

HUMDAM

People. Property. Power.

Effective Conservation Through Education Campaign

Humdam aims towards helping the communities that have been relocated from their native villages because of construction of dams, industrial plants, commercial/residential buildings and complexes for monetary gains and/or economic purposes.





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DAMMED. DISPLACED. DISTRESSED.

Since India's independence in 1947, there has been a surge of economic development activities in the form of massive infrastructure development projects such as the construction of dams for power and irrigation, the building of roads, urbanization, mining, building of thermal power plants, etc. Proponents of large dams argue that only these types of massive projects can improve India's economy and the lives of millions of people. According to Central Water Commission (CWC) India has 5,202 large dams already. But the flip side of this sort of development is that it has displaced more than 42 lakh people in the country.

Displacements due to dams and canals have been traumatic and dehumanising. The displaced family's livelihood, their family, kinship systems, cultural identity and informal social networks were badly affected and disrupted. The condition of the women is even more traumatic. Lack of policy framework and social securities has made them insecure and psychologically very weak.

"If you are to suffer, you should suffer in the interest of the country."

- Jawaharlal Nehru, *speaking to the villagers who were to be displaced by the Hirakud Dam in 1948.*

WHAT DOES HUMDAM DO?

The social impacts of dams are huge, and only those who have been displaced live to tell the negative consequences that transcend through generations. Humdam recommends that dam projects that would displace a large number of people should never be built, as it is very difficult to restore lost cultures, traditions and livelihoods completely.

What does Humdam do?

Humdam, is an education and outreach campaign that works with dam-affected communities to fully realize and understand their rights, acknowledge the impacts of resettlement, and navigate the complex but necessary negotiations.

What is the mode of operation for Humdam?

Humdam houses a team of ecologists, environmentalists, socialists, lawyers and artists who examine the relocation and resettlement policies closely. They work in direct relation with people who have been evicted from their lands and provide them with social, medical, economical and educational aid. It also aims to bridge the gap between the people and legislative bodies to gain rightful fair compensation in

cash and kind, both. They help the communities understand the complicated processes and help them in easier and beneficial decision making.

What will be some of the tools used by Humdam?

Humdam assimilates indigenous knowledge with modern tools to provide a holistic education and outreach campaign movement. They use modern methods of learning with academics, performance art, vocational and remedial training, socio cultural and labour education to uplift their understanding and familiarise them with the new land settlements and requirements.

