

Who pays the price for development? Evidence from selected videos

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Abstract:

Broadly speaking, development apparently intends to improve the livelihoods of the poor and marginalised people. However, this paper assesses whether this is always the case. Could development come at a price? If yes, who pays the price? This paper investigates this further based on cinematic representations of three non-fiction documentary videos: *Drowned Out* (2002), *Dying for a Bargain* (2013), and *Black Gold* (2006). Interpretive analyses of the storylines of these videos suggest that despite the promises of making a positive change for the better, development, often in practice, might affect the poorest through unfair wage and calls for ‘sacrifices’ for a so-called larger common good.

Keywords: Development, video, poor, India, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, coffee, ready-made garments (RMG)

1. Introduction

Traditionally, international development (henceforth development) is understood as a process of distributing grants/loans from Western countries to poor/developing countries mainly through bilateral and multilateral agencies for various programmes/projects (Wilkins and Enghel, 2013). While such view offers a somewhat simplified understanding, many scholars argue that development is a contested concept in its present form (see Eriksson Baaz, 2005; Nederveen Pieterse, 2009) as was in its previous incarnation as colonialism (Escobar, 2011). Although there is no universal consensus on *what is development* but, broadly speaking, development is essentially about change: not just any change, a change for the better (Slim, 1995: 143). In other words, development aims for an upward where positive change can take place in the social system with a focus on how developing countries can improve the living standards of poor, marginalised and vulnerable citizens (Myrdal, 1974: 729; Kingsbury, 2008:1). But, surely developing countries are not a homogenous category, nor are the poor people who live there. Like all other societies, there is a range of actors with diverse interests engaged in various forms of politics, policy-making, and myriad development activities. Policy choices in developing countries (also in other countries) are not mere technical matters. Instead, policy choices can be likened as a field or theatre where variable interests of diverse actors are being negotiated, accommodated, rejected, compromised and reconciled. Making positive change, thus, require a rebalancing of both power and resources, although a body of literature (e.g. Majone, 1989; Houtzager, 2005; Presthus, 2010; Sutton, 1999) manifest that it is mainly the elites who devise development projects, often in the name of poor, marginalised and other vulnerable groups. This paper, however, argues that there is a gap in existing literature in detailing how the negotiations, inclusions, exclusions, compromises of assorted interests are being reconciled. Who wins and who loses? Ideally, development must make sense to people. Particularly to the poor and marginalised who are supposedly development's main intended beneficiaries. This paper, based on selected videos¹, investigates to what extent this is the case. Can the

¹ This is a broad category. Among others, it is comprised of films (including commercial popular films, and non-commercial documentaries), television shows, advertisements (e.g. commercial, and non-commercial [such as awareness campaign] advertisements), and various other promotional videos. Here, the term video has been adopted to represent this broad category of visual documents.

poor and marginalised make sense of development? Or, they think development come at a price? If yes, who pays the price? Before moving on to explore this further a brief note on why videos are chosen to understand this would be useful.

There is no doubt that videos can convey a visceral sense of a given social situation/issue more vividly than academic texts or policy reports (Lewis et. al., 2013). Public understanding of development is a difficult area. As Smith and Yanacopulos (2004: 660) assert that ‘there are multiple public faces of development’ which reflects ‘a complex situation about which we have relatively little understanding’. In understanding such complexities Lewis et. al. (2013) insist that videos can be a useful starting point. Given this context, three non-fiction videos have been selected for this paper to explore who, if anybody, pays the price for development. These are *Drowned Out* (2002)², *Dying for a Bargain* (2013)³, and *Black Gold* (2006)⁴.

The author used the selected videos as course materials for post-graduate and undergraduate degrees in International Development in a UK university, along with other videos such as *A Week of Sweet Water* (1985), *Sarkar Raj* (2008), *Dear Asian Development Bank* (2009), *Tsotsi* (2005), *Salaam Bombay!* (1988), *Matir Moyna/The*

² Released in 2002 and directed by Franny Armstrong, this video tells the true story of one family’s (along with other villagers of Jalsindhi in central India) stand against the destruction of their land, homes, and culture because of a large dam building project. This video has been screened in a number of film festivals across the world and several television channels in the UK, Europe, USA and India. *Drowned Out* was short-listed for Best British Documentary in the British Independent Film Awards (BIFA), in 2005. For more details see: <http://www.spannerfilms.net/films/drownedout>

³ A British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) documentary for its Panorama programme. Panorama is a weekly investigative current affairs programme that was launched first in 1953 and claims to be the longest running public affairs television programme in the world (BBC, 2014). *Dying for a Bargain* was aired on 27 September 2013 and according to the official website it ‘investigates how our [citizens of the Western countries] clothes - including those of some big high street brands - are really made. It finds evidence of shocking working conditions and an industry that still puts profit before workers’ safety. A BBC reporting team discover people working 19-hour days, security guards who lock in the workers and factory owners who hide the truth from western retailers’ (see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03bvmyf>).

⁴ Directed by Nick Francis and Marc Francis (Speakit Films) *Black Gold* was released in 2006. This video is about the coffee farmers of Ethiopia who struggle to make a decent living from farming coffee despite being told that their coffee is gold while intermediaries and large multinational companies are making millions of dollars out of global coffee trade. According to the official website of this film, “coffee is a universal experience enjoyed by billions of people on a daily basis and is part of an industry worth over \$80 billion a year. But, the people behind the product are in crisis with millions of growers fast becoming bankrupt. Nowhere more evident is this paradox than in Ethiopia, the birthplace of coffee”. *Black Gold* has been screened in over 60 international film festivals across the world, and won the Best British Documentary prize by the British Independent Film Awards (BIFA) in 2007. For more details see: <https://blackgoldmovie.com/>

