CHAPTER IV
Exploring Environmental Movements
in Assam: Some Case Studies

The previous chapters dealt with the status of environment and the upsurge of environmental activism in North East India. The present chapter is a specific analysis of environmental movements in Assam with emphasis on certain cases of environmental problems and movements emerging out of such issues.

Though no separate treatment of environmental status of the state of Assam has been done here in this work, the nature of the environmental problem in the state is partly reflected in the discussion on environmental problems of the North East in the preceding chapters. Moreover, the operation of environmental activism can be seen more forcefully in Assam than in the other states of the region. This is illustrated by the large presence of environmental NGOs in the state. According to the Directory of Environmental NGOs in the North East 127 out of total 286 NGOs operating in the region, Assam records 152 NGOs which regard environmental education or action as an important agenda of their activities. Manipur comes next with 80 environmental NGOs followed by Arunachal Pradesh at 06 (See table- 1 of chapter V).

The relatively high presence of industries in Assam as compared to other states in the region can be regarded as the main cause of such a situation. Moreover the state borders six states of the region which also makes the situation more complex. The river linkage and the low lying valleys also make Assam vulnerable to environmental problems. Submergence of its valleys by the river water and flood water are some of the examples of the problem. Since it will be a time consuming exercise to deal with each issue of environmental problem and activism in Assam, I will try to analyse the nature and type of movement related to the environment by focusing on five environmental movements that originated in the state. Further, since it will be logically unjust to claim such kind of activism as environmental movement without proper analysis of each issue, in the pages

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that follow I will make an endeavour to deal with each issue to explore the dynamics of environmental movement in the region. Besides, the involvement of action groups has specially been inquired to analyse the role of action group in these movements which will also help to understand the nature and type of environmental movement in the region as action group has been seen to play a major role in environmental movements in the state. Moreover the understanding of the action group and their involvement in the movements will also help us to understand the nature of environmental activism in the region.

Case: 1

**The Issue of Rain Forest Conservation**

The rain forest conservation movement led by Nature’s Beckon, a regional environmental activist group in Assam is the most famous conservation movement in the region and was in fact the first ever rainforest movement in Assam. Considering the importance of the rainforest and its vital role to preserve the biodiversity of the earth, Nature’s Beckon has taken a major initiative to save the rainforests of the Brahmaputra Valley.

The rainforests of the Brahmaputra valley harbour a wide range of flora and fauna, some of which are endemic and endangered. Hoolok Gibbon, the only ape species found in India has their largest concentration in these rainforests. Another aspect of these forests is that a large number of different species of non-human primates find their ideal habitats in these forests. For instance, out of the fifteen species of nonhuman primates found in India, seven species have their habitats in these rain forests. The forest is also a vital corridor for large herds of elephants and a major elephant habitat.

**Origin of the organization**

Nature’s Beckon, an environment activist group of Assam started its arduous task for the conservation of wild life in the state in the year 1982. Through its catalytic role in its conservationist movement the organization had been successful in influencing the government to declare Chakrashila as Wildlife Sanctuary, making it a major success story of conservationist movement in Assam. After the declaration of Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuary, the organization has come up with another demand for the protection of
rainforest in the Brahmaputra valley. The organization ‘rediscovered’ and highlighted the presence of the biggest and the contiguous package of rainforest in the Brahmaputra valley, which is still surviving. This forest exists as a contiguous patch covering an area of 800 sq km in the Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts of Assam and are known as Joypur Reserved Forest, Upper Dihing Reserved Forest and Dirak Reserved Forest. Nature’s Beckon has appealed to the state government and the concerned authorities to bring these forests under one single unit and to declare them as wildlife sanctuary. They even came up with the name ‘Joydihing Wildlife Sanctuary’ for the proposed protected area.

The importance of Joydihing Wildlife Sanctuary:

The proposed Joydihing Wildlife Sanctuary comprising the Joypur, Upper Dihing and Dirak Reserved Forest is one of the most important woodland bird’s habitats of India. It is recognized as the Important Bird Area (IBA). Nature’s Beckon conducted a survey with the aid of Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) through Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) and found that the proposed Joydihing Wildlife Sanctuary is home of more than 300 species of birds. Some of the important species of this rainforest are Mountain Bamboo Partridge, Grey Peacock Pheasant, White Winged Duck, Oriental Rail, Hornbill, Wreathed Hornbill, Eurasian Eagle owl, Black Baza etc.

The proposed protected area is also the most important habitat of the Asian Elephant. The forest range serves as the corridor for the movement of large herds of elephants from Assam to Arunachal Pradesh. To conserve the Asian Elephants and to reduce the human elephant conflict, the organization felt that permanent protection of the forest zone was very much essential.

The area sought for protection is also the most important primate habitat of India which harbors as many as seven species of primates found in the country. These include Hoolock, Gibbon, Slow Lories, Chapped Langur Pigtailed Macaque, Assamese Macaque and Stamped tailed Macaque.

Action taken:

Since its identification of rain forests in Dibrugarh, and Tinsukia districts in 1997, Nature’s Beckon has started a rainforest movement in upper Assam. To boost the
movement it has produced huge quantity of educational materials targeting various groups. These materials included posters, books, booklets, stickers, pamphlets, folders, audio cassettes and video films etc., many of which have been produced in local languages.

To create awareness among the people of the state and the peripheral forest villages, Nature's Beckon distributed brochures and leaflets that highlight the importance of rainforests and the urgent need for their complete protection. The organization has also been distributing colorful posters among the people of Assam to educate the people about the richness of flora and fauna of these forests, which are invaluable treasures of the Assamese people. Thus, the organization has been motivating the people to give full protection to these rain forests and create pressure on the state government to declare this forest zone a wildlife sanctuary. In its mass awareness campaign, various processions, street plays and demonstrations have been organized in villages and towns of Assam. Local youths have been trained for the conservation of rainforests, and state and village level workshops and seminars are being conducted throughout the year at different places in the state. The organization also maintains close contact with the state government and the forest department of Assam to secure permanent protection for the rainforest of the state. On September 28, 2000, the members of the organization had a meeting with the then forest minister Babulal Marandi at Dibrugarh circuit house for the permanent protection of the rainforest of Assam. To achieve these objectives, a massive signature campaign had been organized to collect ten thousand signatures for submission of a memorandum to the Union Minister of Environment and Forest.