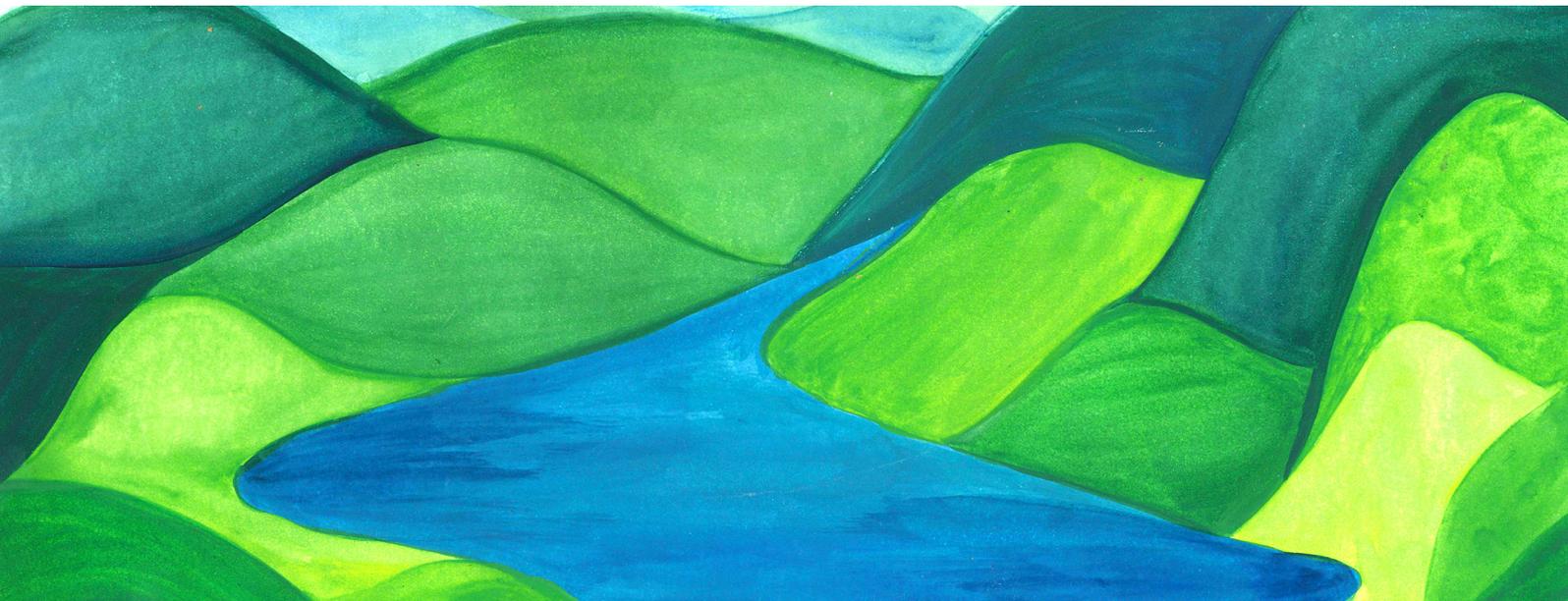
Does sustainability mean keeping the existing traditions alive?

Habitat loss is not the only loss that these communities

face. Their temples, livelihood, generation-generation occupations, religious practices are also lost. Removal of their ancestral lands lead to a destruction of their physiological, mental and socio-cultural health. Thus to sustain the environment, along with biodiversity, it is also important to keep their stories and traditions alive.

Is a rightful reconciliation between people and relocation possible?

A fair compensation is possible when the government, project developers and the affected communities reach a common ground of negotiation for remuneration and compensation. This is only possible when there is a smooth flow of communication with correct understanding.



INITIATION AND PROPAGATION - WORKING MODEL

A startup plan serves several purposes. It helps convince investors or lenders to finance one's undertaking. It also persuades partners or key employees to join the venture. Most importantly, it serves as a roadmap guiding the launch and growth of a new operation.

Our mission at Humdam is to provide safety, service and security to people and communities who have been displaced from their ancestral lands because of mega developmental projects. We look into the environmental impacts and assess the degradation that has occurred due to inundation of forests and fields. We try to make sure that the rehabilitated people are fairly compensated and provided with the same environments to settle in, decent job opportunities, entitled land and vocational training along with cultural and traditional preservation.

Our vision is to see Humdam emerge as a national chain working closely with communities and environment through science, conservation, education and management. Together, these activities change attitudes towards nature and help people imagine lives that are restored after a major

setback. We hope to rekindle their aspirations and dreams for a better life and a hopeful future with protection and security.

Partnerships and Collaborations- We aim to combine long term collaborations with local communities to resolve conflicts and reduce their stress and dysfunction because of relocation and resettlement. Also, reduce their impacts on wildlife, with careful policy interventions. We support and build national education, conservation and preservation capacity at all spatial and social scales. We hope to work with partners who include India's Central and State governments, local and international NGOs, media, social leaders and passionate community conservation leaders who are deeply rooted in local societies that live in proximity to dams and reservoirs.