Clay Bird (2002), *Eunuchs – India’s Third Gender* (1991), *Bosnia: We Are All Neighbors* (1994), *Drowned Out* (2002), *Dying for a Bargain* (2013) and *Black Gold* (2006) are selected because the topics covered in these videos are closely related to the main focuses of this paper (e.g. i) constructing a large dam under the rhetoric of ‘larger common good’ vis-à-vis indigenous communities’ right to land (*Drowned Out*), ii) fast fashion in the Western world and consequent labour exploitation in developing countries (*Dying for a Bargain*), and iii) multinational companies making massive profits at the expense of poor farmers in global coffee trade (*Black Gold*). Certainly, these embody some of the major issues in international development and, therefore, offer excellent options to systematically assess whether development comes at a price, and if yes, who pays that price. In addition to the relevance of topics, there are few other reasons to select these videos. Firstly, duration of these videos (each of these videos are at least half an hour or longer) are appropriate in understanding the question at hand with sufficient depth and breadth. Secondly, regional representation: selected videos cover two main regions (e.g. South Asia and Africa) where majority of the global poor people live (United Nations, 2014). Thirdly, as documentaries (see section-2 for a discussion on how documentaries can enhance the social research tradition), the selected videos offer a range of views in representing and explaining the social world. To elaborate, *Dying For a Bargain* includes the views of readymade garment workers along with outlooks from activists, garment factory owners, mid-level supervisors, security guards, national as well as international experts, and representatives of cognate local/global readymade garment associations. *Drowned Out* emphasises on depicting the plights of one family (a traditional medicine man’s family) who are at the risk of losing their habitat of several generations along with a number of other affected villagers. Their perspectives are crosschecked with high-level government officials, ministers, representatives of a social movement, an internationally reputed writer, and consultants worked for a major donor such as the World Bank. *Black Gold* represents the opinions of the coffee farmers, cooperative supervisor, community leaders, baristas participating in international competitions, ordinary citizens of London (UK) and Seattle (USA), as well as the representatives of World Trade Organization (WTO). The final reason to select these videos are the author’s ability to understand languages used in these videos. The author has a strong grasp in understanding the main language of these videos (English) along with other

languages used (such as Bengali and Hindi) for interviewing/representing the views of different participants/stakeholders.

In analysing these videos, a framework of interpretive analysis⁵ for cinematographic representations has been adopted. For Lewis et. al. (2013; 2014) despite the limitations and opportunities, cinematic representations focus on the power of representations to shape and influence popular conceptions of development. Analyses are done through watching the videos several times, transcribing the dialogues and storylines in texts, and conducting qualitative content analysis by reading and re-reading the created transcripts as well as following up the patterns emerged in this process. In using videos available in public domain, it might be deemed appropriate that real names can be used for research purposes. However, there remain concerns with anonymity concerning the use of identifiable images of people, whether or not the people are being identified by their real names in actual videos⁶. This paper has attempted to address the ethical issues of using videos in social research (Pauwels, 2008); particularly that of anonymity by using the occupations of the participants/characters appeared in selected videos except in the instances where this was not possible (such as in presenting the views of an internationally renowned novelist in *Drowned Out*).

The structure of the paper is as follows: the next section (section-2) provides a conceptual framework on whether/how videos through cinematographic representations can contribute to the critical scholarship of development. This paved the ground for analysing the selected videos and making theoretically informed arguments for the rest of the paper. Section-3 incorporates some representational and interpretive evidence, mainly through the texts, from the selected videos. Based on the conceptual framework and evidence presented in section-3, section-4 offers a critical

⁵ According to Alexander (2008), researchers employ this framework to capture hidden meaning, ambiguity, and inter-connectivity among visual materials. She insists that rather than sticking to surface appearances only, interpretive analysis can capture richness of meaning and can give more weight to important cases. In this paper, this is done mainly through the interpretation of texts as delineated in the storylines of the selected videos.

⁶ For Wiles et. al. (2012), anonymity provides one of the ethical challenges when names are already used in videos selected for a research. It is, nonetheless, also an advantage that people appearing in those videos may have given their consents to the video production teams considering related issues of safety and other risks in expressing the views made in those documents.

analysis in exploring the main objectives of this paper further⁷. Section-5 draws the conclusion.

2. Conceptual Framework

Contemporary social lives are dominated by the visuals and researchers are increasingly taking advantages of this visuality (Alexander, 2008). Videos are one of the key techniques that can represent/analyse social issues, as Pink (2009) insists that videos are important documents commonly used for research purposes. With a long history in social science research, particularly in ethnographic research, videos have become popular for data collection among sociologists as well as among those working in education, health, social anthropology, social policy, and social work (Wiles et. al., 2012; Pink, 2001). Interdisciplinarity, one of the major strengths of using videos in social research, offers an almost unique dimension that is not achievable with traditional research techniques (Hadfield and Haw, 2012). Assorted forms of videos (such as films, television shows, advertisements) can add important insights on how the social and political worlds are shaped and diverse narratives are (re)produced. For Wagner (2006), as a form of distillations of direct observation, videos generate visible data and provide important artefacts for visualising and representing social theory⁸. Contemporary interests in using videos for social research can be explained through methodological development as well as through a broader cultural turn to gain deeper understandings of social realities (Friedland and Mohr, 2004; Schembri and Boyle, 2013). To elaborate, cultural distinction and perceived persuasive power of videos make it increasingly popular within participatory, emancipatory and action research where videos are treated as a medium that has the capacity to engage a mass or non-specialist audiences with the processes and outcomes of research (Braden, 1999). In this context, the link between videos and development, seem to be a benevolent one. This is further elaborated in the rest of this section.

⁷ This needs to be clearly stated that although section-4 finds, as cinematographically represented in selected videos, it is the poor and marginalised people who often pay the prices for development projects, but this paper does not argue this to be a universal pattern or truth. This is further illustrated in the conclusion.

⁸ As Becker (1998) argues that visualisation and images are at the heart of sociological inquiry, while Wagner (2006) asserts that one common objective of understanding a society is the production and refinement of an image that we are studying.

For a number of scholars (such as Croy and Buchmann, 2009; Di Cesare and La Salandra, 2010), among different types of videos, films could be a motivational driver and considered as a valuable source of information for research. Films play an important role in constructing perceptions and impressions about social conditions of a society (Gupta and Gupta, 2013). The visual element of a film's narrative 'goes well beyond what can be expressed in words' (Suber, 2006: xxix–xxx) creating a space in which people can discuss and decide to act on (Whiteman, 2004). Films are also well capable of representing particular types of situations or events (such as, poverty, conflict, or a specific context) much more immediately (Lewis et al., 2013; Zarkov, 2014; Gupta and Gupta, 2013). There are two broad categories of films: popular fiction, and, non-fiction documentary films⁹. This paper focuses on non-fiction documentary films. Therefore, the rest of this section elaborates how documentaries and development are intertwined. This is not to imply any limitations of fiction films - a brief note on how they also can shed lights on development issues might be useful here. Coser (1963: 3) insists that although fiction films are not a substitute for systematically accumulated certified knowledge but they provide researchers with a wealth of important and credible evidence. According to Power and Crampton (2007: 6) popular films can also offer critical insights in solving (geo)political uncertainty by framing a new form of politics. In recent years, popular films such as *Blood Diamond* (2006), *the Hurt Locker* (2008), and *the Constant Gardener* (2005) have presented stories that attempt both to entertain and to engage audiences with important global issues. Whereas, *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) and *City of God* (2002) have drawn attention to numerous development issues (namely poverty, young people, gang culture, social deprivation etc.).

