilised) b) becoming educated/smart c) developing communication skills d) becoming mobile e) becoming prosperous and f) accepting new orders. Sometimes these things are regarded as indicators of achieving ‘city person’ status (an end in themselves), at other times the six factors are seen as the conditions that need to be met in order to access or enjoy the benefits of city life (the means to an end). Whilst the six categories will be dealt with separately in this chapter, they are not mutually exclusive, for what emerges is a clear discourse that equates city living with civilisation, progress, wisdom, articulateness, mobility and order. Mahantbhai, one of my main informants in Kandewal, could not have illustrated this better when he recounted the words of Harivallah Parikh (founder of Anand Niketan Ashram) which oustees seem to have taken to heart:
Bhai [Harivallah] said to us ‘Leave the wine and toddy. You have come within the city, you are moving in the city. With your wine and toddy habit you people were dying in your hilly area ... Some have small families and some have big families and you were intimidating the smaller families. Don’t intimidate other people. You don’t have to talk rubbish. Be good people. Plough the land that you got from the government and live in the pucca house’, that’s what Harivallah said. ‘If you need help come to me, don’t fight. Look to good food and drink. If you leave wine and toddy you will be happy. Don’t live like you did in the hills like monkeys on trees’.

The most pertinent of the six themes, indeed one could argue the concept that to some extent subsumes all the others, is that of becoming sudhrel. I therefore explore this first.

8.2 Becoming sudhrel

Chapter 6 described how housing contractors and the host population discouraged oustees from making sacrificial offerings on completion of the house, deeming the practice to be polluting. To avoid the charge of uncleanness and fit in with the norms of the plains, oustees abandoned the practice of ‘cutting’ (offering) a goat. This readiness to comply is rooted in the desire to become ‘sudhrel’ or more sudhrel. Later in this chapter we learn that the pressure to become more sudhrel comes not only from external sources, but also from within the oustee community. Clothing, housing, language, mannerisms and practices are all used as a means of asserting status, superiority and ‘sudhrel-ness’. Clothing provides a good starting point given that it is the yardstick commonly used by oustees to measure the extent to which one is sudhrel.

8.2.1 Clothing

When asked whether they or their community had changed in any way after resettlement, most oustees cited changes in clothing, possibly because it is a visible, thus tangible, change.

In their original villages older men wore longutis (codpiece secured to the waist with string), which younger generations replaced with lungis (material wrapped round
their waist like a sarong). Since trips beyond the hills were fairly infrequent, there was little need for more formal attire like ‘trouser and shirt’ (pant bu shirt), clothing synonymous with the plains. After resettlement only a couple of very elderly men too old to venture beyond their homes continue to wear lungitis; everyone else wears either a lungi or shirt and trousers, with the later particularly popular amongst young men. Those who wear lungis in the vasahat change into trousers whenever they go out. So the main change for men upon resettlement is the frequency with which they wear shirt and trousers and this is largely a result of the shifting boundary of home. Previously the whole hilly area was ‘home’ and they could walk from village to village wearing their sarongs. Now the boundary of home is the outer limits of the village, hence oustees say in a figurative manner that they change their clothes just to step outside the house. The concept of ‘home clothes’ is therefore a useful indicator of home.

Whilst clothing has continuously evolved before and after resettlement, the importance of keeping up appearances is certainly more pronounced now. These changes are seen as progressive which is why Sumantbhai described himself as being more ‘forward’ than his father on the grounds that he would not walk around in a torn shirt, something that would have been acceptable in the hills. In using the term ‘forward’, Sumant takes on board the idea that clothing represents one’s degree of development. This was the attitude of government officers who used markers such as clothing and eating habits to claim that hill adivasis led such underdeveloped lives that they could be fobbed off without a full resettlement package:

‘We feel ashamed to see you in this dress’ [official saying to Bhil tribal people] … but our people lived in this way in the hills. At the beginning, at that time, they said, ‘What are these people eating? They are living in the jungle. They are eating the leaves of trees and grass. They eat kandiya, vajiya by digging it up from the jungle. They have got no land, so just give them some money as compensation. They don’t need the land’ (Mahantbhai, Kandewal).

Hakim (1995) found that people in the plains construct their own identity along lines of consumption (in terms of dress, food and religion) and apply these criteria to hill adivasi people, in doing so finding them inferior. This research finds that oustees are
increasingly using criteria like clothing to measure to what extent they are *sudhrel*. The drive to modify one's clothing is not, however, simply 'imposed' by the host villagers. Although a few oustees were initially teased about their clothing by host village children, ninety-three per cent of oustees (N=120) reported that they had never been taunted by the hosts. Teasing actually comes from the oustee community itself, perhaps as a result of internalising the belief that the clothing of the plains is more *sudhrel*. Oustees confess that it is their own people who will laugh if they are not dressed properly and on festival days it is especially important that one should look *'sudhrel'*. In Kandewal one oustee explained that men not wearing modern clothes are ribbed by people shouting 'look! They are dancing naked'.

The most significant change in women's dress is that they now cover up. In the hills it was customary to go bare breasted. Some women still go bare breasted in the vicinity of their home but never when stepping out of the boundaries of the *vasahat*. Those who do not wear blouses in the home usually made some kind of attempt to cover themselves up in our presence, even if it was just to wrap their shawl (used to cover their head) round themselves. Oustees from Dhumna and Charbara were more likely to be bare breasted at home compared to other Kandewal oustees and I do not recall seeing anybody bare breasted in Vadaj.

All married women keep their head covered but variations in clothing do exist amongst the oustee population; this is mostly due to differences originating from their original villages. For example, oustees from Panderia wear their saris in a style particular to people of Maharastra State. Vadaj and Kandewal differed in their willingness to wear saris in the 'modern' way. Vadaj women are much more willing to adopt the new style but there is a strong reluctance in Kandewal, even though most women have bought a modern style sari. In Kandewal women are afraid of being teased, particularly by other women, if they attempt to change. Women wearing 'modern' full-length saris can either expect to face criticism for showing off – 'ooh, look at her now. She thinks she's a modern women now just because she's wearing a sari' – or face ridicule for trying to wear sari in the host style but somehow getting it
wrong, thus not carrying it off properly. Most Kandewal women think it is better not to try than to get it wrong and be laughed at.

There is sufficient evidence from my fieldwork to suggest that women from Devdi are especially keen to avoid drawing attention to themselves for fear of attracting the evil eye. Implicit in the ‘ooh, look at her now’ form of taunting is an undercurrent of jealousy towards those perceived to be doing well and ‘making progress’. Devdi oustees are almost paralysed by fear of falling under the gaze of the evil eye, which invariably belongs to women. Women from Devdi feel the best way to avert victimisation is to avoid rousing jealous feelings in other women.

This self-regulation by women is overwhelming and prevents married women, in particular from adopting different kinds of dress, despite ridicule from their men for not doing so. During a group discussion, Panderia men joked that whilst they have become *sudhrel* their women are still walking round as before ‘like monkeys’.

Outside intervention should not, however, be completely overlooked for there have been concerted attempts to modify oustees practices and behaviour. One such intervention came from the NGO Gujarat Rajya Samaj Kalyal Board (Gujarat State Society Welfare Board). The Board have established an office in Sankhedha (the nearest town to Kandewal) to operate in various Gujarat resettlement sites. Whilst their original remit was to provide child care for toddlers and young children to release older children from child-care duties so they can go to school, the Kandewal-based employee spoke to me about how she expanded her remit to include a series of weekly ‘ladies’ meetings’. At the first meeting the employee decided she really did have to start at the ‘very basics’, teaching the women how to dress and sit properly! She felt that the Bhil style of dress and the way they sat exposed their thighs indecently, something the employee tried in vain to rectify. Many Kandewal women attended these ladies meetings but the classes seem to have had minimal impact.
8.2.2 Housing

The analogy of clothing as housing was referred to in Chapter 3, so it is no surprise to find that like clothing, one's house is also used as a measure of being 'sudhrel'.

The cleanliness and orderliness of the house has assumed great importance. The ability to act like a city-dweller, indicated by the term 'talk well', need to be substantiated by a clean and well-kept dwelling to match if one is truly sudhrel:

If you go to a house you may find it's not orderly, the kitchen is not fit for purpose. Whereas other people not only talk well but their house is also good [implying 'like mine']. It's no good just listening to how people speak. Some people talk well but when you go to their house it does not match their talk. Certain items in the house are missing, making it lacking. If the house is built well, if it clean and tidy, then people go to sit there (Mahantbhai, Kandewal).

So, not only is it necessary to live in a pucca house (as shown in Chapter 6) but it is also important to maintain that house well. The Board employee was not only keen to see that female oustees dressed well, but also anxious that they learnt proper housekeeping skills to improve hygiene standards. Oustees were taught to cover their food once cooked to prevent contamination from flies, to wash their hands before preparing food, etc. In addition to these classes oustees claim that government workers had also been round instructing them to throw out stored water and refill their pots daily for fresh drinking water. Households were also told to keep lids on water storage pots to avoid contamination. Even when government staff are at the vasahat on other business they will remind the oustees to keep their water covered if they notice that it has been left open. Haroonbhai was particularly conscious of keeping his home in order in case officials turned up unexpectedly:

They came to see how all the homes are, how it is inside – they see everything. They came from far – from Calcutta, Delhi. They are high ranking officials who only stay for 2 minutes. As many as fifteen, sixteen cars came. Ladies came too in addition to officials ... 'Why are you keeping it this way or that way?' What if they come suddenly and enter the house? They tell us we have to keep everything clean. No officers go there to the hilly area. Then there's no problem. It wasn't a problem if we cleaned the house once a day only. Some homes are not kept clean, some are. If they enter a house that's not clean they'd say so and tell the house owner to keep it clean. We have to keep clean (Haroonbhai, Vadaj).
Similarly Gaurangbhai talks about keeping up appearances at the house site:

We keep the area with the kitchenware tidy. All the things that are outside we put them back into the house. Then when people come they would say ‘Look how clean their house is’. If either a guest comes or the village people [host villagers] come it looks nice. If we put things here or there then people would say look how dirty this house is ... At the start we were living in the same house as we were living in there – we were living with a messy house. When we started seeing people’s houses, we thought to keep our house tidy too, so it would look nice. If we can’t clean the house then it would look untidy.

Do you think that the houses aren’t clean when you go to your old village?

I do feel. If they are family members or friends then I tell them too – that ‘this does not look nice you have to keep the house clean. Your house is dirty so we feel shy because your house is dirty’... I have to say that as well. In our caste some people sweep the house after a couple of days. They keep their food for five days and the house stays in the same condition up to five days. We have to clean the house five times a day. Outside of the house we have to clean twice but in the house we have to clean it many times. I have to tell my house people and other people. The same as when we don’t like food and we can tell to cook this way, saying like this I have to tell other people to clean their house.

Do you feel under pressure that so many people are coming and you have to ensure your house is clean all the time?