Advertising and Marketing - We aim to invite scholars, readers, enthusiasts, practitioners of various studies in environment, geography, sciences and ecology. This intensive task of advertising our campaign will be achieved through films, print medium such as books, magazines and will be shared across schools, colleges, NGOs and in the undeniable social media platforms. Hosting youth forums, talks and panel sessions, workshops about the same can also be a very intricate and an inviting method. Providing internships and fellowship programmes to students will also enrich this program further by helping the students work towards a common objective of knowing, helping and supporting our communities, societies and the nation at large.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

TOOLS AND METHODS

Humdam thrives to help dam-affected communities fully realize and understand their rights, appreciate the impacts of resettlement, and navigate the complex but necessary negotiations. In the early stages of a project, developers typically promise to provide better living standards. We assist the disappointed communities when these promises are not materialized. In most cases, it is too late to reverse the process, and may involve prolonged court cases that leave everyone bruised.

- Education and informed practices are typically the most important tools that allow the preservation of tribal cultures and assimilation in the modern mainstream.
- Group discussions and activities along with personal interviews and discourses are imperative to hear the strained voices of the communities.
- Organizing cultural meetings and social gatherings can help sustain traditional values, festivals

and practices alive, helping the communities to get familiarised in their new environments.

- Using creative aids such as art, dance, drama or poetry and writing will help alleviate psychological distress and trauma.
- Creative learning tools like interactive games, state-of-the-art web and mobile applications will facilitate learning and understanding in modern contexts.
- Vocational training in arts, crafts, farming and fishing knowledge and training for tourism based activities can help generate additional

income and productivity.

- New settlements that look and feel familiar can help trigger mental acquaintance and ease adaptability.
- Occupations that are inherited from generations can be promoted by providing a niche that requires to meet those demands.
- Maintaining unity and understanding the differences cooperatively can help revive the lost livelihood and traditions affecting their physical, social and mental health.

Education is one of the most powerful tools in conservation as it allows people to gain awareness, skills, and knowledge, while providing opportunities to participate in decision-making. Once people understand their environment and are aware of how its problems affect them, they are more motivated to work towards finding solutions that improve their community and support the biodiversity they cohabitate with.

RESETTLEMENT GUIDES

Dams are not built without incurring a significant cost. In addition to large amounts of fiscal deposits being invested, it brings about substantial adverse impacts on the physical environment, disrupting the lives and the lifestyles of people living in the reservoir area or of those dependent on this area. Though, hydropower provides a non-polluting source of energy that may be generated in increasing amounts for the growing needs of overwhelming populations, it is also submerging forests, villages, cultures, communities and civilizations.

- There must be options to avoid or minimize the negative impacts of the construction.
- The government who has approved of the plan and the developers, engineers or financiers who are running the project must communicate with the affected individuals and communities, at large.
- If the developmental impacts are unavoidable, the people have the right to fair compensation in order to cover their losses.

There must be a strong involvement of the affected communities, women, youth, indigenous people, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