Returning to the focus of this paper, non-fiction films such as documentaries can take the form of video case studies and visual ethnographies (Pink, 2001; Schembri and Boyle, 2013). In understanding *who pays the price for development* it is important to (re)recognise that documentary filmmaking has been motivated by the desires for social change, ranging from the New Deal documentary films of Pare Lorentz in the

⁹ Apart from these two categories, theme based promotional videos and advertisements can also be used for development related issues such as creating awareness, social mobilisation, fundraising etc. (for more details see Shain, 2013; Hickel, 2014; Switzer, 2013).

1930s, to feminist documentaries of the 1970s, to other independent work (Aitken, 1992; Lesage, 1984; Zimmerman, 2000). For Whiteman (2004), a documentary film is essentially an intervention into an ongoing social and political process and may act as a catalyst in many different ways. According to Protess et al. (1991), the effects of investigative journalism on policymaking processes provide a useful framework that can be adapted in considering the impact of documentary films¹⁰. Few notable examples are *Blue Planet 2* (2017), *This Changes Everything* (2015) and *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006). These documentaries have brought forward the issues of global warming, plastic pollution and climate change in global policy dialogues by generating a lot of interests beyond traditional audiences.

According to Nichols (2016; 2010), documentaries are marked by a commitment to the exploration of social realities both as a way of taking hold of reality and as a new form of social persuasion. Documentaries do not represent fictional storyline, and, tend to offer important social data with more accuracy by combining journalistic investigative techniques and the power of cinematic representations inherent in film (Pink, 2003). Within the process, documentaries can be powerful tool for learning, and giving voice to participants to express their concerns and raising awareness for important topics by showing the participants in their natural environment and trying to discover what is important for society (Moura, Almeida and Geerts, 2016). Drawing attention to the larger issues of cross-cultural interpretations, documentaries tell the researchers stories and participants' understanding of the real world (Nichols, 2010). The use of documentaries, thus, offer innovative opportunities for presenting polyphonic account of social realities, taking the research findings beyond conventional academic audiences (Morgan, Game and Slutskaya, 2018), and reaching the larger population as an interpretive medium for inspiring, creative and reflexive purposes (Patino, 2014). Documentaries also enable the researchers to share and change the world (Gaines, 2015) by allowing one to see human relations in their natural settings (Walker, 2015) and asking what are the conceptual elective affinities or frictions among geo-locative representations of people and places, among

¹⁰ For example, to assess impact on policy outcomes, Protess and colleagues (1991: 247) identify three types of impact: deliberative ('when policy makers hold formal discussions of policy problems and their solutions, such as legislative hearings or executive commissions'), individualistic ('when policy makers apply sanctions against particular persons or entities, including prosecutions, firings, and demotions'), and substantive ('regulatory, legislative, and/or administrative changes').

geographical imaginations (Gregory, 1993). Although there are some concerns related to potential political bias, possible lack of academic rigour and likely difficulties in combining documentaries with other forms of academic evidence, but Belk (2011) insists there is a broader consensus that documentaries are a valuable and extremely under-utilised source of material for researchers. It is clear that documentaries offer creative options and new avenues in social research transforming from what can be done *for* the participants to what can be done *with* the participants. In doing so, possible concerns including selection bias of the participants and personal/political bias of the documentary maker/producer can be minimised through involving and representing the views of multiple stakeholders (in the context of this paper, see section-1 on how selected videos have incorporated views from a range of stakeholders in offering competing and contrasting views).

While the concepts and images of development are inevitably represented in a wide variety of ways (within academia, policy world, or the public domain), Lewis et. al. (2013) argue that the ways videos and documentaries play a role in shaping and reflecting popular perceptions of development cannot be easily ignored. For Stupples (2014), the most obvious form of instrumentalisation in development context is tying the visual with development issues and seeing their values in communicative capacity to educate the public about particular issue(s). Cowen and Shenton (1995:27) contend that all forms of development knowledge can be, and historically have been, largely understood as a series of stories. According to Lewis et. al. (2008), storytelling as a narrative form and analyses of those narratives as a credible research method have long existed within the social sciences. Visual narratives and stories can come in the shapes of case studies of individual/collective experience or, more broadly, as video ethnographies – like the documentaries selected for this paper. While such narrative style have long formed a part of the interdisciplinary field of development studies, they have rarely been part of the mainstream. Documentaries and other videos can be analysed from different angles (such as through discourse analysis, narrative analysis, content analysis). But, conceptual framework discussed in this section has led the analysis of this paper to focus primarily on the individual/collective narratives and storylines of the selected videos rather than the discourse, contents, technicality or nature of the videos. The aim here is to explore whether these different videos delineate common theme(s) mainly through text analysis of their narrated storylines

that might answer the main question raised in section-1, and thereby, contribute to the development scholarship. Some narrative evidence are provided in the next section based on the texts found in the storylines of each video to understand who, if anybody, has to pay the price for development.

3. Evidence from Selected Videos

Drowned Out

Drowned Out (henceforth, DO), the first video used in this paper, starts by showing the people of Jalsindhi village (India) are in the water up to their necks, chanting ‘rokengey bhai rokengey, sardar sarovar rokengey’ meaning *we will stop, stop the Sardar Sarovar [Dam]*¹¹ (0:02). The video describes that people of Jalsindhi (and 244 other villages) will need to move out from their habitats so that construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam (SSD)¹² can proceed.

Insert Image-1 around here

SSD is a mega development project that caused a lot of desolation as the main character in DO, a traditional medicine-man, suggests ‘there is anger, but who do we tell. Because of the dam, everyone will lose their homes’ (2:30). While the villagers are in great distress glaring excitements are captured among the government officials. As the Chief Engineer of the SSD project suggests ‘there should be small dams,

¹¹ Throughout the paper, the quotations are included as appeared/told in the selected videos (using subtitles where these were not expressed in English). However, at times, clarifying notes have been included within [...].

