CHAPTER IV
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POLITICAL DIMENSION OF ECOLOGICAL MOVEMENTS AND LEVELS OF AWARENESS.

Although ecological movements relate to issues that are geographically localised, e.g. forest, water, air and other specific location loomed. However, their echoes are national and even sometime global in impact. This sort of macro-micro dialectic is rooted in the cognitive gaps associated with development planning and this dichotomy has been analysed politically as the result of the existence of the inequality in India.

Development process invariably has a need for natural resources. In the context of limited quantities of natural resources, either limited by non-renewability of ecological limits to renewability the resource needs in socio-economic and political unequal society are bound to create conflict in different sections of the society to compete with each other. In this unequal competition the survival of the less powerful but more populous micro-economy is directly threatened. This threat may come either by resource transfer or by economic and political factors leading to resource degradation. Yet the significance of these ecology movements does not merely lie in the fact that they are voices of the dispossessed who are victims of the highly unequal sharing of the costs of the development process.

The political dimension of these movements lies in the manner in which they make visible the invisible externalities of development based on a particular political and
economic ideology and reveal its inherent injustice and non
sustainability. The recognition of these inadequacies and
the imperatives arising from the right to creates survive
another ground and another direction for development which
ensures justice with sustainability, and equality with
ecological stability. The ecology movements can no longer
be considered merely as specific and particular happenings.
They are an expression of the universal socio-political and
ecological impacts of a narrowly conceived development
patterns based only on short term commercial criteria of
resource exploitation.

The impact of ecology movements can not be
assessed merely in terms of the impact on particular devel-
opment projects they perceived from. The impact, in the
final analysis is on the very fundamental issues of socio-
political, economic, science and technology which together
have created the classical paradigm of development process.
This approach led to the unequal distribution of its fruits
and generated the conflicts in society for their due share
in natural resources, and this is the struggle for survival
of politically and economically marginalised section in the
one hand and status quoists on the other hand. Infact this
political dimension of unequal resource utilisation is re-
flected in very ecology movement, right from the local to
global level under various labels throughout the ages.

The international community started getting sensi-
tised to environmental issues from the late 60s (the
Stockholm conference of 1972 was a manifestation of this
sensitivity), yet follow-up actions by member nations of
the international community have been slow. Action to fix emission standards on automobile exhaust and to gases enforce them is still far from complete. Nations have been reluctant to scrub the sulphur and nitrogen oxides from the smoke stacks of their power stations in spite of the proven impact of acid rain on forests and marine life in other countries. Overall the earth is in a much morose state today than it was 20 years ago; as the United Nation's report have put it.

"The temperature of the planet has gone up by 0.5 degrees over the past century. Half of the humid tropical forests, in which a variety of biological species are concentrated, have been eliminated over the past 40 years. 6,000,000 hectares of land, on the average, are turned into a desert every year".

Today air has become even more contaminated, large areas of formerly arable land are no longer in use because of soil erosion and desertification, and the area of afforestation has shrunk. According to current estimates, over its history mankind has destroyed 2,000 million hectares of fertile soil, i.e. more than the present area under crops and pasture lands. Between the 1950s and the 1970s the area of afforestation was halved in the world. The loss of forests (in particular, in tropical regions), the abuse of past there lands which are being depleted, and the unrestricted ploughing of land have led to tangible changes in
the global circulation of substances, whose natural closeness is essential for the ecological health of the planet. A number of ecological crises have broken out in the world-the Sahel zone of desertification in Africa, the region of massive elimination of moist tropic forest in Amazonia, the Aral, Sea, etc. The very dangerous ecological state of the world's highest mountain—the Himalayas is the cause of increasing floods and other natural calamities threatening South Asia, which has the densest population in the world.