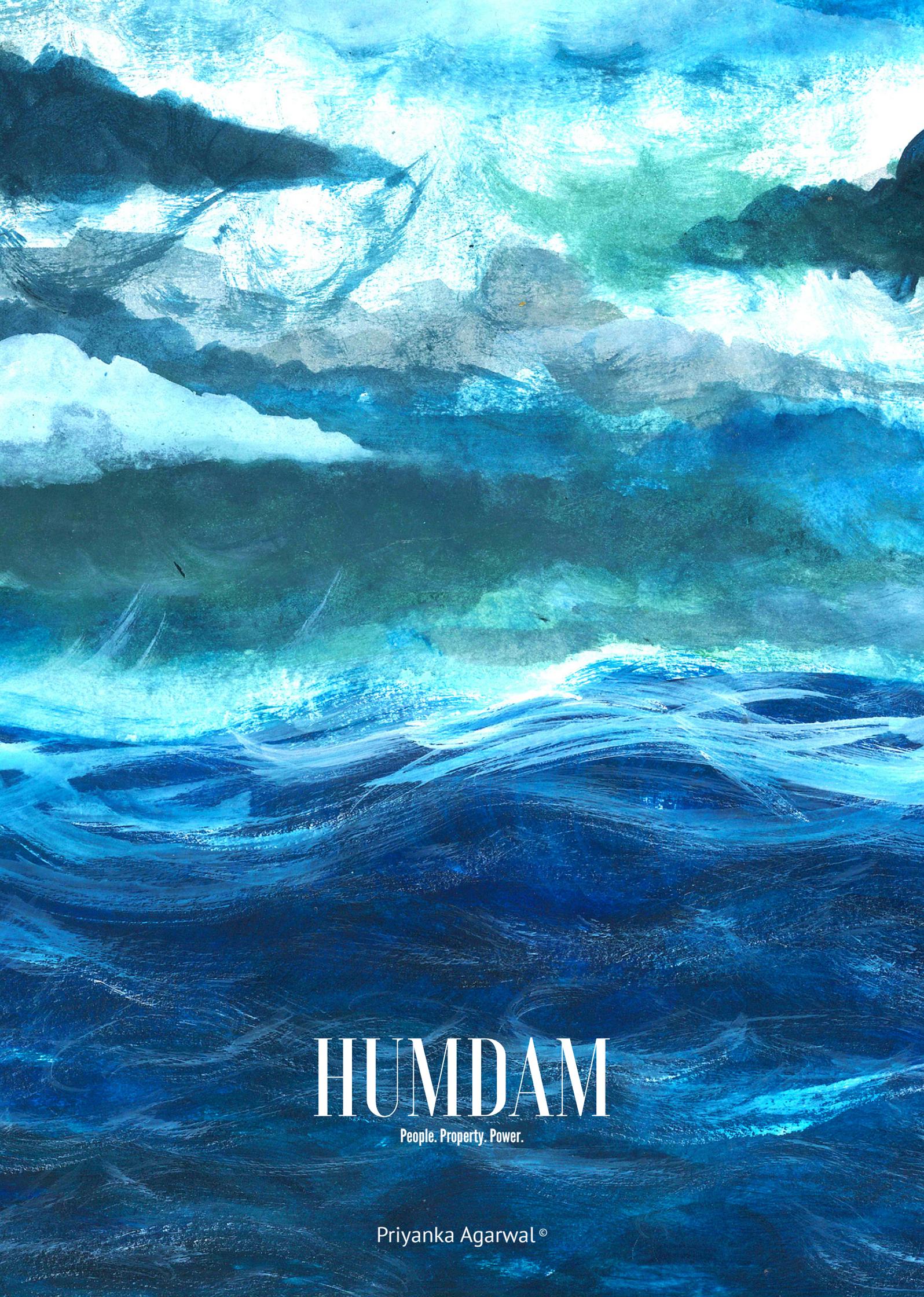
- All information must be presented in an understandable material, discussed orally in local languages.
- They must allow enough time

to the communities to absorb and assimilate this information.

- Focus groups, discussions and interviews with communities or their representatives must be conducted and documented at each stage. They should also facilitate discussions with women only groups.
- New settlements provided must be given in their own environments. Even the oustees (landless people) should be given the assurance of entitled land and employment.
- All sorts of legal rights and other kinds of additional protection must be given under the new 'Resettlement Action Plan', which must be available in oral and written formats available to the general public in multiple languages.
- There must be a 'Dispute Resolution Mechanism' that aims towards minimizing the impacts of the development on the biodiversity and human communities.

- They must be compensated in cash and kind, both. The cash itself is not enough to restore livelihoods but is necessary for initial food and income.
- The developers should build new homes and settlements for the displaced communities and provide them with access to natural resources such as water, forests and agricultural lands.
- The communities must also beget the benefits generated from the development projects such as power and electricity, fishing in the reservoir, access to non-timber forest products, and they must always request for vocational training and the choice between agricultural and non-agricultural jobs.
- There must be an equal representation of men and women heads in the families in the new entitled land documents.

The communities are entitled to have lawyers or organizations that can help them through these complex processes and important negotiations.



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