Yes! I do. I am worried about my house – that it should stay clean. People have built houses already. People ask when will I decorate and clean my house. ‘everybody else has so why haven’t you?’. If I say I haven’t got money, then they would say, ‘how can the others have money and you don’t?’... I do like kutchha houses, but people say why ‘haven’t you built your house when the others have?’ They would think that I’m poor. So we have to live like the city people. In the hillside, there is nobody to dig the foundation and nobody knows how to make bricks so we cut wood and made a neat house and that is enough. But here how do we design the house? If it is made of wood then people would say it is a kutchha house ... Here or in the hillside, if the houses are open the wind comes in and we can enjoy all the time. But here we have to build a pucca house because in other people’s point of view a kutchha house is not good. If it’s a pucca house then it looks good. If our adivasi people come here [to stay] then they understand and say it [the kutchha house] is a good house (Guarangbhai, Kandewal).

Tribal people have seemingly internalised the discourse that they are less clean and civilised than plains dwellers. Generally oustees welcome advice regarding hygiene
and none of them expressed any form of annoyance that they felt they were being ‘told’ what to do. They welcome the advice because again the changes mentioned are regarded as the kinds of changes one would undertake to become more ‘sudhrel’, with the underlying connotations of development and progress.

8.3 Education/smartness

It is noticeable that oustees do not aspire to be like adivasi plains dwellers in Kandewal host village, but set their standards in comparison with the wealthy, landed Patels of the host village or those working in the city with ‘good jobs’. Both classes of people are thought to be well educated or at least literate. Just as cleanliness is seen to be an attribute of sudhrel people, education too is associated with more ‘civilized classes’. It is therefore interesting to note the association of cleanliness with education made by Kovidhbhai when he says ‘educated people don’t like getting their hands dirty. They like their clothes to be spotless’. His observation is a reference to the way people, once educated, seek off-farm employment in offices and the like, no longer wanting to get their ‘hands dirty’. Non-agricultural employment is viewed as more attainable if you are literate.

Oustees place great value on the fact that their children can receive an education, an opportunity that they were denied in the hills. For Vadaj oustees the benefits of resettlement focus on the school and schooling. When asked where their children’s future was better the majority in Vadaj and a significant number in Kandewal said ‘here because the children can be educated’. In Kandewal too education is valued but poor schooling due to teacher absenteeism means there is not the same enthusiasm for education there would be if parents could see their children ‘making progress’. In fact the concept of progress features heavily in the minds of oustees when they think of the benefits of living in the city and education is seen as intrinsic to the notion of development:

After coming here there’s a difference in language. The children are getting educated – that is good here. If we can't get the land but children get a good education they can get a job; they can live. If the children aren't educated,
with two children you can live by farming but your life doesn’t improve. You stay as you are. Life doesn’t progress. When people have goats and cows they send their children to go cow-herding whilst another family member goes to the farm. Then the son stays the same. If he studies a little then he progresses in life. If anyone is uneducated, give them a [bit of] advice, ‘get education’, like that (Mahantbhai, Kandewal).

The image of the boy staying ‘as he is’ because he is uneducated resembles western concepts of progress – the notion that development occurs along a linear path and the further one is along that path the better. The most forthcoming oustees perceived education to be a passport to development: without it people are limited in their ability to access the benefits of the city, including prosperity. This became apparent when we asked oustees whether they had any hopes or wishes for the future or things they wanted to achieve. Take the case of Mahantbhai who says:

I have wishes but what is the use of wishing? … If people are educated then they can progress. Uneducated people can’t progress in life.

**We had a wish, which was that we wanted to go to see the old village and then we went there. So we had a wish then we did it. So like that do you have any wish?**

Wish! Well … I do have that wish, but we are not educated so what is the use of wishing? … Educated people’s wishes are useful. They know ‘if I do this work then I will get this amount of money’ … I have many wishes but can't manage them so what’s the point having wishes? If we have only one job then we can manage with our wish. With all this work I can't manage with my wish any longer. One-by-one I have to finish the jobs. Have to plough and if there is another business then can’t do the farming. If I do everything at the same time then I can’t get anywhere.

**What are you aiming for in your future life?**

We are farmers so we are aiming for farming – what else? What we get from farming is good for us. That’s the only wish. Trying to make another wish I get nothing.

Chimanbhai responded in a similar vein having fulfilled his desire to purchase a tractor, he struggled to think of anything else, remarking ‘what else? because I’m not educated’. This mode of thinking cautions against excessive expectations. It is apparently better to ‘know one’s limits and remain within them’. Yet it is not that
people do not have wishes, just that they do not find it useful to dwell on them. This resignation, first mentioned in Section 4.3.5, is highlighted by an oustee who said:


This tone of resignation is not, however, confined to descriptions of present day circumstances. Oustees were similarly unforthcoming with examples of the wishes and desires they had when reflecting on their years in their original villages:

In the old village did you have any wishes that when you are older you would do this or that?

No, papa brought us up so what wishes would we have had?

But did you have any wishes? All right, your father and mother brought you up, but ... like when I’m older I’ll become surpanch [traditional village head]?

No, but they would ask us to do some work – because we stayed home they would include us in farm work

No, but did you have any wishes that when you are older you will become surpanch or I’ll become police patel or a leader [examples of jobs that were held by tribal people who were themselves illiterate] – any such wishes?

I’ve not studied so who would ask us? If one has education one can do something – what would an uneducated person do? (Haroonbhai, Vadaj).

Haroonbhai’s repeated reference to his lack of education is significant. He perceived it as a barrier to imagining himself in certain roles, even though these jobs were taken up by illiterate tribal people. It is possible that Haroonbhai’s memories of his time in the hills have been coloured by his post-resettlement experience (entailing greater exposure to ‘city’ life) and that actually he did not feel constrained by his lack of education in the same way that he does now.
Whether or not oustees were already conscious of the need for education, they are acutely aware of the opportunities the ‘city’ presents including the barriers to accessing these benefits. The resigned tone and the sentiment that ‘it is too late for the adults’ appears not to always match oustees’ actions. For instance, people in Kandewal had initiated adult education classes to gain basic literacy skills. They recognize the benefits of being literate, including an ability to deal with the paperwork that comes with resettlement, writing applications to the government, being able to read about the products they are purchasing, reading bus signs etc. Whereas literacy skills were not necessary for day-to-day living in the hills, surrounded by their own people and living a self-sufficient existence, in the plains the independence and empowerment it brings is more obvious. For this reason a handful of oustees have gone to unusual lengths to ensure their children receive a good education. For example, Gunin Kaka has sent his son away to boarding school despite the costs involved:

The only good thing is that children will get education here, but it’s also true [to wonder] what they will do after getting educated [i.e. whether or not they will get a job]. Everyone else’s children leave school when they are grown. Lots of children have done that from our hamlet – you know Bholiyu and Vangadiya’s son … and Bharatiyo – they just wander around the village all day. None of them go to school … we have to buy [our kids] something all the time like a pen, a pencil, slate, shirt, umbrella – this and that. ‘We want this much money’ – that’s what they write to us about in their letters (Gunin Kaka, Kandewal).

There is a pervading sentiment that there is potential (note Gunin’s pondering) for children in the plains, more so than for the generation who were already adults at the time of resettlement. So when we asked Chimanbhai whether he had changed in any way after coming to the plains he responded with a firm ‘no’, but continued ‘after coming here more children are getting educated’. Gaurangbhai predicts that future generations of their children will surpass native city people through their education:

In the city people would say ‘why are you cutting the goat and the cock?’ So we feel embarrassed … so we have to forget these things [practices] now. They say ‘You are nice people and [yet] you are doing these things - it is not good … we feel embarrassed [on your behalf]’. Hearing this talk I feel shy too so we are leaving these things. Then our children will leave some things.
We have to cope with other people. We are adivasi people. We didn’t study but our children study up to seven years and their children will study more and those kinds of things [we’ll] leave behind. My children would think ‘my father has given me this much education so I have to give more education to my children’. They might study so they can go in the politics. Our minds are brilliant but we can’t read, so we are behind. We are intelligent but we can’t read and write so the Government think that we are foolish and uncultured otherwise we’d keep educated people behind – only we don’t know how to write (Gurangbhai, Kandewal).

Thus forefront in Gaurangbhai’s mind is the need to gain a competitive edge over others. Education is one way to achieve this. Gaurangbhai distinguishes between education and intelligence. Others, such as Raahibhai, express it as having become more ‘intelligent’ after coming to the city:

You said after coming here people have come to know about law and you have to live according to how others are living – you cannot live how you want. Do you feel comfortable with this?

Yes, [I] feel comfortable [mid question]

... or do you find it difficult having to live according to others?

No. After coming here we’ve become more intelligent.

Dineshbhai thought himself intelligent anyway. He even constructed a temporary dwelling to test the safety of the house plot before proceeding to build his pucca house. But most, like Raahibhai, think that they gained budhee ‘intelligence’ (or perhaps ‘acumen’) by operating in the ‘city’ environment. Some oustees spoke of their earlier ignorance when dealing with people. They lamented, for example, that when they used to visit the market they would accept whatever cash they got for their excess produce as they ‘didn’t know any better’ i.e. did not know what prices different weights fetched. One could argue oustees perceive themselves as ‘nobody’s fool’, or even ‘streetwise’, because they have arrived ‘in the city’.

Being streetwise also translates as becoming accustomed to learning to play the systems that govern life in the plains. That oustees have become adept at dealing with the system was revealed in the comment made by the extension officer for
Kandewal resettlement site. Referring to the oustees from Panderia and Devdi he voiced his opinion that ‘they had become over-smart’. The officer implies that oustees have become manipulative, taking advantage of the fact that the Sardar Sarovar Project is such a high profile issue. Other government officers and host villagers also commented that the politically sensitive nature of the project was causing the state government to bend over backwards for the oustees, keeping them satisfied whilst all eyes are on the government. That said, the oustees have not been given and are not likely to get what they most want, that is land for their landless men. Moreover, whilst some oustees have become canny enough to play the system, a great many lack that self-assurance.

8.4 Developing communication skills

A lack of confidence was evident when we tried without success to persuade Shauravbhai to go to hospital when he was injured by an ox. He said, ‘you need to be an educated person to go into a hospital’. Oustees are given priority treatment in designated government hospitals, but Shauravbhai was, nonetheless, afraid to go into hospital. His fear was rooted in many things, including anxiety about being presented with paperwork, not knowing what is happening, being asked questions that he would be unable to answer and being in unfamiliar surroundings, as well as a previous bad experience in hospital. The necessity to interact with hospital staff frightened him. By contrast many other male oustees and some women derive great satisfaction from being able to communicate with ‘outsiders’. Chapter 7 documented the importance of good relations with the host villagers to feeling ‘at home’ in the vasahat. Indeed those oustees who talk confidently with others seem to take pride in their ability to do so. At the most basic level communicating effectively has involved mastering the Gujarati language. Some oustees knew Gujarati anyway and others have learnt since living in the plains. When asked about the difference between living in his present house and his father’s house in Panderia, Gaurangbhai’s response demonstrated the importance of language with respect to the ability to settle into life in the plains:

It’s good there and here. There’s no difference in that respect. When I first came here, the first one or two years felt different because we had a problem with the water – we didn’t like it. Also I wondered whether the village people
hosts] would talk [to us] or not? Our language was different. We spoke adivasi language in the beginning. But now we understand and speak the local language so there’s no difficulty. But initially I had a lot of difficulty, like this sister [referring to me] … we can’t understand what she’s saying at all and she can’t understand what we are saying – it was like that. Gradually, as this sister stays here we will start to understand her language and she will understand our language. It was just the same [as that] in the beginning.