**Rain Forest Festival: major step forward**

To popularise the movement across the region, Nature's Beckon organized a rainforest festival for four days from 17-21 November, 2001 with the following stated objectives:

1) To highlight nationally and internationally the fragile status of the rainforests of the North East.

2) To build international public opinion for the permanent protection of the rainforest of the Brahmaputra valley.
3) To promote peace initiatives among the indigenous people who live around the forest whose cultures have been inspired and sustained by these forests.

4) To build a local-global citizen based action and initiative in conserving these rainforests.

5) To promote responsible ecotourism and adventure sports in the region.

Through the rain forest festival, the organization was successful in involving people at the grassroots level as well as those at the highest echelon of administration and policy making bodies. Among the various actors who participated in the rainforest festival were farmers, village children, youths and women, teachers, urban people and intelligentsia i.e., journalists, scientists, bureaucrats, NGO representatives, various ethnic communities, international environmentalists from USA, Australia, Thailand, Indonesia and Bolivia.

To mark the occasion Shri Tarun Gogoi, the honorable Chief Minister of Assam laid the foundation stone of the Rainforest Research Centre cum Museum at Joipur. He assured the people of Assam that the status of the rainforests will soon be upgraded to that of wildlife sanctuary.

The signature campaign and rain forest festival had taken the movement to its peak. In addition to the above initiative, the organization has been trying to mobilize other activists and organizations for support of the movement. It has taken various measures to disseminate information about the rainforest of Assam among national and international NGOs, journalists and scientific bodies. Network of activists, NGOs and GOs have been established throughout the state. To highlight the activities of the network of members a newsletter in the Assamese language, named *Topobon* is published and distributed among the members. Many National NGOs such as Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), WWF for Nature-India etc. have expressed their concern for the conservation of the rainforest of Assam.

Thus the rainforest movement initiated by Nature's Beckon is typically conservationist in nature with the prime focus on conservation of rainforest. The organization was successful in getting the Chakrashilla WLS declared and in 2004, 111.19 sq. km of forest areas falling under the proposed area demanded by Nature's Beckon for Joydihing Sanctuary, has been declared as Dihing Patkoi Wildlife Sanctuary.
Case: 2

Movement against open cast mining in Ledo Margherita

The British discovered the presence of coal in the Margherita hill range when it started the exploration of natural resources in different parts in the world to feed the colonial process to reach its high zenith. Along with the prospect in tea production and the respective business on the same, another prospect that came in to their sight was the exploration of mineral resources in upper Assam, more specifically the discovery of coal in the Patkoi hill range of Assam. Initially coal was discovered in the Makum coal field which gradually reached to the adjacent areas of Patkoi hill ranges. Though the commercial riverine dispatch was started in October 1883, the Digboi railway workshop dispatch of coal in true sense started only on February 18, 1884\(^{128}\), the day the first passenger train was opened.

Coal was required by the Railways for use as fuel for locomotives and workshops, traffic etc. Tea gardens and timber plants also required coal to generate power. Coal has received growing demand not only to meet the needs of the local industries, but also to meet the demand of industries outside the region and country. To meet the growing demand and to avoid the wood fuel, different collieries were set up in different places at Namdang in 1885, Ledo New West in 1903, Baragolai in 1909, Tipongpani in 1904 and Namdang Dip in 1904. All these mines were operated under the administrative control of Assam Railway and Trading Company till the date of Nationalization on May 1, 1973, under the control of “Coal Mines Authority Limited”, a holding company on first day of November 1975. Since then the Makum coal field of Margherita area has been placed under North Eastern Coal fields controlled by Coal India Limited.

There are presently six working coal mines in North Eastern Coal fields, Margherita and an exploratory mine at Simsang at Garo hills of Meghalaya. The six working mines of North Eastern Coal fields are Tipong Colliery, Baragoloi Colliery, Ledo Colliery, Jeypore colliery, Tikak Colliery and Tirap Colliery, out of which Tirap and Tikak are open cast mines and rests are underground mines.

\(^{128}\) Dr. Ranjit Dutta, ‘North Eastern Coal fields at a Glance’ in Dihing Patkoi Festival, a souvenir 03 p. 59.
While the underground mining is relatively a more environment friendly method, the open cast mining causes major scars to nature. Since underground mining is more expensive and has some limitation in Assam’s soil condition, open cast mining has been the main method used by the mining companies such as National Mining, Ashok Mining, Upadhyaya Mining engaged in mining operations in Margherita.

There can not be any doubt about the harmful effect of mining in the surrounding areas. The unsystematic and haphazard manner of coal mining followed in the Makum coal field has adverse effects on the surrounding eco system. Drainage of mine water from Lakowa and Geleki locally known as ‘gaspani’ has damaged thousands of acres of crop fields rendering them unsuitable for cultivation.

Though there are a number of protests against the destructive method of coal mining from the very time of nationalization of coal mining, no systematic and organized protests has been made to make it a successful movement.

In the early 1980s when some students went to study the environmental condition in the coal mining areas of Patkoi hill, they were struck by the destructive effects of open cast coal mining on the land and people of nearby villages. These destructive effects were documented by the Students Science Society, an organization based in Guwahati. These reports were later published in the local newspapers to attract the attention of the people of Assam. Public meetings were organized in the affected villages by the society. But they failed to get mass support as most of the villagers were directly or indirectly dependent on the industry. Besides the mafias who patronised the mining activity also indirectly threatened the villagers whenever they tried to protest against mining. As has been said by Monoj Patwary, the then student leader of the tour, “There is a nexus of Police, Administration and Mafia for which doing anything against coal mining was a risky task. We could document everything only when we could arrange to be a part of educational tour of Jorhat Engineering College.”

Despite the lack of support from the villagers, the protest initiated by the students managed to attract the attention of the State Government and an enquiry was ordered on the environmental condition of the region. This response from the government encouraged the Student’s Science Society and to make the protest stronger they called upon the All Assam Students Union (AASU), Yuva Chatra Porisad (YCP) etc. to join hands with them.
Faced with pressure from the different student's organizations, the then Minister of Environment and Forest Mrs. Maneka Gandhi ordered an enquiry which brought out the destructive effect of mining on the environment. In response to the findings, some measures were taken to restore the ecological condition of the region. Some plantations were done and the pits were filled by soil. Coal India also gave some compensation to the village people displaced by the mining operation. The movement against mining however failed to last. The fear of reprisal by the local mafias and the lack of support from people who were dependent on the mining industry led to the shelving of the movement by the students.