There is no clear-cut division into national and international environmental problems. The same river, for instance, is used by several countries, and the worsening of its state in one country adversely affects its neighbours. As for air pollution, it knows no territorial borders. The accumulated in the intellectual potential and material and technical means which mankind has at its disposal are enough to put a stop to the ecological destruction. International cooperation must be intensified, in order to tackle difficult regional problems. Scientific programmes should be created to warn people what we are approaching the threshold of irreversible changes. Scientists should also give recommendation on a stable ecological economic development. The formation of new ideas, which means a cardinal change of the goals, ways and methods of development and a broad introduction of ecologically safe equipment and technology, is an essential condition for survival. The issue of hand could lead to the creation of a new civilisation by overcoming mutually
dependent economic, social, energy, food, ecological and spiritual crisis.

There are good examples of cooperation between states in the ecological field. The projected strategies of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have been implemented and may be further identified to achieve the set target. Important problems are being handled under the programme for combating desertification. A number of agreements have been reached on the Baltic Sea. A project for the study of the transgressional transfer of pollutants in Europe is being fulfilled, and agreements on the protection of specific species of fauna have been concluded. However, a comprehensive international system has not yet been set up in the ecological sphere. There is need to have an International Ecological Agency, similar to the International Atomic Energy Agency which could be created at the United Nations, would be able to provide such a system. The tasks of this agency should include the elaboration of international ecological standards, expert analysis of major projects which may influence the state of the environment beyond individual countries, the creation of a special fund to finance, the elaboration and introduction of new and environmentally sound technologies, and support for priority studies in global and regional ecology.

The optimal planning and global system of ecological monitoring, using conventional means and satellites should be another of the Agency's important issues other
wise it would be a risky task. As Dalby observed:

"Time is pressing up, we have to hurry up, if we want to save life on Earth".

It is important to elaborate and observe principles providing for a fair distribution of the world's indivisible resources, substantiated quotas for the use of, say - forests, and impose limits on various pollutions. The very first steps have been taken in this field. However, the introduction of environmental protection measures has been introduced for more slowly than is required to prevent the destruction of the environment.

The long neglected environmental dangers, such as those recently disclosed in Eastern Europe, threaten to wreak havoc on a number of other regions unless world leaders move not only toward peace with each other, but also peace with nature. In the aftermath of the cold war, peace and stability will rely more on ecopolitics than traditional geopolitics. Restoring our balance with nature is now as important to global security as maintaining a balance of economic and military power. Without concerted action, new national security problems will arise. For example, many of the world's most densely populated countries share endangered river basins. The potential for conflict over water resources is filled by desertification, deforestation and top soil erosion, which at present ratios will eliminate one-third of the world's productive land over the next 10
The richer countries will not be insulated from these conflicts. Infact, many have already become embroiled in various ecological disputes that cut across traditional East-West divisions; for example, acid rain controversies among the nations of Europe and between the United States and Canada. Paramount among the endanger are the ravages of global warming, which could create millions of eco refugees. Last year, scientists taking the world’s temperature established that its average of 57.61 degree Fahrenheit was the highest in the 130 years over which reliable records have been kept. Infact, in present era of sea change in global affairs the environmental problems has become internationalised, and their solution lies in the perceptual outlook to deal with these issues as very rightly put forward by Mustafa Tolba:

"The threat is not the fault of any one nation or even group of nations. It simply reflects the fact that the environment is global, and that nothing short of holistic global solution can do the job. And that solution, in turn, depends on basic shift in society's concept of economic development".

The majority of developing nations have not yet signed the 1987 Montreal Protocol on phasing out use of chlorfluoro carbons (CFC) that are depleting the earth’s ozone layer. This protocol went into effect years back. The hitch is that developing countries cannot afford to partic-
ipate. If efforts by developed countries to reduce CFC damage are not to be nullified, financial and technical transfers must be made to developing countries. It will cost between $2 billion and $7 billion over the next 10 years to pass on to the developing worlds the means to adopt the more expensive substitutes for CFC used in manufacturing such products as refrigerators and air conditioners. The crucial debate about how to pay for remedial action continues to preoccupy the signatory governments of the Montreal protocol. The objectives of the protocol has, for the most part, been settled. Now, the task is to identify the means to achieve a global response. Accomplishing this goal will require bringing to the fore an expansion of the "Polluter pays" principle, essentially encompassing the idea of user fees rather than taxation.