Mahantbhai speaks of the necessity and desirability of speaking the local language, revealing also that the best thing is to adopt the ways of that locality:

Do according to the ways of the country [Jevo desh tevo vesh]. Now that we are living here we have to live like that. How the local people speak, like that we have to speak. You are speaking Gujarati so we understand. We speak a little Gujarati you can understand that, but this girl can’t understand anything. So [similarly] with our people we have to speak our language. If we try to speak then they say ‘What are you telling I can’t understand’ – it feels like that.

So do you think that when you go to another village you also have to do what they are doing?

Yes, that is the best thing [that’s considered good].

It is desirable to learn the local language both for social reasons and also to go about one’s daily routine activities effectively (such as shopping). Such daily routines are an important part of a sense of being at home. In Chapter 3 we saw how routines make the environment predictable, creating a sense of stability. For the Narmada oustees learning the Gujarati language is viewed as a requirement for establishing a routine. However, it does not stop there. The more enterprising oustees express the importance of communicating with others for developing the household’s livelihood, hence prosperity. Mahantbhai seemed to think it was pointless having aspirations because they could never be realised so long as he was uneducated, yet later in his in-depth interview he says:

I do have more wishes. Why would it be less? It’s not less now. It will grow – why wouldn’t it? We have to increase the wishes. If there is no wish then people become lazy, and brain doesn’t work. It’s no good thinking ‘I don’t want to do this and that, I don’t want to go anywhere’ – that’s not possible. Only if we have wishes can all the work get done. ‘I’ve got enough food, so I don’t have to do anything’ – that [attitude] is no good. We have to work and
we have to go out. We’ll get ideas by talking with other people. He was saying that, and he gets this, so if I will do this kind of business then I also will get some thing.

The direct contradiction with his earlier statement perhaps suggests a struggle to reconcile two competing beliefs: The first is one’s present and future position is the result of one’s own efforts. The second is that one’s circumstances are out of one’s hands (involuntary resettlement being the greatest proof of this). Oustees’ experiences to date tend to steer them towards the latter belief. (In the hills they were at the mercy of the forest officers and now, confronted with the necessity to construct a livelihood under a market system, they are reminded that their low socio-economic status has significant bearing on their ability to access the advantages of that system).

One’s situation is dependent on one’s fate according to some oustees. Mahantbhai makes reference to fate, but also implies it is the responsibility of the individual to do what is required to meet household needs:

If someone’s fate is good then they will get lots of money from the farm. Whatever we get we have to eat. If we can’t get [enough] then we have to do some labouring, or business. ‘He bought the car so I have to get one’ – that [attitude] is no good. Whatever we get that is good.

Mahantbhai is one of those who have been given bad land but he is also uniquely enterprising and charismatic, and has therefore managed to create a reasonably prosperous lifestyle for his family: he is an example of the self-made man. So, in spite of all his talk about fate, Mahantbhai knows his progress in the plains reflects his own actions and initiative (working hard, making the effort to meet other people and exchanging ideas with them). Other oustees are also aware of the personal qualities needed in the plains and the methods by which one goes about developing those qualities or skills. The ability to interact and integrate with others is a key to successful negotiation of the market economy. When Mahantbhai said ‘We have to work and have to go out; talking with other people we will get ideas’ he touched upon the connection between mobility and communication.
8.5 Being mobile

Tarunbhai explains how moving around is the way in which one develops communication skills:

Some know how to count money, some know how to talk ... In my hills we speak our language and so here they [locals] don’t understand [us], therefore how will the women take the children to the doctors? – that’s the worry. When you move around you learn to count money, you learn to speak – things like that. In our hills they speak our own language, but here no-one would understand – that’s why she wouldn’t take the child to the doctor. The more you move around, the more you can understand the language. If we stay inside the home then we won’t understand anyone else’s language – in that way (Tarunbhai, Kandewal).

It is noticeable that those who move around more and mix with outsiders tend to fare better in the plains than less mobile oustees. There is evidence to suggest that those more au fait with the ‘city’ prior to resettlement got a head start on the others. Mahantbhai, for instance, knew that bringing as much wood as he could from the forest would stand him in good stead at the resettlement site as wood is such a valuable asset:

We have to bring wood. I knew that we are not getting the wood. One can’t get wood in the city. I went on outings so I knew there are no wooden things in the ‘city’. Some people said ‘you can get gold, you will get silver, but you won’t get this teak wood’. That’s what they said so then I said ‘I’ll take some [wood with me]’.

Since he was well versed in moving around in the ‘city’ he managed to secure himself an economic advantage. In Kandewal, Raahibhai and Gaurangbhai spoke about the need to move around:

Raahibhai: Big officials know people like us. We’re regularly going to offices, taluka panchayat, mamladars, court or police station, we started knowing about all these slowly. Some of them have also become our friends. It depends on how you maintain relations [with them], then they themselves will offer help [before you even had to ask], they will ask, ‘what problems do you have? What’s the matter?’ This is how we get acquaintances and get familiar with officials.
Gaurangbhai: Meaning people like you ... however many months you stay [you’ve decided to stay here] you’ll stay, and if we come to Baroda someday if by chance we meet you, you’ll definitely call us. Now we also know you, so we will also call you [saying] ‘oh, this is our beno [girl/sister’]. In this way if you move around you will come to know other people – with everybody.

Raahibhai: And in nearby village, at that time nobody knew us. ‘Where [on earth] did these people come from?’ – people from nearby villages were talking about us in that way. But now people from nearby villages send us marriage invitations. They send invitations for marriage and we also maintain a give and take relationship with them. They also come here to maintain a give and take relationship. In this way we established relations with each other so now it’s good.

**Now you are living amongst outsiders, so how do you feel about that?**

Raahibhai: Now you [need to] understand one thing. When our population came to the vasahat nobody knew us, so when we were going out and about nobody was calling us. That’s why we have to live in one place in the vasahat, but now after this many years everyone nearby, big officials and office-wallahs or anybody, now we can talk to anybody and everybody. Now we’ve become friendly and now we’ve become familiar with everything. Now we are moving around here and there, that’s why people are offering us to take a seat, they are offering us water, like this we are friendly with one another. That’s why … before nobody was calling us. Without knowing [us] who would? Even we weren’t in a position to invite anyone and the opposite person was not in a position to invite us. ‘That bastard, where did they come from?’ If you know them then you’ll sit there [in their house or with them]. After staying here we became acquainted, so now we know others – that’s why everything is nice. Now we like it here. The first two years nobody was coming to our house and we weren’t going to anyone’s house.

Raahibhai is obviously aware that you get a better service from officials if you cultivate relationships with them. When you get to know someone they will naturally be more helpful when you go to them for assistance. Raahibhai, Gaurangbhai and Mahantbhai are all confident in their ability to interact with outsiders, but the majority of oustees are not necessarily so confident in their relations with others. We saw earlier how Shuravbhai was afraid to go to hospital even when injured. I found the people originally from Dhumna-Charbara were generally less at home in the ‘city’ environment compared to those from Panderia, Devdi and Makadkhada. The Kandewal extension officer believes it is because they go out and about less than the others do. He remarked that the problems faced by people from Dhumna-Charbara
are no different from those faced by other oustees in Kandewal but he was less likely to hear about their problems. When Devdi and Panderia people had complaints he knew about them. There are three main reasons why the people from Dhumna-Charbara are different from the rest of the oustees population:

a) They were the most isolated; the least exposed to mainstream culture of all displaced adivasi. Oustees from Makadkhada (now living in Vadaj) were in walking distance from Gadher village where there were shops and access to a seasonal bus service to Rajpipla town in the plains. Hafeshwar and Panderia oustees had the easiest access to a large market, at the main market centre of Kawat. Dhumna-Charbara oustees, by contrast, had little access to the outside world.

b) Devdi and especially Panderia oustees have had greater interaction with the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement). Panderia oustees have in the past been involved with the NBA and a number of their relatives, still residing in Panderia, are part of the movement. Through their involvement with the NBA they have been encouraged to stand up for their rights and many NBA activities such as meetings, demonstrations and marches have taken them to outside places. They were also more accustomed to moving around outside their village prior to resettlement than Dhumna-Charbara oustees.

c) Participant observation suggested to me that the Dhumna-Charbara people are less concerned about demonstrating that they have become sudhrel compared with oustees from Devdi and Panderia. They are less inclined to make an effort to be something else and are therefore perhaps happier to stay in the resettlement site than other more restless oustees.

Apart from the Dhumna-Charbara population in general, the other group less likely to move around outside the village is women. Women are less au fait with negotiating their way in the plains, largely because they go out less. For some women this then becomes a vicious cycle – the less they go out the less well versed they are in making their way around the ‘city’, therefore when they do venture outside the village it is an
uncomfortable experience, quelling the desire to go out. Being in the ‘city’, stepping outside the village, means being confronted with people of mixed castes and social status. For the likes of Basantiben, an elderly oustee living in Vadaj, ‘moving amongst strangers’ translates as fear of being mugged:

I don’t wear them here [referring to her jewellery]. In the old village we wear them. We can move around in the hills on our own.

**Can’t you move around here?**

Can’t move around. Here they get snatched. I feel scared. I don’t go for *farva* [roaming] too far on my own too far. I’ll go with two people.

**Is it just when you’re wearing jewellery that you feel scared or even without it?**

I feel too scared. I feel scared going just as I am and I [also] feel scared if I’m wearing jewellery. Here it is snatched by those who are moving around on the big road. Now I feel a little scared at home as well.

The different level of mobility between men and women is noticeable. It is considered the man’s role to go to nearby market towns (Dabhoi for Vadaj oustees and Sankhedha or Bodeli for Kandewal oustees) for work purposes (selling stock, buying goods), but afterwards they often sit in coffee shops or go drinking with friends, making their trips pleasurable. Married women, and particularly those with children, are more tied to the home, so if they do ever go to the town centre they return as soon as their business is done. Participant observation and discussions with oustees led to me to believe that men enjoy being ‘cosmopolitan’ (as Tuan would argue) whereas women are less able to derive enjoyment from things the ‘city’ offers. For example, very few women had been to the cinema compared to the number of men, who enjoyed going even though films were in Hindi. The ‘city’ space appears to be less accessible to women oustees.

Things are different for the newer/younger generations. Young unmarried women in Kandewal were much more mobile compared to married women. Young women like Bijalben who are less house-bound and who spent their late teens in the plains are
more at ease in the ‘city’ than women who were adults when they moved. One reason for the high percentage of women reporting that they go for *farva* just as much as before, is the inclusion of younger women in the data. Seventy-three per cent of women reported that they go for *farva* as much as before, 23 per cent said less, leaving a tiny percentage saying they go more.\(^5\) Also women acknowledge that it is easier to get around in the plains where the terrain is flat (something that benefits men and women equally). When asked which place is better for *farva*, one woman replied:

> It’s all good – here and there. Here it’s flat land and so here it’s good to move around, because there you have to cross the hills. Because you can eat for free there one considers that good. Here everything has to be paid for and bought (Geetiben, Kandewal).