¹² The official narrative of Sardar Sarovar Dam is (as can be found in <http://www.sardarsarovardam.org/project.aspx>): the Project is one of the largest water resources project of India covering four major states - Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Dam's spillway discharging capacity (30.7 lakhs cusecs) is third highest in the world. With 1133 cumecs (40000 cusecs) capacity at the head regulator, and 532 km. length, the Narmada Main Canal would be the largest irrigation canal in the world. The dam will be the third highest concrete dam (163 meters) in India and in terms of the volume of concrete involved for gravity dams, this dam will be ranking as the second largest in the world with an aggregate volume of 6.82 million cu.m. Against this backdrop, the narrator in the video describes that once completed, the reservoir will be 200 kilometres long and 245 villages will be submerged. The dam will then divert the Narmada River into a huge canal system which aims to redistribute water across Gujarat and Rajasthan. In contextualising further, it also states, with no water thousands of people have left Gujarat and more than 200 villages have been abandoned, the fields have turned into deserts. People who are still living in drought prone areas are dependent on government's emergency water supply (14:00).

medium dams and large dams across the rivers in India, so that India can become self-sufficient in electricity and food' (9:43). The Minister for Narmada Irrigation (henceforth the Minister) insists that 'if anybody else can do it in the world [build large dams], we can do it better' (10:09). For the Minister, SSD is a *civil engineering marvel* and the dam would serve the noble purpose of providing sustainable water supply for farmers, and drinking water to 8215 villages and 135 urban habitats. In his words: 'not a single village will be left out, everybody will get the drinking water' (14:35). However, DO shows that the project has generated shockwaves of panic and fear among the villagers. According to the medicine-man, the SSD project has snatched away their right to life, land, and natural resources¹³. Others share such feeling as one villager asserts 'the forest is ours, the land is ours and the Narmada river is ours. We have right and we are not going to leave all these. We will drown but we will not move'¹⁴ (1:21 – 1:33). Despite a strong sense of angst among the villagers, one might find a classic example of development rhetoric when the Minister, who does not require moving away from his home, proclaims that for a *larger common good* he would accept a little inconvenience. He suggests 'if it helps the society and one has to sacrifice a little bit then he should do it gladly, willingly and smilingly' (57:40).

Insert Image-2 around here

While the call for *sacrifice* above is indicative of which groups are expected to pay the price for development, looking at the resettlement plans for the people who would *lose* land might also be useful in this regard. DO explains the intention of the Indian government that everyone who would lose land will be rehabilitated in carefully designated resettlement sites (16:01) and be treated *fairly*. The Minister goes further by saying 'in fact, whoever is being ousted is actually better off than they were before' (16:30). He proudly states that:

¹³ The medicine-man's wife (another main character of the video) also explains 'our lives are being snatched away' (4:35).

¹⁴ In utter disbelief, but in a faint voice the medicine-man states that 'it's all ours by right...we have not bought it from market...it's ours, we will not leave (11:47). As he went on to explain further later in the video '....our Gods have always lived here in things like trees and stones. The God of the whole region lived here. But now our Gods have been submerged...our Gods...they have all drowned' (43:15 - 43: 53)

‘...we have given them the best [in terms of resettling the villagers] and put them into the bracket which belongs to the best people...and we should do that because they are our people, they are part of the democratic set-up. We can’t wish them away’ (17:04)

If the above intent were true, one would argue that the villagers are the winners of the SSD project. But, Minister’s statement later turns out to be an empty verbose. As in a meeting with the Narmada Bachao Andolon (NBA)¹⁵ campaigners, the Chief Minister of Bhopal admitted that there was just not enough land to rehabilitate everyone¹⁶. The government, however, offer cash compensation for those who cannot be rehabilitated in resettlement sites (48:50). The issue of cash compensation (a common feature for many different development projects) brings forward another development rhetoric. As one old woman, who received cash compensation from the SSD project but ended up living in an urban slum, explains her experience ‘they gave us some money which we spent on food ...now we have nothing’¹⁷ (49:12). The paradox of cash compensation is further elaborated when another villager gives his perspective:

‘.....show me one person who has taken cash from this project and bought a piece of land or built a house. We survived on our fields, we know no other means for livelihood. But that was snatched away from us, it made us unemployed and reduced to this’¹⁸ (50:02).

Further concerns about the resettlement plans are also shown in DO as the villagers are expected to split into five or six rehabilitation sites. The medicine-man decides to inspect the sites. There, other new settlers give him a tour of the sites and express

¹⁵ Can be translated as Save the Narmada Movement.

¹⁶ A World Bank consultant who was appointed to convene an evaluation study on the SSD project also echoed this. He suggests that the project started without knowing clearly the basic fact what would be the human consequences (37:05). There was not enough space and option for rehabilitating people. There were far more people than anticipated...this was a very big finding [of the World Bank study] and an alarming one (37: 30).

¹⁷ She illustrates further that she was told to ‘go away, you have got the money’ (49:22) when she went to the project office as her money ran out and sought help. This highlights the lack of apathy for the people who *sacrificed* for larger common good by leaving their lands, habitat, neighbour, and friends for this mega development project.

¹⁸ He refers to living in the slum, pulling cycle-rickshaws and working as day-labourer at the same time. He insists that ‘we have always been farmers; apart from that we had no skills’ (50:36). Now we are city dwellers and we do not like it – I have always belonged to village’ (51:26).

their discontent with the quality of land. The medicine-man are told by the settlers that they were promised different land but received non-cultivable lands. They ask ‘how will we grow crops and how will we eat’¹⁹ (18:35). They tell him that they feel cheated (18:40). After visiting two rehabilitation sites and talking to new settlers there, the medicine-man states the following. His view challenges how the people at the top perceive development and in actual practice, how the poor people pay the price for it:

‘...what use are other facilities [health care and school] if there is no land?... why should some people have to leave their [ancestral]homes and live alone in a different place. We need our relatives with us. I need my brothers and everyone else....this is our land. Even when Narmada water rise, we will not move from here. We would die there [in rehabilitation sites], or we die here with submergence. Either way we are facing death’ (20:58 - 22:33)

Dying for a Bargain

Dying for a Bargain (henceforth DFB), the second video used in this paper, focuses on how ready-made garment (RMG) workers in Bangladesh i) are often being exploited through long hours of work, and ii) take life threatening risks in their workplace. Again, it seems that workers are paying the price for development (in this case, economic development and improving the livelihood of poor people through job creation) while workers’ safety and security seems to be a low priority in garment industry. The video explores these issues in the context of two high profile²⁰

¹⁹ Compared to their previous life where they were dependent on land and nature, the new settlers quickly identify how things work in their new life: ‘everything depends on money here’. One has to use and buy fertilizers for crops and food for cattle something they did not have to think about before (19:01-19:30). They suspect this will be expensive and farming in provided land will not be a good way for survival.