The prospects for working out practical solutions in time to avert disaster are dimmed by the slow pace of global negotiations on the environment. The ozone treaty took 10 years to workout. Confronting the ozone challenge is a rehearsal for the far more difficult problem of global warming. We must move much deal faster than we did on ozone to tackle the consequences of climatic change or we may very well commit ourselves to an irreversible course of destruction. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) targeted a goal of coordinating by no later than end of this century, agreement necessary to tackle global warming. The cost of phasing out CFC is very small compared to what we will have to pay for reducing gases that produce the green house effect, particularly carbon dioxide, which
alone contributes more than 30 percent to the global warming process. But nowadays this issue has been politicised at global level in such a manner that world has divided into two blocks and it is very difficult to convince the North that they are the real polluters of the environment, as explained by Paterson: 1m15

"The developing countries are responsible for less than 10 percent of total industrial carbon dioxide emissions that add to global warming. None the less, they still have the potential to negate effort by the industrialised countries to slow the earth's warming trend".

Despite the irrefutable signs of danger, some western experts argue that our global environmental problems are so complex that the only feasible policy is to mark time while further studies are completed. Proponents of delay point to the fact that science is still working on many unanswered questions concerning the ozone layer and the workings of the carbon cycle in nature. But let us remember that in 1987, when UNEP called for a complete phase-out of CFC by the end of this century, many countries regarded this urgency as unwarranted. Today these same countries are pressing for more radical remedies, since it was found that damage to the ozone layer was more extensive than originally suspected. Although environment has become the prime concern at global level but even then political vision is needed to deal with ecology in present global perspective as viewed by Fritjof Capra;
"The obstacle to immediate, effective action remains a lack of political will. But the feature does not forgive lack of resolve. History punishes those who come late."

The environmental issues been taken up at have various levels through different approaches, therefore, tentative signs of hope do exist: The clean Air Bill is a priority of the 10 1st U.S. congress; the erstwhile Soviet leadership had pronounced that the environment is the essence of perestroika; urged on by its Prime Minister, Australia has decided to plant a billion trees; British Prime Minister had even said that industrial civilization may be wittingly experimenting with the life of the planet. Now the question arises that how long we can afford to take the same risks in dealing with the catastrophic possibilities of global warming, which has now begun to reflect a serious divide between the affluent west and the developing world. There seems to be a colonial design in apportioning blame for the green house effect on developing countries. Three years back the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development programme and an American institute called World Resources Institute (WRI), had jointly released a report called "World Resources 1990-91" which, for the first time, said that India, China and Brazil are among the top five countries responsible for the accumulation of gases like Carbon dioxide, Methane and Chlorofluorocarbons in the earth's atmosphere.

This is a patently unfair mathematical jugglery,
where politics is masquerading as science, and very rationally explained by Rumki Basu:

"Developing counties, as a group, are responsible for only 16 percent of carbon dioxide accumulating in the atmosphere, whereas the WRI-UN States claims that the third world share is 48 percent. Developing countries are not responsible for any methane accumulations, whereas WRI says third world share are of 56 percent."

This is the sheer manipulation, being done to reward the biggest polluters and penalise third world countries especially in case tax is levied on excess emitters, and passed on prorate, to countries that stay within their emission quotas. Other area in which we smell conspiracy is the disinformation being spread by the West, such as the environmental cost of the Gulf war is likely to outstrip all other costs. What great though this cost will be, such a claim tends to divert attention from the terrible human suffering of war. Simply put, the Gulf war would be equal to just about eight days of the emissions of Carbon dioxide in the U.S.A. The weakness of the premier environment institution and the so called environment experts also exposed when it comes to safeguarding the interests of the weaker section, deprived regions and backward nation, overawed as most of them are by the power and pull of the western bodies. Infact there is need for
eternal vigilance on matters which may not get the attention they deserve.