Mahantbhai recalls how officials used the flat land of the plains and the ease of mobility as a selling point when persuading people to resettle:

> That’s what the authorities said, ‘you don't need anything. After going there then you won’t have to move around in this type of hilly place. You will be farming on flat ground. Good farming, and *farvanu* is good. When you go you will go in the big city bazaars, you won’t have any kind of problems. Here you are wondering [what it will be like], but when there you will be happy’.

Nevertheless, the difference between men and women is apparent, since one in seven men reported to go for *farva* more often than before. One reason for this is higher use of transport by men compared to women.

Just as the government official claimed, Mahantbhai enjoys enhanced mobility, and he emphasises the importance of transport, ‘it was so difficult. No matter how difficult it is you have to walk there because you don’t get any vehicles. Here with a cycle you can go anywhere. There you have to walk even if your thighs are aching’. Whilst Mahantbhai enjoys a sense of freedom from being able to simply get on a bike and go anywhere, many women do not share this sense of freedom. For instance, women do not cycle; at most they hitch a ride. One of the reasons Siniben no longer
likes going to her father’s house in the hills is because she has to catch the bus in town and then share the first leg of her journey with strangers:

I don’t go there on my own. It used to be all our people there [when going from husband’s village to father’s home you didn’t come across strangers]. Here it involves going into town and then going by vehicle (Siniben, Kandewal).

Even women who are at ease using transport do not necessarily find that their mobility has increased. On the contrary, transport costs can reduce their mobility as they abstain from trips that will now cost them money. Transport costs disadvantage women disproportionately as few have money of their own. Men justify their ‘working’ trips to the market (whilst often combining them with social activities), but women feel unable to use household money ‘unnecessarily’.

However, a quarter of all men and women reported going for farva less than they did when living in the hills. Two main reasons were given for this. First is the perception that there is nowhere to go in the plains. Before villagers could go into the forests, across the hills, to neighbouring villages etc. Second, the need for money constrains the activities of both men and women from households with little cash to spare. When asked whether she prefers living in hilly areas or in the ‘city’, Sheelaben replied:

There is good. If you have money you can move around here, if you don’t have money then you can’t move around at all. If people want to go somewhere only the money-wallahs [people with money] can afford to go; where would a person without money go? If you have money you can move around. If you don’t have money what trips [can you go on]? ... There in the hills wherever you are going, if going as guest you can go on foot (Sheelaben, Kandewal).

8.6 Becoming prosperous

Oustees are coming to terms with the notion that in the plains one can feel very restricted without money. As Tarunbhai of Kandewal commented:
If you have money then you can understand more talk but whoever doesn’t have money has to sit low. Have to sit low. If you have money you go for farva. If you don’t have money you don’t move around you have to stay sitting. Can you just move around? If we say let me do this or that without money, we will fail – in that way.

Oustees know the problems of limited funds and the marginalisation experienced as a result. Without money you are stuck and cannot make a move, in both a literal sense (of not being able to afford to go anywhere by transport) and in the sense of progressing/developing or becoming more prosperous (you need money to make money). Commenting on the incessant need for money in the plains, Hemishbhai said ‘you need money just to step outside the home’. His observation supports an underlying view of many oustees that ‘staying put’ (at home) is the antithesis of development – one needs to get out and about and for that money is required.

As shown in Chapter 5 prosperity levels vary amongst the oustee population. Although the circumstances of individual households vary, generally, earning potential in the plains is generally greater than in the hills, largely as a result of the ability to produce and sell cotton. Oustees speak of their ability to purchase more clothes, more consumer goods and even vehicles such as motorbikes. One woman said she no longer had to share clothing with other female members of her household. In his survey of households owning prestigious goods, Joshi (1987: 88) found that Makadkhada and Hafeshwar villagers (comprising 310 households) had between them only three radios and eight wristwatches or small clocks. He found there were no households in Dhumna, Charbara and Panderia owning prestigious goods. Increased prosperity has, as I observed, resulted in the purchase of consumer goods so that virtually every household in Kandewal and Vadaj owns a wristwatch or clock (nearly every male oustee put on his wristwatch when we took their photo) and many own radios.

Oustees are, however, also aware of the perils of being in a market economy where it is tempting to purchase more and more things. Haroonbhai comments on the newly adopted custom of hiring a Brahmin to perform wedding ceremonies:
There in my desh [country] we don’t have a Brahmin or anyone. [We] Just get the bride and groom together – finished. Here [you call] the Brahmin and all … more money goes and you have to buy more clothes – it all happens and more money is spent on food and drink. If a groom’s party has to be brought [to the wedding] then you have to hire a tempo [type of vehicle] – need separate money for that. There in the hilly area not as much money is spent. [Before] only the money that has been decided by the groom’s side – whatever that is, about ten-fifteen thousand rupees – is given to the girl. That’s all the expense.

**What’s the need to call a Brahmin?**

Here the public is used to it … other people see it and it goes further. When so-and-so got married a Brahmin was there so I must also have one – like this it escalates [he laughs]. Now we’ve come in the city this happens. This is what happens when you leave the hills (Haroonbhai, Vadaj).

Mahantbhai made similar observations – for example, ‘if people have lots of money then they will buy things by foolish imitation and their money will finish’. At other points he stated ‘the attitude is “he bought a car so I have to get one” … here people have become addicts, “he is driving it and so now I can also drive” – people are buying in that way’. So although pleased with their new purchasing power, oustees voice concerns that people will get carried away, perhaps even going beyond their means.

**8.7 Accepting new forms of order**

Living in a market economy means that oustees have to manage and control their money in a way that was not required before. It was only on resettlement that oustees opened bank accounts (into which their resettlement and rehabilitation package money was deposited). Such financial requirements mean that oustees are involved in new structures.

To belong to an institution one has to abide by its rules and regulations – another theme that featured in oustees’ interviews. It is not just financial institutions that impose structures on oustees – there are many new forms of regulation. For instance, earlier in this chapter oustees were shown to perceive schooling as beneficial for their children, partly because it is a vehicle for becoming more sudhrel. Formal schooling
instills discipline in the way pupils have to turn up to class at set times and have to sit in an orderly way, under the control of the teacher. Chapter 5 also described changes in agriculture as a result of movement to the plains, where ground conditions require a more time-bound approach. Oustees' work and social practices therefore now revolve around this less flexible timetable, dictated for them either by an institution or the physical environment.

Although the inhabitants of submergence villages did not receive any formal education and were less bound by a rigid agricultural cycle, life in the hills had its own kind of order, governed by (traditional) authority structures. It is perhaps because they were used to life in the hills that oustees failed to recognize that they had their own codes of conduct structuring their lives there, for people often point out that resettlement to the 'city' has meant they lead more civilised lives. Implicit in their sayings – 'we've reformed, we've become sudhrel' – is a notion that they have become more orderly.

One of the main driving forces for becoming sudhrel is the presence of authority structures that were out of reach when living in the hills. Oustees are very aware that 'city' living comes with rules or 'laws of the land' that are different from those that operated in the hills. For instance, when we asked Raahibhai whether he had changed after relocating he replied:

There in our hilly area everything is unknown and language is also different. After coming here people know more about laws, this law, that law. There after people drank they began to fight. Here you cannot go beyond the law in this area – I know this much. In our country, in our old village, whatever goes, goes, but after coming to this area, in the city, it's not only my house rules, it's the rules of the world you have to listen to, and you have to follow the rules of the world.

Raahibhai's last sentence is highly significant. It brings home the scale of the transition that has been made in moving from the hills where people were relatively isolated from the outside world, to being immersed in it. It highlights how oustees have gone from operating within one set of norms (codes of conduct) to dealing with two co-existing norms. When Raahibhai uses the term 'house rules' he is referring to
Bhil norms rather than literally the discipline in his home. Here 'house' can be likened to Tuan's 'hearth'. Then by using the phrase 'rules of the world', Raahibhai implies that his people have now entered into the world (in Tuan's terms, 'the cosmos'). By implication, therefore, they were not in the world before. There is a suggestion that joining the rest of the 'world' is regarded positively, but Raahibhai's words are more neutral compared to those expressed by writers like Vora (1991) who describe displacement and resettlement as 'not submergence but emergence'. The reason oustees have such equivocal views is that they experience not only benefits but also drawbacks from their entry into the new 'world'.

For example, the prohibition on production and sale of alcohol in Gujarat state is a law that impinges heavily on oustees' lives. Although Gujarat is a dry state tribal peoples used to produce and consume alcohol freely in the hills because law-enforcement authorities are out of reach of these isolated areas. In the *vasahats*, however, intermittent raids by the police prevent oustees from producing and drinking alcohol freely. If caught they have to pay substantial fines. During my time in Kandewal there was one such police raid in which two oustees were fined. This is one reason why some oustees claim to drink less than they did before, although many (the more self-conscious individuals) have changed or say they are trying to reduce their alcohol consumption in an attempt to become more *sudhrel*.

A few households have declared their members *bhagat* in an attempt to establish greater respectability. Kushanubhai stopped drinking because he felt 'it looks bad when you are so drunk you can't make it back home [from town] and end up lying at the side of the street'. Gaurangbhai explained how he has changed after resettlement:

> On the hill side we had wine. If we know we are born as a human being only once we have to live nicely. We mustn't speak lies. We have to pray to God. We have to live for as long as God has decided for us. Up until that time we have to keep friendship with everybody. We have to think like that, but people don't understand that. We came into the world empty-handed and we have to leave empty-handed. We are not taking anything with us; we have to earn and we have to spend. We have to keep control of the wine. Some people go to each and every house and drink a lot and they can't recognise anybody. I've stopped drinking. When you first came, at that time we were drunk. We kept drinking all time (Gaurangbhai, Kandewal).
Maintaining *bhagat* status is, however, challenging as alcohol plays an important role in Bhil social and religious life. Being under the jurisdiction of the law therefore presents oustees with difficulties.

Nevertheless, oustees generally welcome the proximity to law-enforcement agencies, namely the local police force. Oustees claimed it was a deterrent to getting involved in fights because if the police are called all parties will be fined. Oustees therefore claim to be more cautious about getting into fights in order to protect their hard-earned cash. On one occasion Mohitbhai, former leader of the Devdi oustees, who had just negotiated the settlement of a dispute, approached us to proclaim ‘what you saw here was nothing. Before [in the hills] I’d have been surrounded by 30 dead bodies’. He thought people were calmer since resettlement. In the original villages celebrations were prime times for fights to erupt – probably because they were fuelled by alcohol.

Celebrations have therefore been transformed into smaller affairs. Although they regretted this change to some extent because it meant their parties would be less fun, most oustees considered them better overall because there is less trouble. Forty-five per cent reported they have the same amount of fun at festivals, 36 per cent said they were less fun and ninety per cent, more fun now (N = 102). The leaders at *vasahats* are purposely organising smaller events as the police have told them that the blame for any trouble will be placed squarely on their shoulders. Since the onus to ensure that events remain trouble-free events is on the leaders, they are reducing the size of their festivals for easier crowd management. The way they have done this is by celebrating events such as diwali on the same day as their fellow tribal people in other resettlement sites. In the hills each village would celebrate diwali on a different day so crowds from other villages could gather for each other’s celebrations. This again represents the ‘acceptance’ of new orders.