²⁰ While small-scale workplace accidents are not quite unusual, large-scale accidents like Rana Plaza and Tazreen Fashions show the level of risks RMG workers in Bangladesh have to take to earn a living. The term ‘high profile’ is being used as these incidents caught intense attention both in national (Bangladeshi) and global media.

accidents (namely Rana Plaza²¹ and Tazreen Fashions²²) causing deaths of around 1300 workers in Bangladesh RMG sector. DFB also looks into how Western fashion outlets/buyers deny their business links with the RMG factories involved in accidents to avoid any responsibility and obligations. DFB offers emotional and personal accounts of RMG workers in Bangladesh. For example, one female worker describes her experience of Rana Plaza accident as ‘there were bodies all over my feet, bodies were over my hands while one of my legs was squashed under the beam’ (1:46). Tazreen Fashions fire incident took place just a few months before Rana Plaza accident and an activist described it as ‘many workers just jumped through the window, exhaust fan holes [to save their lives]’ (3:45). It is claimed in DFB that security guards (under the direction from their supervisors) locked the factory gate during the fire at Tazreen so that workers cannot *steal any cloth*. One security guard from another factory (also subject to a separate fire incident where several workers died because the factory gate was locked) elaborates this further. When the DFB team probe the security guard (who actually locked the factory gate) whether he feels responsible for the deaths of the workers, the guard replies ‘no never, why I would be responsible? I went for the lunch’ (9: 12). The video insists that the guard claims he was told to pull the gate across during his breaks to stop workers from stealing (9:19).

Insert Image-3 around here

Along with life-threatening risks RMG workers have to live with, DFB brings forward the issue of how workers are indirectly forced to work long hours. It shows the process first hand as the filming team pretend to be a Western buyer and check with one RMG factory about working hours. Staffs at that factory tell the team that factory opens at 7 am and closes at 5.30 pm, workers generally work for eight hours and are asked to work two more hours as overtime²³. Next day, the team set

²¹ Described as the worst industrial accident in Bangladesh (Guardian, 2015), Rana Plaza was an eight storied building including multiple RMG factories. It was collapsed in April 2013 and it is estimated that more than 1100 people, mainly RMG workers, were dead and many more (about 2500) injured (Akhter, 2016; Motlagh and Saha, 2014).

²² Tazreen Fashions was a garment factory in Bangladesh making clothes for Western high street outlets such as Walmart and CAN. Tazreen experienced one of the deadliest accidents in Bangladesh RMG factories where a fire in 2012 caused the deaths of more than 100 workers and many with serious injuries (Yasmin, 2014; Skorpen Claeson, 2015).

²³ The video reveals how the RMG factories keep two separate records for time-keeping. One for the buyers and other checks – where it always shows that workers left the factory at 5 pm. The other one is

themselves to watch whether this was the case. They found that workers were entering into the factory at 7 am. The team observed some workers coming out for evening meal at around 7 pm and majority of them returned to the factory. At around 10:30 pm all workers came out as the factory was closed for that day (17: 52). The claim of 7 am to 5.30 pm as working shift therefore seems to be a dubious one. DFB found worse examples in other factories where RMG workers were coming out at 2:30 am after 19 hours shift (started at 7 am). Moreover, in the factory with 19 hours shift, the DFB team also found the main factory gate was locked as the security guard went out to stretch his legs. This particular factory had to be unlocked by the guard at that time of night requiring few additional minutes before the workers could finally go home (21:14).

Insert Image-4 around here

Another aspect highlighted in DFB is that how the Western buyers tend to distance themselves in the events of fire or other major accidents. Regarding fire incidents in Tazreen Fashions, the Walmart tells the DFB team that they did not know their clothes were made in Tazreen (5:11). Similar to the Walmart, Edinburgh Woollen Mill (EWM) Clothing, a British High Street fashion shop, also deny that their clothes were made in Tazreen. The EWM further claim that rejected clothes were stored at Tazreen without their knowledge after being made elsewhere, and were scattered around the factory in order to implicate the EWM (5:55). Further investigation by the DFB team reveal that the product code and other documents clearly suggest clothes were actually made for the EWM inside Tazreen factory, and those were even inspected [by the EWM] (26:43). The EWM, again, deny this claim suggesting that the information/allegation is inaccurate and being fabricated. The DFB team then purchase one polo shirt from a EWM shop in the UK and confirm that the barcode is indeed similar to the ones found in Tazreen Fashions. It is claimed in the DFB that there are clear evidence that clothes were made in Tazreen for EWM (27: 20). In addition to Walmart and EWM, another Western outlet, Lotto insist that they stopped

for internal use to track the workers' overtime (11:12). This was reconfirmed by a spokesperson of Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity, 'the factory owners keep two different books so they show one to the buyer and the other to the worker. The retailers' so called audit really doesn't work' (11:58).

using Tazreen three months before the fire, and Boesche say they did not know that Tazreen was making their clothes (9:45).

One might ask why the Western outlets/buyers tend to distance themselves in the events of major accidents in factories situated in developing countries. Should these outlets/buyers not know how/where their clothes are being produced? How this attitude of the Western outlets/buyers is different from a factory supervisor ordering security guards to keep the main gate locked so that workers cannot steal clothes despite workers' bodies were burning in fire? Who should be held responsible for these deaths? Two narratives are presented in the video. The Chairman of Knit Asia Group²⁴ insists that while RMG sector is considered as the lifeline for Bangladesh's economy but this is also true that many Western buyers tend to exploit the situation (6:41). The buyers care more about *fast delivery and low price*, quality of the product comes after that. *Safety of the RMG workers is even lower in buyers' priorities* (7: 11, emphasis added). In contrast to this, a spokesperson for the Ethical Trading Initiative²⁵ asserts that 'if you look at it from the sense of who has got the responsibility to fix it, it's got to be the Bangladesh government, Bangladeshi industries and it's got to be the retail sector and international buyers' (26: 04). It is worth noting that in terms of who should be responsible for workers' safety and wellbeing international buyers came last in his statement. No wonder Western buyers themselves want to deny any link in the events of fire or other major accidents as links with the affected factories might bring along financial obligations for them. Patently, they do not want to pay that price.

Black Gold

Black Gold (henceforth BG), the third video used in this paper, is about coffee production and stories of coffee farmers of a co-operative (Kilenso Mokonisa Co-operative) in Oromia, Southern Ethiopia. While the BG video highlights some issues

²⁴ A large export oriented RMG factory in Bangladesh.