Not much voice was raised for a year. However, following a massive landslide in Number 1 Malugaon village, on July 7, 2001, the people of the affected villages were frightened that more landslides may occur any time. The landslide had brought down the primary school and a dozen hutments. Thirty-eight families were displaced to Paninal of Ledo. Though people of Tirap tribal belt nursed a feeling of deprivation generated by mining in that area, but the incidence of Malugaon has created a permanent fear in people's mind in the surrounding villages. The Malugaon incident not only shook the mind of the local people, it had also shaken the mind of the intellectuals all over the region. In September 2001, a committee under the name "Ledo Open Cast Mining Protection Committee" (LOCMPC) was formed by some human rights and environment conservation activists in the state to make the movement more effective. The main leader of the organization, Mr. Durlav Mohanta with some environmentalists and other members made an extensive study to assess and document the effect of mining on the lives of the people. It has been observed by the organization that the mining operations had affected the crop fields of the villagers because of the acid water coming out of the mines. And the burden of coal in the hill slopes which lead to the flow of coal and acid in the fields in the rainy season. The drainage of acid water in the Tirap river has led to the reduction in the growth of fishes in the river.

The committee had got extensive support from different organizations of tribal people of Patkoi hill range having different kinds of interests namely Patkoi Pahar People's Protection Committee, Ledo Sonali Pather Porichalona Somitee. But the organization soon became defunct due to the clash of interest of the Ledo Open Cast Mining Protection Committee and Tirap Autonomous District Council Demand Committee and Patkoi Pahar
People’s Protection Committee, the later two were more concerned with people’s right on land and tribal identity issue and the former specifically with environmental issues.

Though incorporations of different interests are very much common in the new social movements, which involves concern with issues other than economic or typical class based issues, the clash of interests often makes the movements to lose its rigour. At the same time, the involvement of Tirap Autonomous District Council Demand Committee and Patkoi Pahar People’s Protection Committee also widened the dimension of the movement.

The Tirap Autonomous District Council Demand Committee has been demanding for the formation of Tirap Autonomous District Council including Tirap, Makum, Buridihing and its adjacent areas of Margherita and Digboi Legislative Assembly of upper Assam. The region is the home of several tribals who consider themselves as indigenous. The people of the region had experienced a feeling of deprivation and exploitation which became more intense after the introduction of different projects that demanded heavy exploitation of nature by the government. Such activities by the state intensified people’s fear for their rights and subsistence. This fear was strongly communicated in the Souvenir of the Frontier Tribes (*SimantoJanajatiya Abhibartana*). As has been mentioned in the Souvenir, the Tenth Amendment of the Land and Revenue Act of 1886 made in 1947 gives the tribals legal right to the land of the region which came under the Excluded Areas during the British period. However gradual migration by the non tribals from outside into the region amassing vast tracks of land for their tea and citronella cultivation led to a feeling of threat to livelihood and land among the people most of whom are peasant by occupation. They realized that such kind of exploitation can only be stopped if they possess strong administrative power and self determination. The creation of Tirap Autonomous District Council Demand Committee with its demand for the formation of Tirap Autonomous District Council was an outcome of this threat perception and fear of losing their land and livelihood. However loss of land was not the only issue of concern for TADCDC. The committee was equally concerned about the increasing degradation of the environment caused by open cast mining in the region. To strengthen their fight against the deleterious effect on the environment by open cast mining the TADCDC joined forces with Ledo Open Cast Mining Protection Committee but it failed to achieve its objective because of the conflict of interests. In another move TADCDC joined hands with Patkoi Pahar
People’s Protection Committee (PPPPC) which also protested against open cast mining. The organization has been protesting against the mining along with other organizations like All Assam Tribal Sangha, Tribal Students’ Federation, Assam, Ledo Sonali Pather Parichalona Samity etc. Like TADCDC, PPPPC also did not have environment as the sole concern of its protest. Along with its demand to stop the excavation of coal by North Eastern Coal Fields, it also demanded the issue of land patta to the tribal people residing in the Makum Mouza, haulting of eviction of encroachers from these villages etc., which shows that this organization is also concerned with the right of the tribal people to their land.

From the above discussion it has been seen that though there were protests against the environmental degradation in the region caused by the destructive practice of coal mining it could not generate much success due to the diversity of interests of the different action groups. While organisations like Students’ Science Society and Ledo Open Cast Mining Protection Committee were primarily interested on the issue of damage to the environment and people’s life, the TADCDC tried to combine environmental issues with political autonomy and right to self determination. Such conflicting interests have reduced the ability of this movement to emerge as a state level movement. Moreover there were no coordinated efforts to bring different groups under common umbrella which also came in the way of development of the movement as a popular one and thus also came in the way of its success.

Case: 3

Pagldia Dam Resistance Movement

Objective of the Dam

The Pagladia dam project which has been proposed to be constructed near Thalkuchi village of Nalbari district has attracted continuous protests from the very time of its inception. It was originally conceived in 1968-67 as a minor flood detection project at an estimated cost of Rs.12.60 crores. In 1984-85, the project was taken over by the Brahmaputra Board. Later, the irrigation aspect was added to the project costing 287.86 crores at 1988-89 price level. The project gradually took the form of multipurpose project with the goal of irrigation, flood detection and generation of electricity. The major target
was protection of 40,000 hectares of land in Nalbari district, irrigation of 54,160 hectares of land spread over 145 villages of the district and to generate 3 megawatt electricity. A detailed report of the project in compliance with the observations of the technical advisory committee report of the Ministry of Water Resources was submitted in November 1992. This paved the way for the techno economic clearance of the multi purpose project. In 1995, the project received clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests and after updating the cost estimate of the project to 540.99 crores at 1999 price level, the Public Investment Board of the Government of India accorded its approval at the cost of 526.62 crores in March 2000.

**Seeds of Unease:**

According to the project plan, a 23 kilometres long and 26 metre high dam will be constructed along with a reservoir to retain 446 million cubic metre of water. The main canal would be 66.2kms long and a branch canal of 39.5 kilometres making it 105.7 kilometres in total.