Sometimes acceptance of new orders is more like tolerance of them. Madigan and Munro (1991) warned that socio-cultural orders can be restrictive and it seems that
amongst Kandewal oustees some new orders are being established which are just that. For example, although women gave mixed responses as to where their work-load was greater, one woman described the burden of changing gender roles following resettlement:

I have to do more work here: cooking and washing clothes.

Didn’t you also have to do all those things there?

I did but there when men went for farva, when they went to bathe, they would wash their clothes at the same time. If they went to the river they would wash their clothes whilst there – it was like that.

Meaning here you have to wash your husband’s clothes as well as your own?

They’ve seen in the other [host] village that women wash them so now we have to wash them. [...] They said they are going to ... moving around so they see in other villages that ladies are washing the clothes. [Our men say] ‘all the other women are cleaning, so you clean them’.

Before did your father and brother wash their own clothes?

Yes, washed them themselves.

Is there other work that men think women should do after coming here?

What else?

So, it’s just washing clothes?

Hmm.

What about fetching water?

They didn’t collect water in the old village [either].

How does it make you feel now that men tell you to wash their clothes?

How do I feel? If they say ‘wash it’ then you have to wash it.

Do you feel angry?

You may feel angry but what to do? If you have to wash it you have to wash. If you feel angry you [still] have to live in their home, whether you feel it or
not you have to live in their home, therefore what do you do? If you are angry, you’re angry, but you have to live there [regardless]. (Sheelaben, Kandewal).

One man explained how he felt embarrassed washing his clothes in the vasahat, giving two reasons for his unease. To wash one’s clothes now is to find oneself surrounded by women gathered at the handpump, whereas before they could be washed somewhere along the riverside. The river it seems was a place for everyone but the handpump and/or tap outlets have now acquired a sense of being gendered spaces – spaces where men might feel increasingly ‘out of place’, particularly if there to perform a ‘woman’s task’. Kansabhai felt embarrassed when host village men saw him washing his clothes at the handpump and so his wife now does it for him. This example demonstrates that one should not assume movement to the plains, so often symbolised by plains people as a step forward for tribal people, brings about the adoption of progressive socio-cultural orders.

8.8 Conclusion – ‘city’ life

Oustees interpret their relocation to the plains as a move into the ‘city’. This means adapting to a new way of life. In many ways this has taken the form of developing preoccupations along the lines of those that concern plains dwellers. Hakim (1995) found that deshi identity (the identity of those living in the plains) is constructed along lines of consumption (dress, food and religion) and predicted that oustees may begin to define themselves accordingly. Having worked with some of the same people five years down the line it is evident that oustees are judging themselves through markers of consumption. In this chapter I have shown how oustees measure themselves by the clothes they wear and their housing. Some have even become bhagat. Oustees see themselves as becoming more sudhrel by adopting ‘the practices of the ritually purer castes’ (Gopalakrishnan 2004). This is what Srinivas (1962) called ‘Sanskritization’ – a group’s efforts to elevate their status by imitating the practices associated with Sanskrit texts and Brahanamical tradition. They have other preoccupations too. Oustees want to make the most of their situation and this means acquiring literacy skills for themselves and an education for their children, developing their ability to speak with barna loko (outside people) and getting out and
about. These things enable progress and expand their opportunities. Now that oustees have to operate within a market economy, money has greater significance as both an enabling and limiting factor for progress. Making money is a preoccupation one cannot afford to neglect.

Given all these new preoccupations as a result of place-change, we may question whether or not oustees are concerned that their people will change or their cultural identity will be destroyed as they become more like the plains dwellers. Evidence suggests not. Shardarben thinks her group identity is the same as before, ‘I don’t feel like that. It feels like it was there’. Similarly another person replies:

All our village people came this side so saying that we’ve become like city people - it doesn’t feel like that. We’re people of there [that place] and so it doesn’t feel like we’ve become city people (Mayaben, Vadaj).

In the same vein, Geetiben was not overly concerned about her children forgetting Bhil culture:

I don’t worry about that … [laughs]. Here what to do? If they forget they forget – it’s like that. What can I do if I worry – do what? What can I do if I don’t worry – do what? (Geetiben, Kandewal).

Alternatively, if they do become more like host villagers some oustees think it can only be a good thing. Sajaniben does not worry about her children forgetting Bhil culture, accepting it as a certainty, ‘They won’t be like Vasavas [type of Bhil], they’ll be like the old [host] villagers – that’s good’. Similarly, when talking about clothing, Chatura Kaka endorses changes that bring them in line with their hosts.

You have to live according to the country you are in. If you change your country you have to change.

Are you not concerned about that?

No. I’ll like it if they [the children] become like city people [laughs]. If you’re looking the same [as host villagers] nobody will say oh ‘they are from the vasahat’, everyone will look the same.

Have you had any problems of others saying you are outsiders?
No I haven't. No, it's just whatever country you are in you follow those ways. It's better for all that you are the same. It's just more peaceful to live the same. In our old village we wore *chadi* [shorts] and we also wore *lungi*. It's just the clothes that have changed. Otherwise I haven't changed. I'm as I was before. I've been like this from the beginning, but the children have changed.

It is apparent that many oustees have taken a pragmatic attitude towards their resettlement in the plains, often expressing the 'when in Rome' idea as Sinkarben did: 'if you change kingdom you have to change your ways'.

It would be easy to advance evidence to support the argument that resettlement is seen as development – that oustees are free from the restrictions of hearth. However, it would be just as easy to draw on oustees’ descriptions of the perils of life in the plains and the barriers to suggest that resettlement is a disaster. Neither would accurately describe how oustees feel (even leaving aside the question of individual variation). Oustees accept, even embrace, change in their new context (in the 'city'); but that does not mean they were pining for a more ‘cosmopolitan’ life when they were living in the hills. As Mahantbhai says:

Why we would we feel wrong [living here]? After coming here we like living here, and when we go there then we like it there – it’s like that. There are lots of trees, *madhu*, mango, *tadi* and other fruits, so we feel if we were living there it’s good – feel like that. You could say we’re in two minds for both sides. There we get things free, but here the amount you get is according to the amount of money you have. There if we need to go out at midnight then there are lots of difficulties, but here in the midnight also we get the vehicle – so we can go.
Notes for Chapter 8

1 A member of ARCH-Vahini commented that Bhil *adivasi* tend not to speak about disputes once they have been resolved. Oustees may have therefore under-reported past incidents of trouble from host villagers.

2 This does not apply to all festivals and celebrations. For Holi the Dhumna-Charbara people dressed in special costumes (as *Geerias*) to celebrate Holi in their traditional way.

3 To what extent this was driven by prejudice regarding the cleanliness of oustees or the general need to impart public health information is debatable.

4 When his sister intentionally poisoned herself she was taken to hospital where she later died. Having seen her die Shaurvbhai now argues that, if he is to die, he would rather do so at home.

5 The high percentage of women reporting no change could also reflect the higher tendency of women to say ‘the same’ in response to a question to avoid having to explain the reasons for change.

6 Religious person abstaining from alcohol and meat consumption (following Hindu tradition).
9 Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The Bhil *adivasi* with whom I worked had been accustomed to moving from place to place before resettlement. They went daily from their homes to their fields; frequently from their village to another to visit relatives; occasionally from the hills to the market in the plains and when necessary from one house-plot to another. None of these place-changes, however, compare with the traumatic change that is displacement. The place-change brought about by Gujarat’s Sardar Sarovar Dam Project has meant profound transformation in displaced *adivasis’* economic, social and cultural life to a degree unparalleled and at a pace unsurpassed in their recent history.

This thesis has been concerned with a certain kind of place: that is the home. Defining the home is however extremely difficult as it has elusive properties and can be conceptualised on different scales and in a variety of different ways. The nature of home varies across cultures, groups and even person to person. Chapter 2 featured a discussion of two nationalist visions for post-independence India that could be brought about by ‘home-rule’. One group hoped India would become home to a pluralist nation whose agenda(s) would emerge from the grassroots of society. The other – the one whose vision became hegemonic – relegated diversity to the margins and highlighted the ideas of modernisation and integration to create a new kind of home. The nationalists therefore held different views about the meaning of (their) home. Some perceived their home (India) to be backward and in need of development. This mentality is the reason for projects like Sardar Sarovar. The meaning of place has been mobilised in the battle over the future of the Narmada Valley. Usually one only hears about the meanings of place held by those in powerful positions, so in this thesis I have explored the meanings of home for displaced Bhil *adivasis*.
9.2 Meanings of home

Before displacement the home-place of Bhil *adivasi* had changed over the years, but until resettlement the locality had not changed for generations. Resettlement entailed moving from the Narmada Valley where oustees led largely self-sufficient lives practising subsistence agriculture to the plains where rural livelihoods are market-orientated. Chapter 5 demonstrates how this has significant implications as Bhil *adivasi* notions of home are intertwined with issues relating to production and consumption. Seen from today’s vantage point, oustees depict their old home – often referring to it as ‘*dungar vista*’ (hilly area) – as a place of self-sufficient production and consumption. This description goes beyond delineating the locale but provides an insight into how a sense of home [place] was achieved. The rich resource base available to all, regardless of socio-economic status, enabled a way of belonging, embodied in the figure of a mother providing unconditional support to all her children. The experience of resettlement that has perhaps brought this view of home into sharper focus, for it shows that the promise of a better standard of living comes with hidden costs and is dependent on the individual’s merit and effort.

In one sense, living off ‘mother’ can be seen as child-like since you are dependent on her for your sustenance (depending on mother-nature) – no doubt the reason such people and places are regarded as undeveloped by dominant Indian society. This is however somewhat ironic, given that the people in question led self-sufficient lives, at odds with images of helplessness and dependency.

Hence, oustees who hang onto or hanker after a place to enjoy unconditional provision, attaching more importance to this meaning of home over other meanings, are likely to feel homeless after resettlement. Economics make a difference – those who feel helpless due to their inability to pay for things are more likely to hanker after ‘old home’, remembering a time when they felt self-sufficient – although wealthier oustees can also feel ‘homeless’.

Oustees can mitigate feelings of loss by drawing on other meanings of home, such as ‘a place where one belongs by right’. They have also adopted new meanings of home befitting their new environment in the plains, as shown in Chapter 6.
Recognising the importance attached to the material in the plains, many oustees have used their government grant to build themselves red-brick pucca houses, which can be displayed as status-symbols and held as assets to be passed on. The greater the number of oustees building pucca houses, the more these dwellings become a prerequisite for feeling at home in the new environment. For Devdi oustees differences in their housing standards seem to have been detrimental to community cohesion. Generally, however, resettlement does not appear to have caused the kind of social disarticulation that many have predicted. Chapter 7 shows that this is primarily because patrilineal social networks remain largely intact, offering some resistance to forces that undermine collectivism. Even though changes may be on the horizon co-location with kin and other displaced adivasi in nearby vasahats has enabled oustees to re-create many aspects of their social milieu in their new environment. For women married before resettlement, however, rehabilitation is much harder as limited access to their parents’ home seriously undermines their ability to feel at home in the vasahats. It is also more difficult for women to embrace changes for reasons described in Chapter 8. Social pressures on women are different from those on men. They are ridiculed (usually by other women) for appearing ‘too forward’ if they dress like host village women and are fearful of ‘not getting it right’ if they try. This is also the reason they were wary of speaking Gujarati. Men move around more than women and talk to more people outside their community which, according to male oustees, indicates they are progressing faster than their female counterparts. Oustees’ preoccupations with clothing, housing, cleanliness and speech (their outward appearance) all reflect their desire to become sudhrel. Part of this drive is to remove any barriers to opportunity and they have identified lack of education as a limiting factor. Thus value is placed on educating children in order to avert the fate of previously displaced adivasi who were uprooted and dispatched only ‘to become unskilled wage laborers and pawns in modern industrial centers’ (Hemadri et al. 2000: lxv).