²⁵ Based in London, UK, the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) tells about the organisation as 'a leading alliance of companies, trade unions and NGOs that promotes respect for workers' rights around the globe. Our vision is a world where all workers are free from exploitation and discrimination, and enjoy conditions of freedom, security and equity'. Further information can be obtained from <http://www.ethicaltrade.org/about-eti>.

of international development and global political economy (such as the role of World Trade Organization (WTO) in serving the interest of global capitalist firms instead of poor coffee farmers), the focus here will be on the main objective of the paper in perceiving who, if anybody, pays the price for development. This can be understood partly when the Supervisor of the Co-operative (henceforth the Supervisor) asks the coffee farmers ‘a cup of coffee, how much you [the farmers] think it costs in the Western world’ (7:07). The farmers murmur ‘we don’t know’ (7: 12). The Supervisor then enquires ‘do you know how much it costs here in Hagere Mariam? Isn’t it one Birr’ (\$0.12²⁶) (7: 20)? The farmers agree ‘yes, yes’ (7:21). The Supervisor then tells the farmers that in Western countries, one cup of coffee is sold for 25 Birr (\$2.90) (7:25). Farmers are seen to be shocked and surprised at the same time. The Supervisor goes on to ask ‘do you know how many cups are made from one kilo[gram] of coffee’ (7:33). While most farmers seem to be unaware of this, some farmers mutter that it could be hundred cups. The Supervisor gives them more accurate figure saying ‘eighty cups of coffee are made from one kilo[gram] of coffee’ (7: 38). When one multiplies eighty cups with 25 birr it comes to 2000 birr, equivalent of \$230. How much do the farmers in Oromia get for one kilogram of coffee? When the Supervisor asks this the farmers reply ‘2 birr (\$0.24), if we’re lucky’ (8:03). The Supervisor checks with the farmers ‘is it not a bit higher, say 4 or 5 birr’ (8: 05)? The farmers deny firmly saying ‘we haven’t received as much as 5 birr yet’ (8:07). BG then shows the farmers expressing their frustrations based on their discussion with the Supervisor. Farmers are heard saying ‘it is said coffee is gold, and on the radio they’re always talking about coffee, we listen to it, but gain nothing’ (8:20). Moving on from the issue of price of coffee in Ethiopia and how much the farmers are receiving for their coffee beans, the video shows hundreds of women engaged in handpicking every poor/damaged coffee beans at one of the coffee export-processing centres in Addis Ababa. A painstakingly tedious yet low wage²⁷ task, similar to women working in Bangladesh RMG sector shown in the DFB.

Insert Image-5 around here

²⁶ The US\$ estimate shown here are taken from the actual video.

²⁷ The video shows a worker there gets 4 Birr and 50 cents which is less than half of \$1 a day for working eight hours (22.38).

BG then reveals how the farmers *lose out* in the global chain of coffee trade where the international price of coffee is determined in New York and London (11: 30). The Vice President of New York Board of Trade clarifies this further saying that:

‘...the producer knows what can they expect for their coffee, the buyer knows what he is gonna be paying for his coffee, but they don’t establish the price. The price for the coffee are established here [in New York] and most people in the world who get involved in the coffee industry pay attention to what is happening here every day...about fifty thousand screens are getting our prices as it happens’ (12.05 - 12:37).

To support the above view, the video shows a government auction in Ethiopia where the middlemen/brokers are seen to be present in abundance. It is shown that coffee collectors, coffee suppliers, and agents of bigger companies are bidding for the coffee in a local auction (17:13). It is then further clarified that the price of the auction market in Ethiopia is based on the New York stock market, if the New York is down by 5 cents [on that day] the coffee exporters are going to buy coffee for 5 cents less too (18:37). The video also shows that coffee reach to a high street consumer after six different stages from the field²⁸ (19:17). People engaged in each of these stages make money while coffee farmers receive very little for their production. As one farmer explains, ‘our problem is when our coffee ripens and is ready for sale, a man comes to our farm and says to us I will take your coffee and pay you 0.75 birr (\$0.08) for a kilo. There’s no negotiation, one person decides to buy our coffee at that price. We have no up to date price information and for us one person controls the market’ (8:49). Another farmer says, ‘it is the private traders who have got fat. They block others from coming in’ (8:25) – clearly highlighting who are the winners and losers in this trade.

Insert Image-6 around here

4. Analysis

²⁸ From farmers to local buyers to regional/international suppliers to roasters to cafes to the customer.

This section argues that there seems to be a broad pattern highlighting that it is often the poorest who pay the price for development. Such claim can be made based on the interpretive textual evidences of the storylines of the selected videos. This may not be a ubiquitous outcome of extant development practice. But, it is widely acknowledged that global development do produce winners and losers (O'Brien and Leichenko, 2003). According to Rudra (2005), passionate proponents of globalisation insist that workers of developing countries (the largest social class both domestically and internationally) should be considered as the winners of increased growth and purported associated benefits for the workers (such as greater employment opportunities and higher wages). However, for Taylor and Taylor (1992: 52), the history of human development reveal that relationships between the powerful and powerless (at national, regional and global scale) are so disparate that a win-lose relationship is virtually certain, with less powerful groups and countries being the loser. Such view is consistent with the arguments of Matthews (2012), Chisari et. al. (1999), and Milanovic (2012). To illustrate, from an example of hydropower project in Laos, Matthews (2012) demonstrates that the winners of the project, which he labels as water grabbing, were the powerful state and private actors while the losers were the local poor people and the environment. A similar observation can also be found in Argentina where Chisari et al. (1999) assert that privatisation of utilities mainly benefited the high-income class. Milanovic (2012) confirms this trend further by insisting that two groups have been the big winners of global economic development within the last decade of twentieth century and the first decade of twenty-first century: the very rich, and the middle classes of the emerging economies. In the context of this paper, the process how the poorest often pay a price for development can be discerned in two ways. First, the poorest pay a price by receiving lowest wages or being deprived of a fair wage for their labour. Secondly, they pay a price through some expected 'sacrifices' for *larger common good*. The 'sacrifices' may come in the forms of displacement and eviction from ancestral homes/lands; change of occupation that involves life threatening risks including being burnt in factories; and being treated as a cog, instead of human, of the production machinery. These points are illustrated below.

The first point, denial of a fair wage can be perceived from a parallel account, as portrayed in BG, showing how the coffee industry made positive impacts on lives of many people in the West at the expense of coffee farmers' struggle in Ethiopia. To

elaborate, one finalist of the World Barista Championship in Seattle gleefully states that ‘I make coffee for a living and I get paid for it’ (BG, 23.20)²⁹. In another example, one manager of a Starbucks coffee shop, who feels very lucky to be a manager there, gratefully mentions ‘Starbucks is about human relations and how many lives they touch everyday’ (ibid, 39.26). While she talks about *human relationship* and *touching lives*, one might wonder whether she (or the contestants of the World Barista Championship) is aware of the struggles of Ethiopian coffee farmers or the lives of women working in coffee export-processing factories in Addis Ababa from where Starbucks receive their supply of coffee beans. Possibly not. The worlds of coffee farmers, women workers in coffee export processing factories, Starbucks manager, and contestants of the World Barista Championship are very different indeed. Life of the RMG workers in Bangladesh might not be fully comparable but are more relatable with the lives of the coffee farmers in Ethiopia. While the prides have been visible for the coffee shop manager and finalist of the World Barista Championship, the coffee farmers in Ethiopia or RMG workers in Bangladesh do not seem to feel equally lucky or content. There is a gulf of difference between their lived experiences as shown in DFB when one garment worker tells his experience after a long shift:

‘...after going back home, having dinner, I will sleep at midnight. After four or five hours of sleep, I need to get up at 5 am. My mind does not want to do this. This is *inhuman*, but we are compelled, *compelled to come*. *We are like prisoners*’ (DFB, 12: 52, *emphasis added*).