Altogether, 38 villages would be submerged under the proposed project. In January 2003, the government issued notification for the acquisition of land from the villagers. Mention may be made that all the villages expected to be submerged fall under the proposed Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) area. While the Brahmaputra Board, the implementing agency of the dam project claimed that only 20 percent of the potential displacees belonged to the Scheduled Tribes, according to the affected people the figure is around 90 percent. According to its estimation the Board has drawn up a Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) package at the cost of Rs .47.89 crores, aiming to rehabilitate 18,473 people and 3, 271 families. However, in the opinion of the affected people, the government figure was extremely low and the actual figure comes to around 50,000 people belonging to 5,000 families. Moreover the figure did not include the number of potential displacees of the five villages newly added to the original 33 affected villages pointed out by the dam resistance committee that had launched a long struggle against the construction of the dam and the Brahmaputra Board.

While the government claimed that it would compensate all the affected people of the dam project, by providing handsome R and R package, the people were not convinced.
The villagers had their own view of the fate of the dam displacees based on their assessment of the affected people of similar projects as has been mentioned in an article published in the souvenir of the PDPKASS. The people of the projects who have not been given rehabilitation and some of the projects which have not been completed are mentioned in the article as affected people of Borlia river, Suklai, Champanadi, military base at Satgaon in Guwahati, Jagiroad paper mill, capital complex at Dispur, NEEPCO Duliajan Project at Kathalguri, Dinjan Military Base and Numaligarh Refinery project¹²⁹. The people were also aware of the fate of other projects, such as, Bhakranangal projects learnt from the interaction they had with the dam activists. Hence people felt that both the state government and Union Ministry of Water Resources have simply been fooling the people of Nalbari who were going to be affected by the project. Besides more than 40,000 people were expected to be affected by the project, the government proposed to acquire another 34,000 acres of land, which is very fertile. Though the project was going to affect different communities such as Rabha, Rajbanshi, Nepalese, Bengalis, Santhals etc, the Bodos were demographically the largest groups to be affected in the area, most of whom were peasants. Hence acquisition of land from them was thus the acquisition of livelihood of these victims. In addition to this, the proposed project would submerge four high schools and forty primary schools, several primary health centres, temples, Namghars and other places of worship.

While the rehabilitation of the social and cultural assets of these victims would be practically impossible to achieve, the economic rehabilitation was yet another hidden difficulty observed by the villagers. Though the Brahmaputra Board has prepared a separate R and R package for the displacees, only 47.89 crores had been allocated for the same. Moreover the potential displacees have lost faith in the state government and the claim of the Brahmaputra Board. Moreover the land selected by the government of Assam for the rehabilitation of the displacees were already occupied by thousands of refugees from East Pakistan (present Bangladesh), the Nalbari district does not have sufficient land at its disposal to accommodate the displaced population. Thus the people are aware that the government would not be in a position to rehabilitate peasants with due grant of fertile

¹²⁹ K.N.Bodo 'Pagladia dam Prakalper Khatigrastha Alekar Sangram Samitir Chomu Itibritta' in Souvenier published in 17th Biennial session of PBPKASS.
land in the newly settled area. Hence they are to be settled in hill reserved forests which will not only lead to forest loss but also once again bring a threat to the livelihood of the people. Besides, the district being densely populated, it can not accommodate the entire gamut of population in the same area which would lead to ethnic dispersion and loss of traditional kinship and ethnic ties. The lack of absolute ownership over land by many of the inhabitants of the affected area has created another feeling of scarcity in the minds of the victims. They feared that like in many other cases of developmental projects, the people who did not possess proper land documents will not be able to avail the R and R measures. All these cumulative feelings of the villagers have led them to refuse and reject each step by the Brahmaputra board and the government of Assam to implement the plan to construct a dam on the Pagladia river.

As noted at the outset, the opposition to the dam began from a period between 1968 and 1971, when investigation was conducted by the state for the construction of a minor flood detention project. To combat the government’s attempt to construct the dam the educated people of the effected area formed a committee called “Pagladia Dam Protection Committee”. Late Sri Mukundaram Medhi was the founder president of the committee and late Bitty Barman was the Secretary.

Soon after its inception, the activists of the protection committee went to Shillong, the then capital of Assam and demanded the immediate closure of the project by the Assam Legislative Assembly. Due to the relentless opposition by the people, the Government had to close the project. But the AGP Government tried to re-open the file of Pagladia dam project and restart the project by investing Rs.500 crores in order to solve the problem of perennial flood in the region.

After this declaration the disappointed people of the effected area formed another committee called Pagladia Bandh Prakolper Khatigrasha Alakar Sangram Somittee [PD PKASS] to counter what they consider to be an onesided undemocratic decision. Adopting a non violent and democratic strategy, this committee opened a new chapter in the history of movement against Pagladia dam project.

In their attempt to secure closure of the project, copies of the memorandum were sent to various agencies: the District Commissioner of Nalbari, the Chairman of
Bramhaputra Board, the Chief Executive Engineer, Local Legislatures, Minister of Dam Control, Government of Assam and to the Chief Minister of the state. In 1989, a memorandum was sent to the Prime Minister of India through the MLA of Kokrajhar, late Samar Brahmachoudhury.

The movement took momentum in 2000, on the eve of the observation of sixteenth biennial session of PDPSSS. With lots of encouragement and immense mass support, the two day long session was observed successfully. The mobilization was done by the leaders of the movement through their speeches calling the people to join hands in the protest against the project. The project was also severely criticized by Sri Sansuma Khungdor Bosumatiari, Member of Parliament (MP) representing the 5th Kokrajhar constituency, as well as by the core members of All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), All Assam Rabha Student's Union (AARSU) etc. in their speeches during the session. The project was also criticized by the former revenue minister of Assam, Sri Padma Bahadur Chauhan in his long speech at the session. All the speakers criticized the dam for its destructive effect on the people of the downstream area and thus demanded for withdrawal of the project. In his speech, the MP had advised the protesters to send a delegation to Delhi. A twelve member committee was formed following the suggestion of Sri Bosumatiary and on March 9, 2000, the delegates\(^{130}\) left Guwahati for Delhi under the leadership of the president of the movement committee.