In effect ‘staying as you are’ is rejected in favour of ‘making a go of it’ by many. This pragmatic attitude is in keeping with Bhil adivasi’s cultural identity, rooted in a history of survival against the odds. Oustees seem to have done what they can to feel at home in their new environment.
Chapter 3 mentioned the work of Dovey (1985) who argued that there are no particular properties that are necessary or sufficient for the experience of home, ‘rather like fibers in a rope, each property lends strength to the meaning of home’. Similarly we can think of a piece of clothing made of fabric of multi-coloured threads and imagine each as a meaning of home. Displacement unravels the fabric. In order to feel at home, oustees have re-woven the fabric so some colours (meanings of home) appear more prominently than others do. One may or may not like the resulting article of clothing (in its own right or in comparison to the old one) but it fits in better in the new environment thus enabling the wearer to feel less out of place/more at home.

9.3 Relating findings to thesis assertions

Four assertions were presented in Chapter 3. The first – that resettlement requires more than an economic approach – was inspired by Downing (1999b: 1-2) who felt that all too often:

> Only economic actions are proscribed [sic] to mitigate social impoverishment. Conventional wisdom is synthesized into proscriptive [sic] economic action – holding that, social impoverishment, like other forms of impoverishment can be mitigated by re-establishing disrupted productive activities.

The findings in this thesis justify the focus on home as opposed to a purely economic approach as they reveal why satisfaction with resettlement cannot be guaranteed even when people are ‘better off’ as a result of the resettlement and rehabilitation package. Other factors such as the desire for unconditional provision, appropriate housing and good social relations are key factors.

The second assertion was that successful resettlement depended on planners considering the original lay out and form of the built environment, recreating those aspects that are (socially) important and valued. In this instance it would appear that project authorities have been fortunate that most oustees identify with the built form of the vasahats even though they bear little resemblance to the original villages. However, for oustees from Dhumna and Charbara a large communal space in their side of the vasahat would have ensured greater satisfaction with the built environment.
The third assertion was that if recreating 'social geometry' is crucial to mitigating the disorientation that causes social impoverishment after resettlement (as suggested by Downing 1999b), one could do worse than looking at 'the home'. For the purpose of ensuring better resettlement outcomes 'social geometry' and 'home' are interchangeable i.e. the implications of studying the home would be similar to those derived from studying social geometry but using more familiar terminology. For example, Chapter 5 discussed oustees’ focus on ‘rights’ as a way of asserting belonging in the new environment. For them the re-placing of the forefather’s stone in a field near the vasahat eased their rehabilitation, particularly as they were able to continue their annual worship of their ancestors. This example supports my proposition as it represents the re-establishment of a previous socio-temporal order, one aspect of oustees’ social geometry (to put it in Downing’s language).

The overarching assertion was that proper resettlement is not possible without a full understanding of what home means to those displaced. The evidence presented in this thesis suggests resettlement would have a greater chance of success or better outcomes if home were considered. Resettlement that considers the home would involve a compilation of baseline information through a literature review of the people and place to be affected and through the use of quantitative and qualitative research techniques to ascertain the aspects of home that are important to people affected by a project. Project planners would use this knowledge of the ‘home’ in the design and execution of resettlement and rehabilitation from policy formulation to the design of the relocation sites. The Sardar Sarovar Punavahasat Agency, like most project authorities, did not place home at the centre of their planning. A prior understanding of home may for example, have guided planners to make provision for more livestock at the vasahats given that cattle are integral to the Bhil adivasi home. They would have also taken greater account of Bhil adivasis’ preference for nuclear rather than joint families. Newly weds are having to remain in the same house as the groom’s parents. Young men who were not old enough to qualify for project-affected person status in 1987 now have their own families, but are dependent on their father or older brothers for housing and land.

What constitutes ‘proper’ resettlement is also an issue for debate. For instance, this study revealed a meaning of home dear to oustees – as a place to enjoy unconditional
provision. Does this mean, therefore, that resettlement to the plains where market conditions prevail can never be proper? Some argue that no amount of ‘tinkering’ can alter the fundamental differences between life in the hills and in the plains. Hemadri et al. (2000: lxxvi) for example recommend that:

Rural and tribal people should be resettled in the same agro-climate area where the culture of the hosts is not much different from that of oustees. Resettlement should be allowed only after a strict assessment of the carrying capacity is done and it is found that the host area is capable of absorbing the oustees population.

What happens, however, when it is not possible to resettle oustees in a similar area because there are just too many of them? This brings me back to a question that I had refrained from investigating at the outset of my thesis: is resettlement of this nature and scale justified? In the end we have to ask if the development project (the dam) is worth it? These questions paradoxically strengthen the need to investigate home rather than making it unnecessary. I started with the premise that if projects such as dams are to go ahead then proper resettlement can only be achieved with a full understanding of what home means to those displaced. This proposition needs to be turned on its head so that meanings of home are part of the decision-making process that determines whether or not to proceed with a given project. This shift in the argument is in accordance with the latest literature on development-induced displacement and resettlement that seeks a shift from forced displacement towards voluntary resettlement. The main question is how this should be achieved.

The report of the World Commission on Dams (2000) offers a framework for decision-making, based on a ‘rights and risks’ approach, for the purpose of reconciling competing interests and needs. The Commission argues that effective development requires full appreciation of everyone’s rights and risks. Right-holders include those people whose livelihoods, human rights and property and resource rights may be affected by an intervention. This includes not only existing right-holders but people who have the right to resources (such as safe drinking water) who would be denied them if the intervention were not to go ahead. It is also important to recognise all those who will bear risks. Historically risk is associated with the developer, the promoters of a project (the state or private companies). The developers, however, are voluntary risk-takers, whereas there are also risk-bearers
who face a variety of economic, social and cultural risks. Not until there is sufficient consideration of the risks of the latter group can development be carried out effectively. This means hearing the voices of risk-bearers. They must be given the opportunity to assess the risks they are prepared to take to achieve a benefit. Although it could be argued that one cannot know what is at stake until after the fact (you do not know what you had until you lose it) it is nevertheless crucial that attempts are made to establish what is important to the people who, in this example, face displacement. It is here that an investigation into the meaning of home could be beneficial and can play a vital role. I argue that such investigations should be placed alongside more standard approaches such as Environmental Impact Assessments and techniques that place monetary value on social and environmental impacts. Often these valuation techniques require stakeholders to engage in a process of ‘trading off’. Hemadri et al. (2000) highlight that trade offs are the staple of economics and that there is already an established economic methodology in this regard known as contingent valuation based on the willingness to accept compensation (WTAC) and the willingness to pay to secure a benefit (WTP). They cite Goyal’s (1996) work on voluntary bargaining and research by David Pearce (1999) saying:

As Pearce points out the whole range of contingent valuation methods could be brought to bear on problems of resettlement – not just social disarticulation, marginalisation, morbidity and mortality costs of access to common property resources [...] but also the psychological uncertainty and alienation caused by displacement (Hemadri et al. 2000).

If these techniques are used they should be employed in conjunction with studies like this on the home. This is because people, particularly tribal people in non-monetarised economies would find it (virtually) impossible to assign monetary value on the things they value. In other words a study on the home would provide alternative means of learning what is important to people. This provides a more solid ground for negotiations between all stakeholders to assess whether or not project authorities can compensate for the loss of home (by various means, not just financially).

The outcome of these negotiations may well be to proceed with a project such as a dam. This, however, is the beginning rather than the end of people’s participation. One of the strategic priorities identified by the Commission is the recognition of
entitlements and the sharing of benefits. The stakeholders will have to negotiate what they want from the project, including inducements for resettlement. Again consideration should be given to the home in the design of any resettlement and rehabilitation/development action plan. If oustees have been involved in this process the chances of achieving oustee’ satisfaction at the resettlement sites is greater.

This kind of approach is dependent on transparent decision-making processes, a weak point of many governments world-wide, including the Indian government. Civil society has to demand such changes in government conduct. In this respect NGOs such as NBA and ARCH-Vahini and other organisations (whether for or against dams) have made significant strides in demanding justice for all citizens. Ultimately the development issue (including large dams) is about providing legitimate means for people to influence decision-making.

9.4 Other contributions of the thesis

A major contribution of this thesis, already discussed, is its detailed examination of the meaning of home for displaced Bhil adivasi. This uncovered the extent to which satisfaction with resettlement was related to the impact on the home and community social relations. Another finding to emerge from this study of the meaning of home is its incredibly dynamic nature. By studying home in relation to production and consumption, housing, social relations and development, it becomes apparent that it changes continuously and that in some ways comparing home before and after resettlement creates an artificial distinction. Home for Bhil adivasi in the hills of the Narmada valley prior their displacement was not static. For example, Bhil adivasi were not always cultivators. Their predecessors were hunter-gathers and later shifting cultivators, livelihoods which by their very nature do not allow home to remain sedentary. One could argue that both these forms of livelihood enabled the Bhil adivasi to live self-sufficiently drawing on the resources of the natural environment (the hills, forests, river) like they did in the hills as cultivators prior to resettlement and thus the meaning of home may well have been similar to that found in this study – a place of unconditional provision. This, however, can never be more than just a guess as the only way to know what home means to people is to ask them, and to ask them again as it changes over time. Going back even further in time
reveals how much home has changed, as the predecessors of the Bhils in the submerging villages may not have even lived in the hills, only fleeing there after the fighting and droughts at the beginning of the 17th century. In short one can not assume that simply because the meaning of home for a population has been studied it does not need to be explored again.

The conceptual dynamism of home does not only relate to the changing nature of home over time but also the different meanings of home within a community at the same moment in time. For example, this study has shown that men are more likely to feel the resettlement site their home compared with women. This relates to the different experiences of home amongst the displaced population even though their locations are the same. For women the vasahats are not the same (home) place as they are for men. Likewise, the meaning of home for older people is different to that of the younger generation. So, as demonstrated in this thesis, one can not assume that the meaning of home is the same for everyone. The only way to avoid a partial understanding of home is to ask its meaning for different groups within a community and only that basis can one begin to address the different needs within a population (for whatever purpose).

It is important to recognise that this study relates to the meanings of home of a particular group of Bhil adivasi whose circumstances are different to those of other Bhils. They have been recently resettled from the hills to the plains in Gujarat. Prior to their resettlement they were living in hilly, isolated areas in the Narmada Valley. Elsewhere the Bhils have already adapted to a wide variety of social and economic circumstances. A large proportion of Bhils live in urban areas, particularly in Rajasthan and even within these areas there are significant differences in the Bhil population as documented by Sharma (1996) in this study on class stratification. The highly varied lifestyle of Bhils means that they have several different constructs of what is home already. Thus contemporary Bhil meanings of home cannot be essentialised.