Broadly speaking, farmers in developing countries (excluding large land-owning farmers) and/or the RMG workers are at the lowest rung of the production chain for the respective sectors. They receive lowest wage/benefit/share despite producing the main ingredients or key products of their trades. Struggles of these groups, especially the small and marginal farmers, are a common experience. To elaborate, in Bangladesh, despite being most productive, small and marginal farmers often lose out

²⁹ In section-3, only the time was mentioned as evidence was presented there in order. As in this section, analysis will involve cross-referencing, so initials of the videos are also provided for ease of reading.

from rice cultivation³⁰ and frequently forced to sell their products to brokers/middlemen at a very low price (Mondal, 2010). In various parts of India, small/marginal farmers commit suicide because of, among other reasons, capitalist development (Assaidi, 2006), rising cost of cultivation, heavy indebtedness, loss of crops, and plummeting prices of farm commodities (Behere and Behere, 2008; Deshpande, 2002). Nevertheless, farmers, RMG workers, and people in similar positions in other sectors can be found repeatedly at the heart of various government/non-government development projects portrayed as one of the *main intended beneficiaries*.

Secondly, these groups can pay a price for development through the *calls for sacrifices*. This was evidenced, when the Minister for Narmada Irrigation (in DO) asked the poor villagers to make ‘a little sacrifice’ for ‘larger common good - willingly and smilingly’ (see section-3). It is, however, worth noting that the tone of the call was highly authoritative (as if they are the representatives of the God of development who need sacrifices from servants) making it more of an order than a pledge. Such calls for *sacrifice* and its undertone demonstrate the normalcy where poor(est) people are identified as the groups who should pay a/the price for development. It is surprising, that calls for *sacrifice* are aimed at the poor people not the Minister or other privileged sections of the society. Nevertheless, one might assume that the people who are expected to make such *sacrifices* would be safeguarded through careful planning by the implementing authority of development policies. DO shows that while expectations for making *sacrifices* was loud and clear, wellbeing of these people through resettlement plan was feeble, unfair, and inhumane. Villagers evicted from their land were far worse off than their previous lives. They were forced to doing jobs they never had to do or had any prior knowledge about, while living in the slums and separate from relatives (for more details see section-3). In life, change of vocation and habitat are common parlances. But, when such changes are forced upon some people then it seems immoral. Moreover, when such enforcement comes against the will of the affected people and in the name of development, it then appears to be hypocritical because it contradicts with the

³⁰ It is often reported in the national newspapers (see Mahmud, 2015; Parvez, 2014) that in peak seasons when the supply is plenty, small and marginal farmers sell 40 KGs of rice for one kilogram of fish (such as Hilsha) or beef.

principles and right to development. To elaborate, the NBA challenged the rationale of the World Bank for funding the SSD project³¹ (in DO) resulting in the Bank sending four experts to review all aspects of the project³². One of these experts who was appointed to investigate the human cost of the project offers his perspectives saying ‘the experts team concluded that the project was severely flawed as they stood’ (DO, 39:38). According to him:

‘...the government sell this kind of projects as if such projects are in the interest of the people. But a close look reveals that they are in the interest of engineering, construction, and people who are already fairly prosperous such as rich farmers, and industrialist’³³ (ibid, 61:32).

Such assessment echoes with the views of Arundhati Roy, a celebrated writer³⁴ in India, insisting that ‘everything that happens in India, has to happen in the name of poor. It has to. This is why people say that there is lot of money in poverty’ (ibid, 62:10). Roy’s observation was backed up by the President of Gujarat Chamber of Commerce who reverberates that the SSD project would help the better off regions of Gujarat than other distant villages suffering from lack of water for drinking and cultivation. As he asserts ‘sugarcane was never on the priority list for Gujarat. But with Narmada water is few years way, many industries related to sugarcane are now making huge investments in the region’ (ibid, 61:03). Moreover, the review of the World Bank’s experts team challenged the claim to provide sustainable water supply for farmers, and drinking water for all the affected villages and urban habitats (see section-3):

³¹ The Bank kick-started the project in 1980s by loaning the Indian Government 450 million dollars (DO, 34:18).

³² One NBA leader insists that they asked 36 questions to the World Bank officials (in 1987) and had no answers. This made them to think that not only the Bank did not know about the complexity of socio-cultural aspect of the population in the Narmada valley, but also the Bank did not know the economics of the [SSD] project (34:42). Campaigners from the NBA opted for various forms of protest including a hunger-strike prompting the World Bank to agree to carry out an independent review of Sardar Sarovar project. Nine months after the review team published its report, the Bank withdrew from the project. The Indian government ignored all the criticism, raised money internally and continued construction on the dam.

³³ He further elaborates that the government promise clean water for the people who do not have water, they promise irrigation to people who are drought vulnerable - things that all human being long for when they don’t have them. When in fact, they will not deliver these things and when in power no one will deliver these things either but do not say so, a hideous evil is at work (DO, 63: 30).

³⁴ Winner of Man Booker Prize (1997), and Sydney Peace Prize (2004).

‘.....the review team of the World Bank created a computerised model of the flow from the project and concluded that water will not reach to the drought prone areas in North-west anyway. However, water will be available for the golden corridor and industrial belt comprised of four large cities, Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad, Vadodara, and Bharuch’ (ibid, 59:58).

This section clearly shows that the price and sacrifices poor people pay/make for development are not often in the best interests of improving their lives or making an upward movement for entire social system. Instead, often in practice, development might make the rich richer. This must be acknowledged that the makers of the selected videos may have had variable agendas and interests. Be it political, commercial or else. The selected videos, nevertheless, convincingly demonstrate farmers/workers’ plights³⁵ against development projects’ supposed objective of improving their lives. These videos also successfully depict that poor people are hardworking signifying that there is a problem in the national/global economic structure where a large number of people are working very hard but still cannot make enough just to get by in a reasonably dignified manner. While big corporations/retailers are making millions these hardworking poor groups cannot afford enough for food, clothes, shelter and other basic needs. This might lead someone to concur with Roy as she insists that one needs to ponder ‘development for whom? Who owns the river, who owns the forest, who owns the fish’ (DO, 32:22)? Roy is careful not to question development as a whole: ‘people are not saying we don’t want electricity or we don’t want irrigation. All they are saying is there are better and more democratic means of achieving it. No-one at the top is personally paying the price, its always someone else [the poor]’ (ibid, 27:30). The price seems to be too high as an activist in DFB insists ‘they [the RMG workers] are risking their lives so that someone on the other side of the ocean can wear nice clothes’ (DFB, 28:04).