The twelve member delegation reached Delhi on March 12, 2003. The delegates consisting of the Sangram Samittee leaders and the ABSU members were hosted by Mr. S

\(^{130}\) The delegates were :-

(1) Mr. Har Mohan Das, Advisor, Sangram Samiti
(2) Mr. Khagendra Bodo, President, Sangram Samittee
(3) Mr. Ganesh Swargiary, Representative (ABSU)
(4) Mr. Bolen Rabha, Vice President (ABSU)
(5) Mr. Keshab Rajbansi, Vice President (ABSU)
(6) Mr. Utpal Kumar Das, General Secretary, Sangram Samittee
(7) Mr. Bodon Chandra Das, Asst Sec. Sangram Samittee
(8) Mr. Madhab Rajbansi, Finance Secretary, Sangram Samittee
(9) Mr. Dharmeswar Das, Former G.S, Sangram Samittee
(10) Nobin Nurgery, Member, Sangram Samittee
(11) Nobin Rajbonsi, Member, Sangram Samittee
(12) Arun Das Member, Sangram Samittee
K Basumatiary at his official residence. Parliament was in session at that time. Despite, a meeting with Central Ministers and bureaucrats was arranged by the MP. The memorandum demanding the closure of the project was given to the MP, and then subsequently to Srimati Bijoya Chokroborty, Minister of State, Water Resource Development, Mr. Zed Hussain, Secretary, Water Resource Department, Dr. AK Kundra, Chairman Planning Department, Prime Minister Sri Atal Bihari Bajpai, Mr. L.K. Advani, Home Minister, and Sri K.R. Narayanan, President of India.

Communication was also established with the former Revenue Minister cum Congress I leader, Mr. Padma Bahadur Chauhan residing in Delhi. However, not much could be achieved from the twelve member's delegation to Delhi. A meeting was arranged by the Brahmaputra Board on construction of the dam in Tamulpur. But agitated masses rendered the meeting futile by making a demonstration to the Central Water Resource Minister Bijoya Chokroborty. Another meeting was held on February 1, 2001, between Bramhaputra Board, Sangram Samitee and the administration at the office of DC of Nalbari which was also attended by the renowned people of Nalbari District, the Gao Burhas of the affected areas and the then MLA of Tamulpur, Sri-Drhagra, but again the attempt failed to produce any tangible result. Likewise the endeavor to discuss on the building of Pagladia dam by the former Health, Panchyat and Rural Development Minister of Assam Dr. Bhumidhar Barman invited by the Brahmaputra Board of Assam, also went in vain due to the protest by the agitated people. The Minister had promised that no injustice will be done to the people of the downstream. On July 28, 2001 six MLAs of ABSU/BDLP along with the circle officer, the BDO of Tamulpur and some important people of Tamulpur visited the affected area of Pagladia river. In a discussion with the people of the Tamulpur area, the MLA promised to put pressure on Government to stop the dam project.

The Sangram Samitee, along with ABSU central committee, BDLP and the MP of Kokrajhar had called for a Dharma near the main Secretariat, for closure of the Dam work. But the government stopped the bus carrying twenty five participants of Dharma and with the help of the police and detained the bus in Amin gaon. The day following the incident when the Brahmaputra Board authority came to take measurement of the land inhabited by

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the Dam affected families, the agitated people did not allow the Brahmaputra Board Authority even to measure the land. Thus the different steps of the Brahmaputra Board authority went in vain as every time there is a massive protest by the effected people of the Dam project.

The movement has got widespread support from different organizations. On October 29, 2001, the PBPKASS with the cooperation extended by ABSU and BDLP organized a dharna near the Last Gate of the state secretariat at Dispur. The program received widespread support from the people. On their way towards Dispur, the procession was stopped near Amingaon checkgate, a distance of 20 kms from the state complex. While the crowd showed firm determination to reach the destination, the police used their lathicharge and exploded tear gas to suppress the protest. A large number of people, including children and women were injured in the Melee and many of them had to be hospitalised. Yet this did not deter the protesters. A large number of people continued to gather in the capital and demonstrated against the PDP. The demonstration was represented mainly by the ABSU, MPs and MLAs belonging to the BDLP, ARSU, and All Bodo Employees Federation (ABEF).

Police high handedness on the people protesting against the state is not a rare phenomenon in the region. In another incident, a group of young people informed of the corruption by the Brahmaputraputra Board official involved in rehabilitation package, had to face police firing when they tried to put up posters to oppose the said corruption. According to the protesters the board officials had exaggerated the cost of the model house for resettlement from Rs.30, 000 - 1, 24, 620. They pointed out that the houses proposed were so small that they are inadequate even to accommodate a small family.

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These organizations are:
All Bodo Student’s Union (ABSU ), Central committee
M.P. Lok Sabha, Kokrajhar
Bodoland Demand Legislative Party (BDLP)
All Assam Tribal Sangha (AATS)
All Bodo Sahitya Sabha (ABSS)
Bebak Rabha Kraurang Ranchum ( BRKR )
All Assam Sarania Cachari Students’ Union ( AASKU ).
All Assam Rabha Students’ Union ( AARSU )
All Assam Napali Students’ Union. ( AANSU )
All Assam Students’ Union ( AASU ), Baganpara Anchalik Committee
All Assam Students Union, Tamulpur Anchalik Committee
On January 29, 2004, the movement took a major momentum when a large contingent of officials from Brahmaputra Board and district administration reached Thalkuchi, to conduct the land Survey and to assess the compensation package required for the displacees. The angry villagers registered their protest by blocking all the roads barring the entry of the officials into the villages in order to stop the survey work they intended to do. Around 40,000 people participated in such protest including a significantly large number of women, children and aged villagers. When the people were adamant in their protest and did not give ear to the threat issued by the officials, the police resorted to blank firing to frighten the people, but to no avail. The team had to go back without completing their assignment after 35 days of continuous trial and confrontation with the villagers.

This movement is not only one of the oldest movements against dam construction it is also an important symbol of people’s resistance against the anti people model of Government and lack of concern for the need and inspirations of the masses. While the government is sanguine for its extraction of hydro-energy, the affected people are also mobilizing their strength by seeking to establish network with the anti dam activists such as Medha Patkar and other like minded groups at state, region and national levels. Mention has already been made of the existence of antidam lobby in the region including the activists of affected people of Tipaimukh dam, Subansiri dam and other high dams which are equally threat to the people’s life and livelihood in North East India.