The Environmental issues related to the greenhouse effect and depletion of the ozone layer are global problems. Against the perspective of these global trends and the greening of politics in several countries, there is some indication of a similar movement taking roots in India as well. For quite some time now, several activists and organisations, particularly outside the government, have in various ways been raising the alarm of environmental damage. However, their action have not established credibility, largely because the advocacy of green economic policies has not been put forward effectively as part of an over all development strategy. Typically, past efforts of activists have been directed at stopping specific projects or programmes, without adequately spelling out alternatives with benign environmental impact and without compromising development. But slowly there appears some shift within government circles, to the extent that even civil servants generally regarded as conservative in these matters, now appear concerned about environmental problems and the imperatives of adopting a sustainable path of development.

In the developing countries the tendency of specific groups and sections of society is to dismiss ecological movements as a luxury that only developed nations can afford. It is argued that developing countries, which have low levels of per capita income and consumption must do everything possible to increase the production of goods and services. Nothing could be more short sighted as this
approach to development. Environmental degradation in the developing countries, and particularly in India, is perhaps a far more serious threat to economic well-being than in several other societies. What makes the relevance of sustainable development strategies for stronger is the fact that, by and large, the livelihood of the poor in our rural areas depends on the wealth of natural resource that surround them. In the absence of access to capital resources and financial wealth, in essence, the poor and rural areas are directly dependent on the health of the soil, the adequacy of water supply the stock of biomass resources and the cleanliness of the air which they breathe clean air and water become vitally important in the absence of adequate nutrition and medical infrastructure.

Nothing provides stronger evidence of this relationship between man and nature than the rapid ecological degradation that has taken place in the Himalayan region of this country. With rapid deforestation, several streams which not only provided water but represented significant potential for small hydro power development, have suddenly vanished; erosion of soil in various regions has left the land surface impoverished to a stage where plant growth is seriously threatened. Soil erosion is the real environmental problem in Himalayan region as Vandana Shiva puts it;

"It is estimated that the erosion of soil in the rivers of the Himalayan region is currently at the rate of one millimetre per year, which represents five-fold increase over the rate that existed at
the beginning of this century. Consequently, these rivers are annually carrying sediments at the rate of 16.5 hectare per 100 sq. km of catchment area.

In the Ganga basin alone it is estimated that erosion is around 6 billion tonnes of soil per annum and the total of the rivers of the entire country could be as high as 15 billion tonnes per annum. The value of this loss of soil if estimated in terms of market equivalence could be over Rs. 10,000 crore annually. The direct impact of this loss felt by the rural poor whose sustenance and life support depend on the quality of the soil they eke their living from.

The country is currently in the grip of a controversy on two major projects, e.g. Tehri and Narmada. Both are not viable, taking into account every aspect of these Mega Dams. Since political manipulation is going on right from the beginning therefore it is very difficult to convince the government as well as pro-Dam camp that ignoring the real costs to the environment, and even where human beings are involved, treating them merely as statistics, without regard to the human dimension of movement and rehabilitation, etc. Of course there is a clear vacuum in awareness, skills and organisational capabilities for conceptualising, pursing and implementing small projects. There are, for instance, in this country, a large number of streams which flow perennially in many of our mountain
areas, but these hardly receive consideration for setting up small hydro-power stations due to the organisational and institutional weaknesses. After all alternatives are small projects. Big is also beauty but not in our case, considering prevailing objective conditions. The main problem lies here that these small projects are not receiving as much consideration in the planning and development process as do large conventional projects, it require equal and fair appraisal. Indian Government and society have to now face squarely the challenge of creating a decentralised infrastructure, which alone can ensure a shift towards more sustainable processes of development.