³⁵ It is envisaged in BG and DFB that the farmers/workers are not getting fair prices to make a decent living and switching towards the farming of a narcotic plant called Chat for financial reasons. Their malnourished children are not being treated in local health clinics, they are dying in great numbers and getting burnt alive in their efforts to make clothes for Western customers.

5. Conclusion

Development as a change for the better (see section-1) sounds great in theory. But, in practice, development might often ask the poor and marginalised to make *sacrifices for larger common good* leading to a mechanism that denies a fair deal for the poor. Whether or not development can and do deliver larger common good is a topic that is beyond the remit of this paper. However, interpretive textual evidence from selected videos have manifested that development under the guises of promoting larger common good often comes at a price. Ironically, it is the poor (development projects are most often planned and devised to improve the lives of this group), who often pay the price. One might still wonder to what extent cinematic representations of video documentaries can help making such observation. A fairly straightforward response in that regard would be that videos and documentaries are indeed legitimate forms of development knowledge as these are documents with a capacity for dealing with certain types of complexities offering distinctive insights. Videos and documentaries can help make sense of social issues in ways that have distinct policy-relevance by giving voice to local experience, humanising development processes and embodying both resistant and reconstructive forms of agency (Lewis et al., 2013; Lewis *et al.*, 2008; McEwan, 2009). Therefore, the selected videos have been very useful in reaching this critical observation that despite the promises of making positive social change for the poor, marginalised, voiceless, excluded and deprived sections of the society it is often these people themselves who are adversely affected from many development initiatives.

This needs to be clearly stated that the above observation may not be applicable for all cases. There might be multiple variations and spin-offs of development outputs. One notable spin-off is that notwithstanding the promises of improving the livelihoods of the poor, development might serve the interests of other unintended beneficiaries such as national elites, cooperative managers, fair-trade campaigners, activists and other lobby groups. Many of these unintended beneficiaries travel internationally (for conferences, meetings, training, campaigning), conduct fieldworks, and make careers

out of it³⁶. They apparently have the goodwill and determination to do something that would improve the situation for the poor/disadvantaged people. In this endeavour, they meet new people; join national/international alliances. Again in the name of development and improving the livelihoods of poor in developing countries. With the price of poor/disadvantaged people's sweat, hardwork, frustration, and broken dreams some people become rich; make progress in careers (as academics, experts, campaigners, activists) while in many occasions the poor people continue to struggle to make a decent living. The struggles of the poor and marginalised have been clearly visible in selected videos and following examples further enhance this statement.

In BG, the cooperative Supervisor asks the farmers what should be the price for one kilogram of red cherries that would improve their lives. In response, the farmers say to live a better life they will need to sell one kilogram of red cherry for 10 Birr (\$1.10). It is worth noting that by *better life* they did not mean any luxury. For the farmers, better life means to be able to feed their families with nutritious food, to have clean water and clean clothes, and be able to send their children to school. This can be seen from the following prayer of a group of farmers in Yirgacheffe, Southern Ethiopia:

‘...O God of truth, God of heaven and earth, maker of everything who created this beautiful land, help us farmers to get more from our green land, help us change our lives, get rid of poverty, build better houses to live in, satisfy our needs and improve our lives. Give us a more peaceful life. *Give us a fair price for the coffee we produce. O God we ask you to raise the coffee price* [BG, 29.12, *emphasis added*]

This paper contends that such expectation, in return of their hardwork, is just and fair. As one spokesperson from Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity puts it in DFB ‘behind the fashion labels there are human faces and these humans should not be treated as equipment or like slaves’ (DFB, 22:12). The continued struggle of the poor and marginalised are clearly captured in DO as it concludes with the legal victory for

³⁶ People like the Cooperative Supervisor in BG (as one example demonstrated in selected videos) seen visiting Western countries to gain first-hand knowledge on how much one cup/tin of coffee is sold in the coffee shops or retail stores.

the Indian Government³⁷. The medicine-man's reaction to the verdict was 'the lives of many generations have been snatched away. Our right to life has gone. What can we do' (DO, 68:32). The medicine-man's wife can also be heard saying 'we want to live our full lives, we don't want to die, so we are not feeling good. They [the rich] will build the dam and live happily, but we will be left in sorrow' (ibid, 68: 49). Bearing the main objective of this paper in mind, this seems most apposite when she asks 'why are they murdering us, the water comes in my dream, I feel helpless' (ibid, 64: 11). For Roy, this represents 'a way of capturing the natural resources, taking it away from the poor and giving it to the richest'³⁸ (ibid, 62: 55).

³⁷ Three judges of Indian Supreme Court delivered a split verdict. One of them asked to stop the dam activities until detailed impact assessment while two others judges outvoted this decision and permitting the dam to be built up to its full height on condition that resettlement is completed before each five metres increase (DO, 67:59)

³⁸ For Roy, most of the times the decision, from who to take away goes against the poor, and the decision to whom the advantage will be given go to the rich. Roy also challenges the Minister for Narmada Irrigation in the Second World Water Forum, when the Minister claimed that India has already invested a huge amount of money (8.5 billion dollars) and cannot retreat from building the dam. Roy tells the Minister, 'stop being hypocritical and just say look this many people need to be dumped for the good of that many people. And we [the politicians] will decide who this people are' (DO, 28: 22). When the Minister accused her making absolutely false allegations, she further asserts 'some people asked me why I came here. I said I just came here to see what power smells like. Let me tell you it stinks, stinks' (ibid, 28:29).

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Image – 1



Villagers were forcefully removed from water by the Police. Image Source: *Drowned Out* (2002), copyright permission obtained from the Director.

Image – 2



Temple submerged as a consequence of Sardar Sarovar Dam project. Image Source: *Drowned Out* (2002), copyright permission obtained from the Director.

Image – 3



Main gate of this factory was locked during a fire incident. Image source: *Dying for a Bargain* (2013), copyright permission obtained from the producer.

Image – 4



Workers coming out from this factory after 15 hours shift. Image source: *Dying for a Bargain* (2013), copyright permission obtained from the producer.

Image – 5



Women removing bad coffee beans in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Image source: *Black Gold* (2006), copyright permission obtained from Speakit films.

Image – 6



Coffee from Ethiopia are ready to be exported in the USA. Image source: *Black Gold* (2006), copyright permission obtained from Speakit films.