Meanings of home emerge from a series of dynamics giving home its fluid quality. Therefore whilst understanding of home is needed for planning, it is not a model of the ideal home that project authorities, government agencies or development
practitioners need to create, as one cannot foresee how things will change. The participation of people affected by any given development becomes more important with this awareness, hence the link with policy makers who need to ensure constant engagement with people whose lives will be affected.

9.5 Evaluating the use of home in resettlement studies

It has been shown that the study of 'home' has a dual purpose: first to identify what it means in order to consider whether or not project authorities can ever compensate for its loss in a way that is acceptable to those whose homes are affected. Second, if so, understandings of home direct us to ways of overcoming or mitigating risks to oustees at the vasahats. In this section I wish to highlight some of the advantages and disadvantages of using the home as a tool to study resettlement.

The oustees with whom I worked had already been displaced and resettled so their meanings of home are shaped by this experience. A study of home prior to resettlement may not have picked up aspects of home that are taken for granted, meaning there is always a chance of overlooking crucial aspects. (However if efforts are made to understand the prior meaning of home in order to inform the design and execution of resettlement and people facing displacement have been involved in that process, then even if aspects are overlooked, oustees better able to live with resettlement outcomes).

Investigating such an elusive concept is difficult. For this reason researchers may prefer to use other tools such as Cernea’s risk assessment model. Critics may argue that it is possible to reach similar findings to those in this thesis through these established tools and by other kinds of insightful investigation.

I felt there were real advantages in using the ‘home’ as a methodological tool for information gathering and as a basis for fieldwork analysis. On the former, inviting oustees to talk about home meant they were more likely to deviate from their standard response to enquires about their experience of resettlement. This is not to say that the ‘standard response’ should be ignored. On the contrary, the issue of landless male adults is a serious problem for a people whose livelihoods have
traditionally been based on cultivation. A focus on home enables one to dig even
deeper – to unearth more. As an analytical tool it is useful because the elusive nature
of home can help the researcher to think ‘out of the box’ – to see resettlement from
another perspective.

Above all the home is a topic worthy of investigation in itself.

India’s 1998 Draft National Policy: Packages and Guidelines for Resettlement and
Rehabilitation suggests that benchmark surveys of those to be displaced should
collect *inter alia* information about: the human resource base of each family;
economic status of each member of the family; ownership of property; the
deprivation of community life, community properties and resource base, community
amenities and services, socio-cultural value etc. I hope those reading this thesis will
feel that in such benchmark work an investigation into the meaning of home would
be a valuable addition.
Appendix 1*
The household survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1) Date of interview</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2) Vasahat</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q3) Place of origin: village, including hamlet if applicable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q4) Name of interviewee</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q5) Is interviewee the head of household?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q6) In which social group does your family belong?</th>
<th>Bhil</th>
<th>Bhil (vasava)</th>
<th>Rathwa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q7) length of residence in this vasahat? (in years)</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q8) In what type of dwelling does the household live?</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pucca Redbrick</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pucca by Ranpur Ashram</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pucca by other NGO/government</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kutcha (using original village materials)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kutcha (using tin sheets for walls)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tin sheds</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q9) If dwelling is not standard government/NGO housing, what is the size of the household’s dwelling?</th>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* The Gujarati version of each question features before the English one and represents the actual question that was usually asked rather than the exact translation (the questions varied slightly, providing the essence was retained, to take account of oustees’ varying proficiency in Gujarati).
પ. 10  તમારા વર્ષમાં કેટલા કેળા રહ્યો છે?


d. બધાના નામ શું છે?


g. તમારા વર્ષમાં કોણે કોણ જુદીન મળી છે?


f. તમારા વર્ષમાં કોણે ઓપરેશન કર્યું છે?


e. તમારા વર્ષમાં કોણે કોણે ટ્રેનનીંગ લાભી છે?


b. ...અંદલી ઉમર શું છે?


f. ........૧૭ના વર્ષ ગયા છે?


j. ........૨૧ વર્ષ થય છે?


i. ........૨૧ વર્ષ થય છે?


k. ........૨૧ વર્ષ થય છે?


l. ........૨૧ વર્ષ થય છે?


m. ........૨૧ વર્ષ થય છે?


n. ........૨૧ વર્ષ થય છે?


o. ........૨૧ વર્ષ થય છે?


p. ........૨૧ વર્ષ થય છે?
**QUESTIONS ON HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE**

Q10) Provide the following details for all those currently living in this household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship to interviewee</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Sterilisation</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Main occupation/role in household</th>
<th>Recipient of R-R package?</th>
<th>Length of residence with household? (Years/months)</th>
<th>Reason for joining? *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Interviewee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b)</td>
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<tr>
<td>d)</td>
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<td>e)</td>
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<tr>
<td>h)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q11) Is there anybody lived in the same household as you but now lives in a different household? (either prior to resettlement or after resettlement)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes, go to Q12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Q12) आपके समाज में आपके साथ रहने वाले कोई व्यक्ति वर्तमान में कहाँ रहता है?

Q13) वे आपके साथ रहने के लिए क्यों नहीं रहते?

Q14) वे आपसे कब रह गए?

Q15) वे अब कहाँ है?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person one</th>
<th>Person two</th>
<th>Person three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q12) What is their relationship to you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13) Why are they no longer living with you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14) When did they cease to live with you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15) Where are they now?</td>
<td>Different household but same vasahat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Different vasahat (name)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In original village</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Specify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16) When do you expect them to return?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q17) Aside from family members already mentioned in questions 1 & 3, provide the following information about other parents, brothers, sisters, daughters and sons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relation to interviewee</th>
<th>Recipient of R &amp; R package?</th>
<th>Where do they live and why?</th>
<th>No. of visits to household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS ON ESTABLISHING RESIDENCE

Q18.5 तमे छायारे आ पर बांध्या तपाई तमाशा घरलाई बाजबोकै मुद्दा करी भती?
Q18.6 तमासा बीजा सपार्नो गरी मुद्दा करी भती? क्या रहे छे?
Q18.7 तमासा खाटबोकै मुद्दा करी भती? क्याँ रहे छे?
Q18.8 तमा छायारी पसै पैसा आफ्नो गरी कहाँ लाग्नेस्को?
Q18.9 तमा आ पर सरकारी संस्थामा बाँस्को आफिब्यू? क्या बीज संस्थामा?

Q18) Have any of the following helped to construct this house?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household members</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>What did they do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in this site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living elsewhere</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in this site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living elsewhere</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid workers/contractors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO contracted by the government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

319
## Value of goods & services from contributors (In Rs. if monetary, if non-monetary provide description of goods)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>NGO</th>
<th>Family/friends</th>
<th>Original village</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iron bars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricks &amp; sand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapchi</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin sheets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof tiles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plinth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**END OF HOUSEHOLD SURVEY**
Appendix 2
Economic survey (Quantitative Component)

Q1) Describe cultivation by the household at the resettlement site in the completed agricultural year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land tenure (PAP, hired etc)</th>
<th>Describe quality of land. Has an application been filed to the GRA?</th>
<th>Area (acres)</th>
<th>Is it Irrigated?</th>
<th>Crops grown</th>
<th>Amount of crop production (Kg)</th>
<th>Used for home consumption?</th>
<th>If for sale what price was fetched?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q2) Has any land been leased out or sold by the household since resettlement? Yes No

Q3) In the last year were household consumption needs met without the purchase of grains? Yes No

Q4) जून गाम्वा तमारा घरमा माखो लेके रहेली जमीनमा मेती कस्तो करेका?
क आ जमीनमा हाई पासे लेके रहेली जमीन कर्नी?
ख आ जमीनमा केरली कर्नी?
ग आम्ला धु धु पाक्कु कर्नी?
घ तम्ने डेबले पेषा माण्ता कर्नी?
ण तम्ने डेबले पेषा माण्ता कर्नी?
Q4) Describe cultivation by the household in the original village in a typical year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land tenure (Legal, forest etc.)</th>
<th>Describe quality of land</th>
<th>Area (acres)</th>
<th>Crops grown</th>
<th>Amount of crop production (Kg)</th>
<th>Used for home consumption?</th>
<th>If for sale what price was fetched?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check List: Badhi, Banti, Bazra, Chillies, Jar, Kodra, Mool/moor, Maize, Masoor, Moong, Mung Phali, Red Bhindi, Rice, Tali, Tuwar, Urad.
Q5) Detail other sources of household income last year (other than crop sales)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Income</th>
<th>Tick all that apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labouring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other labour work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self employment eg.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of products eg. Milk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring out equipment e.g. tractor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of animals Poultry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q6) What were the regular sources of household income in the original village? Tick all that apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Income</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labouring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other labour work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self employment eg. taking people across the river, shepherd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of animals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q7) Employment of agricultural labourers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In the last agricultural year were any labourers employed?

In the original village were labourers employed?

Q8) Does the household have any loans or debts?

Yes, how much?  No

Q9) Provide details of livestock owned by the household in which you live/lived.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cows</th>
<th>How many of each do you have now?</th>
<th>Has the hh had the same number since resettlement?</th>
<th>How many did the hh have before leaving?</th>
<th>Reasons for change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Buffalo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q10) Describe changes to household’s diet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe hhs consumption of the following:</th>
<th>Don’t have now did before</th>
<th>Have less than before</th>
<th>Same as before</th>
<th>Have more than before</th>
<th>Didn’t have but do now</th>
<th>Reason for change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3
Economic survey (Qualitative component).

Q1) What is the difference between the land you cultivate now and the land you used to cultivate?

Q2) Where was it easier to feed the family?

Q3) Where is it easier to keep the household running (Ghar Chalva)?

Q4) If households consumption needs were not met without the purchase of grains why was this so?

Q5) Where did grain shortages occur more often, here or in your original villages?

Q6) Where was your diet better, here or in your original village?

Q7) How many people does a 5 acre plot comfortably support a) with irrigation, b) without irrigation?

Q8) How do you think things will change when you receive irrigation (Kandewal oustees only)?

Q9) Where was your children’s future better, here or in your original village?

Q10) Where did you house feel more full (bharelau ghar)?
Q11) Has the household become poorer or wealthier after resettlement?

Q12) Is the household or better or worse off?
Appendix 4
Individual Survey

Q1) Date of interview
Q2) Name of interviewee
Q3) Vasahat
Q4) Place of origin: village, including hamlet if applicable

Q5) What are the advantages if any of living here compared to your original village?

Illustrate which of the above are the most important by ranking (1=most important)

Q6) What are the disadvantages if any of living here compared to your original village?