But for the government of the state and nation, the hope for Vajpayee Government appears afresh with their fresh strategies developed time to time. The Chief Minister of Assam is thus with a new hope sent a letter to the centre to give more incentive to the people who would be displaced. “The local people are of the opinion that the dam will not help them in any way. We suggested the centre to release more incentives so that they can buy land in some other areas and settle there.”\textsuperscript{133} The Public Investment Board returned the project to the ministry saying that the Ziraat Survey which had given details of the land holders to be displaced is ‘inadequate’ and ‘lacking in Facts’. The ministry has hence asked the government to sort it out with the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). At the end of 2005, hence a meeting was called in Guwahati between Bodo leaders and representatives of the Board and state government but it failed to arrive at any agreement.

\textsuperscript{133} The Sentinel, January 1, 2006.
Endeavours were also going on to seek the aid of NGOs to persuade the people to accept the rehabilitation package.

The project has thus divided the population settled in the two streams of the river. The people living in the southern part of the district in the flood affected plain downstream of the river supported the dam while the upstream people settled in the northern part who stood to lose their land and livelihood from the project opposed it. While the upstream people were getting organized to resist the dam, the government was trying to mobilize the downstream people to support the dam, besides using repressive measures to suppress the anti-dam movement. Two NGOs Manab Seba Sangha and Assam Council for People's Action have been patronized by the Brahmaputra Board to mobilise support for the project. But the two NGOs failed in their missions in the face of popular opposition to the construction of the dam.

Case: 4

Digboi Oil Refinery and pollution in its Vicinity

The history of industrial establishments is generally associated with the exploitation of nature and its subsequent impact on pollution in surrounding areas. When the British discovered the presence of oil in Digboi area of Tinsukia, lower Assam, people could hardly think of its hazardous impact on surrounding forest resources and agricultural lands. The resource exploitation started with the drilling of India's first commercial well in 1889. Subsequently, in 1901 Digboi refinery was commissioned. After the government of India took it over following the nationalization of Assam Oil in October 14, 1981, the production of oil not only went up, but also its effect could no longer be ignored.

The effluents coming out of the refinery was a major source of pollution for the agricultural and forest land, water etc. To combat the hazardous impact of the effluents an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) was set up near the refinery. But the polluted land of the nearby areas have hardly been checked by the ETP, which is illustrated by the incidents of fire in the forest areas, reported from time to time.
The hazardous impact

Needless to say the hundred year old refinery has been a major cause of pollution to the nearby areas. The effluent treatment plant set up by the Indian Oil Limited, has been seen to have little effect on the control of pollution in the region. The waste products coming out from the different parts of the refinery were supposed to be collected in one place to be treated by Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) to separate the substance from the water which was to be drained away. But the ETP has been found to be dysfunctional for a long time, leading to a contamination of a vast area of land and river. The poisonous oil coming out of ETP has not only affected the agricultural land of the peasant community of Ramnagar, Kenduguri and Balijun, it has also resulted in the death of a large number of livestock and domestic animals which drank the oil mixed water. Beside, the villagers pointed out that because of the afflutents thousands of bighas of land have been desertified in the Lakkhipother forest.

Activism and protest against the hazardous impact-

Although some newspapers have reported on the pollution caused by the refinery, initially there was little organised response from the public or any other organization. However, a devastating conflagration on September 4, 1996 at the oil drain outlet which carried Bengene along with other effluents from the refinery broke the people’s complacency. The conflagration which spread to more than one kilometer not only destroyed seven houses and other property of Anandapara village, but also caused the death of some villagers in the area.

The fear of loss of crops every year made the villagers scared as no action had been taken by the refinery authority or the forest department for protection of agricultural land, despite the frequent complaint from the villagers. When no action was taken, the villagers decided to start a movement against the authority. But no concrete steps were taken on the matter.

There were reports of repeated incidences of conflagration in different areas of near-by villages. Though the authorities have been informed of the risks posed by the oil in its nearby areas, no action had been taken neither to control the pollution, nor to revamp
the dysfunctional and outmoded ETP. But after the destructive conflagration that took place on October 31, 2000, the protest was intensified. Like the earlier incident, the conflagration took place from the oil-drain coming out from the Refinery but at a distance of two kilometers away from the Refinery in the Borbill area destroying forest resources of crores of rupees. The oil that accumulated in the soil led to another fire incident the following day after the Borbill incident which once again destroyed vast chunks of forest resources.

The two incidents created terror in the people’s mind that such incidents could continue to take place thereby posing a threat to people’s life. This led to the rise of environmental concern among the people of the region and complaints were lodged against the Refinery. Different organizations and the local people lodged complaints with the Pollution Control Board, Assam. They also had prolonged discussions with the Board, but these had little effect on the activities of the Refinery. When repeated complaints to the state Pollution Control Board failed, the concerned organizations comprising the District Journalist Association, Aranya Suraksha Samittee, Tinsukia District and Digboi Animal Welfare Association submitted a complaint to noted environmentalist Smt.Maneka Gandhi, who was also the Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment and to the Central Pollution Control Board and the Prime Minister.

Smt. Gandhi took up the issue with the Union Ministry of Environment and Forest, which in turn directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to take urgent steps in this connection. Chairman of the CPCB, then directed the pollution control board of Assam to investigate the matter and send the report immediately.

The PCBA report was based on ten years data of laboratory analysis concerning violation of the provision of 1986 Environment (protection) Act by the Digboi Refinery.

The PCBA in its report to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) alleged that the Digboi Refinery has been constantly flouting the norms concerning the permissible limits fixed by the CPCB under the EP Act. On over fourteen occasions since September 1999, the PCBA had to serve notices on the Digboi Refinery authorities on matters of violation of standards of effluents, the report said.

Acting on the findings, the State Pollution Control Board issued a showcase notice to the Refinery on November 19, 2000. When the reply to the notice was not found to be
satisfactory, the PCBA finally served a closure notice on the Refinery on February 12, 2001, under section 33A of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974.

In the closure notice, there were altogether nine charges levelled against the Refinery. However faced with the closure notice, the Refinery authorities made an appeal to the PCBA. On receiving the appeal, the PCBA, considering the greater public interest in general and environmental matters in particular, asked the Refinery authorities to submit a court affidavit detailing a specific action plan regarding pollution control measures.

Beside, the PCBA also asked the Refinery authorities to furnish a bank guarantee of Rs.Five lakhs against the failure to abide by the promises made in the affidavit. The effect of the closure notice was kept in abeyance.