It would be fair to believe that such a shift would be simple and that it will not be opposed by vested interests. There would, in fact, be a strong reaction which would tend to move development choices to the other extreme, on the argument that the country is facing a severe constraint of capital, and, therefore, economics of scale must be exploited to the fullest extent in making the best use of scarce capital resources. Some of these arguments would be put forward on the basis of genuine belief, but others may sometimes be only a convenient cover for vested interests attempting to satisfy their greed at the cost of over-exploitation of the natural wealth of this country. The one possible impact of green politics on development strategy could be through focussing on future environmental concerns in long term planning. For instance, the quality of air in most Indian cities is already far below the acceptable standards. The future structure of transport,
should clearly be dictated by environmental concerns, requiring major investments in public transport and the railways. Because the rapid rate of growth of vehicular traffic, which is the main culprit in deteriorating air quality, could take environmental conditions to disastrous levels in our urban areas.

Thus environmental issues are not apolitical; they arise out of decisions taken on development policy and indicate the priority a government accords to certain classes and sets of people. At the moment, these issues are thus being raised essentially by urban-based professionals. But at the same time ecology movements in India are increasingly taking the shape of a people's movement which is exerting pressure on policy makers to reconsider development plans. On the other land it is also established that environmental problems do not recognise national borders.

This has been accepted world-wide for some years now, especially in the light of the growing evidence of the "green house effect" caused by global warming. India and Pakistan, however, have taken a longer time to acknowledge this reality. The Thar desert for instance, straddles the border between India and Pakistan. On both sides the desert and its people have encountered similar difficulties. The strain imposed by a market economy has meant a devaluation of indigenous species of trees, grasses and animals so central to the conservation of the desert ecosystem.

Therefore in India environmental groups working in the desert region are encouraging the revival of traditional water systems which ensure planned use of ground water
resources, cultivation and Sewan grass which is rich in protein and carbohydrate, protection of the Khejri tree which is sturdy enough to survive the worst drought and the propagation of the indigenous species of cattle. In the Tharparkar region of Pakistan, the same Khejri tree has almost disappeared. The main environmental problems have been caused by the replacement of a subsistence economy with an exchange economy. Additionally, the old socio-political and economic structure, in which most of the land was owned by Hindus, has changed. In the course of the two wars between India and Pakistan, in 1965 and 1971, the Hindus and their share croppers fled to India. In exchange Muslim peasants and landless labourers, who had been working on the Indian side of the border, came into Tharparkar and were settled on common lands, or "gowchar lands".

Thus not only was the old socio-political structure which led to a certain organisation of the economy of the Thar region, completely disrupted, but the vacuum left by the Hindus was filled by urban based middlemen who came in and introduced an hitherto unknown factor of the market economy. They bought up traditional crafts and introduced factory-made goods. They also encouraged villagers to sell the locally grown millet in the urban markets and in exchange supplied wheat to the area. Therefore politics of partition in 1947 left a tremendous effect on desert ecology of India and Pakistan. Now it is well established fact that democratic political setup also plays a significant role in mass agitations, carried out at local or global level. Ecological movements also cannot be
ignored, because people's voice on any issues can only be heard within a democratic framework where such intervention is permitted. Even various rival blocks can have the healthy dialogue to the problem of sharing natural sort out resources in the present world order as viewed by Prof. M.G.K. Menon;

"However, the present concern about environment offers a major opportunity for a creative dialogue between the North and the South over the use and management of the finite resources of the earth, which obviously is connected with the broader issue of international economic management".