Illustrate which of the above are the most important by ranking (1=most important)
### QUESTIONS ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q7) How satisfied are you with the location of your house-plot in the resettlement site?</th>
<th>Q8) Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied or dissatisfied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V dissatisfied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q9) Describe your overall level of satisfaction with this house in comparison to the dwelling unit you lived in prior to resettlement</th>
<th>Q10) What is the main reason for you answer?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much more satisfied than before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More satisfied than before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same level of satisfaction as before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less satisfied than before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much less satisfied than before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q11) What is the size of your present house compared to the house where you were living prior to resettlement?</th>
<th>Q12) If there is a change in size what effect does this have?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much larger than before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger than before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same as before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller than before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much smaller than before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q13) What was distance to the nearest house when you were living in your house in the original village?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance to Nearest House</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now much further from nearest house</td>
<td>Go to Q17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now further from nearest house</td>
<td>Go to Q17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same as before</td>
<td>Go to Q17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now Closer to nearest house</td>
<td>Go to Q14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now Much Closer to nearest house</td>
<td>Go to Q14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q14) How do you feel about living closer to other households?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like very much</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike very much</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q15) Are there any advantages to living in more compact villages?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantage</th>
<th>Most important (tick)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q16) Are there any disadvantages to living in more compact villages?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantage</th>
<th>Most important (tick)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTIONS ON ACTIVITIES & LESUIRE

1. तम्बे जुना गायमा न्याय माटे शुं करता हतास्का/शता हतास्का? अक्षीया शूं करो छ?

2. न्यायान्तर तम्ने अतीया धारण छ्याँ? त्या धारणे शश्वात्ता करु?

3. तम्ने त्या कराया या साख कर्त्यानु अक्षीया धारणे सजेनु पडेको, अथवापतिदेखि त्यापो सरपुञ्ज करो?

4. वास्तव साख कर्त्यानु माटे तम्बे जुना गायमा शुं करता हतास्का? अक्षीया शूं करो छ?

5. वास्तव साख कर्त्यानु तम्ने अक्षीया धारणे छ्याँ? त्या धारणे शश्वात्ता करु?

6. कप्रां धोराया माटे तम्बे जुना गायमा शुं करता हतास्का? अक्षीया शूं करो छ?

7. कप्रां धोरानु तम्ने अक्षीया धारणे छ्याँ? त्या धारणे शश्वात्ता करु?

8. तम्ने त्या करता अक्षीया सांध्यानु सजेनु पडेको, अथवापतिदेखि त्यापो सरपुञ्ज करो?

9. तम्ने शूवा माटे त्या सापूँ पडेको आक्षीया?

10. तम्ने आक्षीया कर्त्यानु माटे त्या सापूँ पडेको अक्षीया?

11. अक्षीया सेवा कर्त्यानु त्या सापूँ पडेको अक्षीया?

12. शर्तू सामान्य कर्त्यानु त्या सजेनु पडेको अक्षीया?

13. छब्बर्जोनी सासंभाजन/कृष्णभाजन/बिष्णु अक्षीया सारी पडेको त्या?
17) Describe changes if any in the following activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of activity</th>
<th>Place of activity</th>
<th>Level of difficulty in carrying out activity compared to before</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>River</td>
<td>Stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning body</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning house</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing dishes</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing clothes</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing/ cooking meals</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxing</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialising</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairing / maintaining house</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q18) Where is there more housework?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the vasahat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the original village</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q19) Why so?

Q20) How much time do you spend in this house compared to before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same amount (do spend time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same amount (didn’t spend time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q21) If more/less time why so?

Q22) Where did/do you have more free-time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leisure time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Q23) Where was it/is it more fun to spend free-time?

Q24) What did/do you do in your free-time?

Leisure time  | Original village | Vasahat |
-------------|-----------------|--------|
Q25) How many people drop-in to the house compared to before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than before</td>
<td>Go to Q23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same as before</td>
<td>Go to Q24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than before</td>
<td>Go to Q23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q26) How do you feel about fewer/greater people dropping-in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Like it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q27. तम्बादे वर्समां केटलीवार मा आपनेते वेश झाले किती?

पहेला कर्तामार्ग आत्मा पत्ती तमारू मा आपनेते वेश झालांत वयी गयुं के घडी गयुं?

वये म्हणे कि वेशाचा माणद माणांनी झाले आहे, आही ते सर्वं न किती?

Q. तम्बादे वर्समां केटलीवार म्हणून जवानी झाली?

पहेला कर्तामार्ग आत्मा पत्ती तमारू म्हणून जवानी झाली गयुं के घडी गयुं?

वये म्हणून जवानी वधारे माण होते, आही ते सर्वं न किती?

व. गुप्त वर्ष तम्बादे केटलीवार लगभग मग झाला कसा?

पहेला कर्तामार्ग आत्मा पत्ती तमारू लगभग जवानी वयी गयुं के घडी गयुं?

वये लगभग जवानी वधारे माण होते, आही ते सर्वं न किती?

छ. गुप्त वर्ष तम्बादे केटलीवार वाचरीया ते मग झाला कसा?

पहेला कर्तामार्ग आत्मा पत्ती तमारू वाचरीया जवानी वयी गयुं के घडी गयुं?

वये वाचरीया जवानी वधारे माण होते, आही ते सर्वं न किती?

२. गुप्त वर्ष तम्बादे केटलीवार तत्तेवरमा मग झाला कसा?

पहेला कर्तामार्ग आत्मा पत्ती तत्तेवरमा जवानी वयी गयुं के घडी गयुं?

वये तत्तेवरमा जवानी वधारे माण होते, आही ते सर्वं न किती?

छ. गुप्त वर्ष तम्बादे केटलीवार भेजवमा मग झाला कसा?

तम्बे जणू गणमा कसा तयारी वधारे वार झाले के महीने वधारे वार झाले किती?

वये भेजवमा जवानी वधारे माण होते, आही ते सर्वं न किती?
Q27) Describe frequency/attendance of the following social activities and enjoyment of the activity compared to before

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of social event</th>
<th>Frequency of visits last year?</th>
<th>How many times did you attend such an event last year?</th>
<th>Frequency/level of attendance compared to before</th>
<th>How enjoyable are these visits/events compared to before?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>Every few months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to parents' house?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a guest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival (esp. religious)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mela</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**QUESTIONS ON SOCIAL RELATIONS & SUPPORT NETWORKS**

### Q28 How do you find the people originally from...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devdi, Hafeshwar?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panderia?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhumna?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charbara?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q29 Do you like living in a vasahat with people from different original villages?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefer it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t mind either way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would prefer own villagers only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q30 How do you feel about people from your village living in different vasahats?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefers it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislikes it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q31 Have the number of arguments within the household changed after resettlement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Didn’t fight before but do now</th>
<th>Greater fights</th>
<th>same as before: fights</th>
<th>Same as before: no fights</th>
<th>Fewer fights</th>
<th>Fought before, never now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q32) Have the number of arguments within the household changed after resettlement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>didn’t argue before and do now</th>
<th>Greater arguments</th>
<th>same as before: arguments</th>
<th>Same as before: no arguments</th>
<th>Fewer arguments</th>
<th>Argued before, never now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Q33) If you have a problem or when you are feeling bad about something are there individuals you can talk to?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yes, had no-one before</th>
<th>yes, have more than before</th>
<th>yes, have same as before</th>
<th>yes, but have less than before</th>
<th>no, but did have before</th>
<th>no, no-one before either</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Q34) When in need of practical support for the following is it as readily available?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yes, wasn’t before</th>
<th>yes, more than before</th>
<th>yes, same as before</th>
<th>yes, less than before</th>
<th>no, but was before</th>
<th>no, wasn’t before either</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Q35) What is the nature of your contact with host villagers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No relation at all i.e. do not ever speak to any host villagers</th>
<th>Casual relationship i.e. chat on the road, way to field, at local shops, when bumping into each other</th>
<th>Friendship—will specifically go to them for a chat, socialise etc.</th>
<th>When in need of something</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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Q36) How do you find the host villagers?

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very friendly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q37) Have you received any help from host villagers?  
Yes (give details below)  
No (Go to Q38)

Q38) Have you experienced any trouble from host villagers?  
Yes (give details below)  
No (Go to Q39)
QUESTIONS ON AMENITIES / HEALTH CARE

Q39) Do you suffer from any of the following since being here?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>yes, never had it before</th>
<th>yes, more than before</th>
<th>yes, same as before</th>
<th>yes, less than before</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach cramps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body aches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No

never

had it before

more

than before

same

as before

less

than before
Q40.  Are there any illnesses you used to get but haven't suffered from since resettlement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes (detail below)</th>
<th>No (Go to Q41)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q41.  Have you visited people at other resettlement sites?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, name them below</th>
<th>No, go to Q</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q42.  How do you find your vasahat compared to other vasahats (based on personal visits or hearsay)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Better than most I know about</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same as others I know about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worse than most I know about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### GENERAL QUESTIONS

П.3. Возьмите традиционный вопрос о том, где вы родились, и в каком месте вы переехали после этого?

П.4. Каковы причины переезда после рождения?

Q43) Describe residential history, including changes of housing within the same place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At birth</th>
<th>Reason for move</th>
<th>Place 2</th>
<th>Reason for move</th>
<th>Place 3</th>
<th>Reason for move</th>
<th>Place 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takula</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamlet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q44) How do your fears (if have any) of the things listed below compare to before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things listed below</th>
<th>no fear there or here</th>
<th>no fear there, but fear here</th>
<th>Same fear there &amp; here</th>
<th>fear there &amp; here (unspecified)</th>
<th>fear there &amp; here but less now</th>
<th>fear there &amp; here but more now</th>
<th>Fear there, but none here</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal attack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft from field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accident causing injury</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccessibility of medical treatment in emergency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q45) How many times has your house been burgled?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In your original village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since resettlement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ans. Sribhujan Shreepawar)

Q46) Did you have money of your own before? (For female interviewees only)

Q47) Do you have money of your own? (For female interviewees only)
Q46) Did you have money of your own before? (For female interviewees only)

Q47) Do you have money of your own? (For female interviewees only)

Q48) Does you miss your old village?

No, (Go to Q49)

Yes, (Give details & tick most important)

Q49) Do you like going back to your original village?

Yes, (Give details below)

No, (Give details below)

Q50) Does Kandewal/Vadaj feel like your own place?

Yes, give reason below

No, give reason below

Invite interviewees to make further comments if they wish.
## Appendix 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Diagram</th>
<th>Description/Explanation</th>
<th>Cultivation arrangement</th>
<th>Residential arrangement</th>
<th>% of hh Before</th>
<th>% of hh After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Diagram 1" /></td>
<td>Independent of other Hhs</td>
<td>Hh members living in one detached dwelling</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Diagram 2" /></td>
<td>Cultivates all land jointly with another Hh</td>
<td>Hh members living in one detached dwelling</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Diagram 3" /></td>
<td>Cultivates some of their land with another Hh</td>
<td>Hh members living in one detached dwelling</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Diagram 4" /></td>
<td>Independent of other Hhs</td>
<td>Hh members in different detached houses</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Diagram 5" /></td>
<td>Independent of other Hhs</td>
<td>Hh members in one 'semi-detached' dwelling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Diagram 6" /></td>
<td>Cultivates all land jointly with another Hh</td>
<td>Hh members in one 'semi-detached' dwelling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Diagram 7" /></td>
<td>Independent of other Hhs</td>
<td>Hh members occupying both parts of 'semi-detached' dwelling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Diagram All" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Hh = household or Hhs = households, defined as members who eat together

- A Household
- Links households that cultivate some of their land jointly
- Links households that cultivate all of their land jointly
List of References


Downing, T. (1999a) ‘Evidence from Balaji Pandey’s depriving the underprivileged for development is launched into a storm of policy controversy on international involuntary resettlement’ (WWW) (http://www.policykiosk.com/policy/pandey.htm; 3 February 1999).