Though there were protests by student's organizations against the polluting impact of refinery, these were of temporary nature. The collective action against the hazardous impact though took a strong form which ultimately led to the issue of show cause notice to the refinery, no sort of movement developed out of that. Though the local NGOs such as Digboi Paribesh Sachetan Manch, Aranya Suraksha Samiti, Tinsukia, have raised general issue of pollution, no organization has made it an issue of long concern.

Case: 5
Issue of depleting forest cover in Assam and environmental activism

Nature has endowed Assam with a rich potential for the growth of forest. The forest areas of the state are the meeting grounds of Indo-Tibetan and Burmese flora and fauna. The luxuriant and evergreen deciduous forest of the state abounds in variety of valuable species of trees. There is also diffusion of considerable number of species that must have evolved in the region which has been well demonstrated in the forest types. In certain parts of the state bamboo forest also exists. Assam occupies a significant place in the wild life map of the country for her rich and rare bird and animal species as well. In no other parts of the world with comparable climatic, geographical and edaphic condition, such diversity of flora and fauna exists, as they do in the limited bio-geographical area of the state of Assam. 134

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134 Bhagwati et al 2001
But the forest resource of Assam like other North Eastern states has recorded a gradual decrease in its cover in the last fifty years. It is regrettable that the bounty of forest resources bestowed upon the state is not utilized responsibly. The increasing depletion of this important resource has disrupted the ecological balance leading to catastrophic results in the form of unusual floods and periodic droughts in the state.

According to the State of Forest Report published by Forest Survey of India, the forest cover in the state has sloped down sharply during 1995-97. According to the report the state had a total of 24,741 sq km, under forest in 1991-92. But it declined to 24,508 sq km. in 1993-94. Again in 1995, Assam recorded a forest cover of 24,061 while it got further reduced to 23,824, which means Assam suffered a huge loss of 237 sq. km. from 1995 to 1997. 135

There has been a rapid decline in forest cover in Assam mainly after 1993. In fact Assam’s forest land has decreased by about 820 sq.km.from 1993 to 1999. In 1993, the area of forest land in Assam was 24,508 sq.km .This came down to 23,688sq.km. in 1999.

The state of the forest report has identified shifting cultivation and rampant felling of trees as the main reasons for depleting forests in six North Eastern states including Assam. A study by the Forest Survey of India reported that an area of 13 million hectares in Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills district have been affected by shifting cultivation.

The illegal forest cutting is seen as another major cause of dwindling forest cover and resources in Assam. A large proportion of the forest products of the state are processed by a number of forest-based industries located in various parts of the state. There are plywood factories, match factories, timber treatment and seasoning plants, hardboard factories, paper mills and saw mills which are based on forest resources of the state. A number of contractors who supply the forest products thus engaged in illegal forest cutting and destroying the forest cover of the region.

While shifting cultivation and illegal forest cutting are the major factors causing decrease in forest cover, another major problem that seriously affects the forests is encroachment by people. Due to rapid growth of population, there has been an increasing

pressure on land forcing people to move into forest lands. In addition to this, some illegal migrants are also encroaching upon the forest areas. Besides, some forest land along the state’s border is under the occupation of neighboring states.

So far more than 2.60 lakhs hectares of forest land of Assam’s 35 reserved forest have been encroached in different parts of the states. Of the 35 Reserved forests, seven i.e., Haltugaon, Aie Valley, Sointpur, Lakhipur, Jorhat and Golaghat are the worst affected. Five Reserved Forests in Golaghat district were encroached by people from the neighboring state of Nagaland due to sheer negligence on the part of the successive states Governments. The Assam-Nagaland border areas have four sectors A, B, C and D. The Doyang reserved forest is situated in the D sector in Golaghat subdivision and A, B and C sectors are within Dhansiri subdivision. The Rongma forest has virtually come under the control of the Nagas.

In Lakhimpur division with 12 reserved forests Rengma, Pabha, Kadam, Subansiri, Jiadhal, Sissi, Semon, Archia, Demon, Bhangajan, Zamzing and Gali had originally 73, 567.43 hectares of forest land. But because of the massive encroachment just 48, 810.28 hectares of forest land have remained intact in these areas. In this division, a sizeable portion of forest land have been encroached by the people of Arunachal Pradesh. In Jorhat forest division with four reserved forests Desoi, Hollongpara, Desoivalley and Tiruvalley, out of 28, 194.76 hectares forest land, 19, 478.95 hectares area have already been encroached. About 58, 000 hectares of reserved forest area in North Assam have been devastated following aggression by Arunachal Pradesh on the one hand and encroachment by local people on the other. While the forcefull aggression of land by Nagaland had continued on the South Arunachal has been diminishing the border of Assam by relentless encroachment.

In addition to the encroachment and occupation of the forests by the migrants from neighboring states another reason often reported is the "unholy nexus of politicians, Mafia and a powerful section of people who set up illegal settlement in the government administrated forest areas."136

136 S. Chakraborty, Grass Roots Options, M/A. 2002
Steps taken by the government:

Though the forest Department is often accused of being a mute spectator of illegitimate timber felling and encroachment, the recent decision taken by the Supreme Court on timber felling has forced state government to take some steps to prevent destruction of forest. Following the Supreme Court order issued on November 23, 2001, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) directed all the states to reclaim the forest land under illegal encroachment by September 30, 2002, and set up state level monitoring cells to update the encroached area list and pursue a follow up action plan to implement the objectives.

According to the Forest Survey of India Report, Assam records a continuous decline of forest cover. Out of all the states of the region it records a loss of 447 sq.km. of forest cover in 1995, while in 1997 it recorded a loss of 237 sq.km. and 136 sq.km. in 1999. While the whole of the North Eastern Region shows a decline of forest cover of 78 sq.km in 1995, 316 sq.km. in 1997, and 216 sq.km. in 1999. Thus timber ban was a massive step from the side of the government for keeping North East Green and the Eviction drive being another significant step in that direction.

Action Group and Forest Protection

Protection of forest is a major concern of many environmental action groups, and different actions have been taken by different groups from time to time. While increase in protected area is a common demand observed in different parts of Assam, a number of organizations also tried to look for other causes that led to the decrease of forest cover. Among the different organizations the much heard voice is of Aranyak Nature’s Club (ANC), which has taken major steps to save the forest land from destruction. When the members of the different action groups could find encroachment as the major cause leading to dwindling forest cover, the Secretary of Aranyak Nature’s Club has filed a Public Interest Litigation on the deforestation and encroachment of forest areas in Assam. The case was treated as public interest litigation in view of the notice taken by Guwahati High Court on the basis of a newspaper report under the caption “Deforestation in Assam—Bonanza for encroachment.” The news item was on the basis of a statement given by the secretary, ANC Mr. Gautam Uzir, an advocate who appeared for the petition to M
Talukder, the President of ANC. Grievences which have been highlighted in the PIL, were that further deforestation must be stopped and encroachers must be evicted from the forest land to conserve the flora and fauna of Assam. The final hearing of the PIL [under civil rule No 648 of 1993] took place on September 19 in the presence of Chief Justice Mr.Brijesh Kumar and Justice Mr.N.C.Jain of Gauhati High Court. When Mr.Uzir, counsel for the petition as well as Mr.B.K.Talukdar and Mr.Chinmoy Choudhury, State Counsel put their point of view. Mr.Uzir placed before the High Court some facts including the latest satellite map on the forest cover in North-East India and some details of decrease of forest cover by 237 sq-km between 1995 and 1997 in Assam. Mr.Uzir and Mr. Talukdar pointed out the increase in the encroachment in forest areas and the need to clear the forest and also to maintain the ecological balance of the region. As per the international standard, 33.33 percent of any geographical area should be under the forest cover. They pointed out that fresh encroachment was going on and the response given by the state Govt. was therefore not sufficient.

Timber Association and Protest against Timber Ban

To protest against rapacious drive of the government against timber felling the Timber Association of Meghalaya staged in march in Shillong city stating that the ban has threatened the livelihood of the local people. But the protest had hardly any impact on government. Moreover it was more a protest by business class which earned a huge amount of money out of industries based on timber. No protest is reported from general people against timber ban though it had hit a large section of people who are dependent upon forest products for their livelihood. Besides few demonstrations in some places no sustained movement against the Supreme Court verdict on timber ban took place. Moreover the timber ban though affected a large section of people in other states including Assam as number of industriesand mills based on timber got closed immediately after the ban, but no organized effort took place to protest such move of the Supreme Court.

Politics of Encroachment and Eviction
While timber ban *per se* failed to generate any response from the public, the eviction drive which was launched by the government on May 7, 2002 in the reserved forest within Guwahati following the directive of Supreme Court had invited huge protest from different interest groups due to which the drive had to be scuttled midway. Order from the apex court, sudden initiative from the state government and unexpected reaction and resistance from the people made the eviction drive against the encroachers from the reserve forest in Assam a media headline. The state forest department and local administration carried out the drive to recover the huge land areas under reserve forest, Wildlife Santuaries and National Parks, but suddenly it was halted as suddenly as it was started.

The controversy started with the eviction drive, which was launched in the reserved forests around Guwahati on May 7, 2002. Following the directive there were severe public outrages in Guwahati. The drive in Botahgguli area in Guwahati attracted a large number of people from the locality which turned violent while the demolition of houses took place. To control the mob the para-military forces were deployed which resulted in the death of one person from bullet injuries.

The eviction drive had placed the political parties, NGOs, social organizations and even the environmentally conscious people in divided houses. The ruling Congress party tried to exploit the move by following the guidelines of the apex court and thus project itself as a green party. But the leaders sitting in opposition including Assam Gana Parishad, (AGP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), CPI (M) and CPI had termed the move irrational. The different parties supported a 12 hour dawn to dusk Guwahati Bandh on May 26 protesting against the eviction drive, which was called by Greater Guwahati Evicted and Oppressed People’s Forum. Arguing for the protection of the indigenous people’s right, AGP has challenged the government to first evict the encroachers from the national parks, who had settled down there under the benevolent eyes of the Congress. BJP leaders including MP Mr. Rajesh Guhaign and the Union Minister of State for Water Resources Bijoya Chakraborty also sided with the opposition to protest against the drive without issuing any prior notice. The local MLA of the Congress party and Minister of State for Sports and Youth Welfare Mr. Rabin Bordoloi had also termed
the eviction as ill timed. He argued that the demarcation between Government land and reserved forest should be done before launching such a massive drive.

The eviction drive has also received criticism from various student organizations. The All Assam Students Union (AASU) for whom one of the major concern is the illegal immigration in the state, has criticized the state government that the drive was only planned to evict the local people. Many other influential student’s groups such as Tribal Students Federation, All Assam Moran Students Union, All Assam Deuri Students Union, All Tai Ahom Students Union, Assam Sonowal Kachari Student’s Union, Assam Tea Tribes Student’s Association, Tai Yuba Chatra Samstha expressed their support to AASU in this matter.

From the above discussion it has been seen that Assam itself accounts for a number of cases of environmental activism which in some way or other can be put in the different ranks of environmental movements. It has been seen that all the movements are in some way or the other led by groups which either already existed in the form of registered societies or organizations which did not have any prior set up but spontaneously emerged at the place of origin of the movement to address the problem from the very grass roots level. The strategies of the action groups are different, but in general all have questioned the problem of environmental degradation and sought to bring certain changes at institutional level to protect the environment. While organizations like Nature’s Beckon with preservationist ideology demanded declaration of patches of forest land as Wildlife Sanctuary, the movement against Pagladia dam strongly questions government’s rehabilitation measures. The issue of pollution by oil refinery of Digboi questions the functioning of Pollution Control Board and Digboi Oil Refinery and proper implementation of the environmental guidelines by the Digboi Oil Refinery. Most of these movements primarily deal with the government policies and their implementation directed to help the affected people to lead a life in a healthy environment. Thus all these movements have the elements of intervention in policy formulation and implementation level, and hence also do come under the contour of environmental activism, as has been conceived in the introductory section of this work.

Thus from the analysis of the five cases of environmental movement in Assam, it has been seen that the state witnesses environmental movements some of which have
sustained for decades, though of unequal vigor. The organizations which have been treated as Action Groups for their involvement in action related environmental problems, have been seen to give leadership with their distinct motto in saving environment and protecting the right of people. Moreover these movements have been seen to take the help of certain legislations and policies to make an intervention for their action, hence these do also show an environment of activism related to environment in the state.