Hence ecology movements can be viewed in political perspective in different parts of the globe are to say that the intensity of these agitations varies from the nature of state structure to the people's democratic right to raise these issues. In India people are protesting against Tehri and Narmada dams within the democratic framework, they have the very right to raise the voices of discontent regarding the injustice carried out by the government. Even these issues has been raised at international level by their leaders. This is the beauty of democracy. In Pakistan the controversy over Kalabagh dam is also going on because this benefit Punjab state but whose environmental would costs will have to be borne by the other provinces. They are, predictably, strongly opposing the dam. But such
interventions are not permitted in Pakistan, because of the years of military rule have taken their toll on the growth of democratic movements. According to Lummis Douglas, it is very essential to democratise the development processes in which majority has to be benefited from the particular scheme while at present the scenario is just reverse. As he put it;

"Development should be in democratic framework, optimum utilisation of minimum resources are the criteria, and the fruits of development should be shared in majority of the people, decided by themselves, by few elites".

Till a short while ago it seemed that politics and ecology were a great distance apart, but within the lifetime of one generation that distance has nearly disappeared. We admired industrialisation, regarded the columns of thick black smoke over factories and plants and the tractor felling trees as symbols of technological and social progress. The first giant chemical plants sent us all into raptures about the power of the human intellect. The past two or three decades have seen a major shift in public opinion and social and philosophical conceptions. Now we know that economic activity can be as destructive as the use of nuclear weapons if it is conducted without regard for the environmental factors. Over 20 tonnes of industrial and other waste per person a year are produced.
in the world today. More than 200 million tonnes of and Nitric Sulphur oxides and composite pollutants, which are particularly dangerous for man, are annually discharged into the air. The amount of Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which is discharged in thousands of millions of tonnes a year, is growing. In the foreseeable future this may cause a warming of the atmosphere and, consequently, an overflowing of vast tracts of dry land due to a rise in the sea level. As a result, hundreds of millions of people may become ecological refugees.

Industrial accidents pose another threat to the environment. Ecologically dangerous conduct of individuals and countries is causing irreversible genetic changes in human beings and animals. Even now 100 biological species disappear everyday. In the present global scenario the environmental problem is as important for mankind's survival as settlement of regional conflicts and overcoming economic backwardness. In this context, the relationship between politics and ecology in the present international arena can be explored further as Gorz viewed in this manner:

"The new political thinking and an adequate manner of conduct in this increasingly interdependent world have accelerated the movement of these two spheres towards one another and made us realise that if we want to cure the earth's disease we must, as soon as possible,
work out global solutions of the highest political order and internationalise the efforts of states in this field".

Thus politics and ecology have now merged into a new science that may be called political ecology. Practically every country has now made ecology a political priority. This is only natural, since environmental problems transcend national borders because of their negative consequences. Hence the need to work out and adopt a global strategy of environmental control and rational use of natural resources. To this end all states should work out their own environmental control programmes. The implementation of a global strategy for environmental control requires the concentration of effort on priority projects. These include, above all, climatic modifications, transboundary pollution and acid rain, the depletion of the Ozone layer, pollution of the world's oceans, soil degradation, desertification, deforestation, extinction of animal and plant species, degeneration of the polar regions, recycling, neutralisation and dumping of toxic waste, genetic effects, pollution of space, the development of environmentally safe technologies, and major accidents.

In the final analysis, our objective is to put into practice on global scale the ideas about rational and unable interaction between man and Nature, formulating the main principle of the concept of ecology security, we have to regard the peace-making efforts, socio-political, economic and environment in their inter-relationship. This
inter-relationship will help in working out the practical measures that would correspond to the gist of each specific problem and their solution of global level. Therefore ecological issues also has to be dealt within legal perspective in the present era because of its multidimensional role in the world affairs as Anderson, and Walt has put it in this way:

"Political ecology finds expression in international affairs in the concept of ecological security, which is part of universal security. Ecological security implies the implementation of series of measures on the basis of wide-ranging international cooperation and international law".

The primary aim of these measures is to avert environmental disasters which may cause irreparable damage to all forms of life and biosphere modifications; make further ecological processes predictable; rationalise the use of natural resources and optimise the relationship between human society and Nature. In this affair, state should play a significant role to perform their duty to the world citizens, and ecological well-being of any state cannot be attained at the expense of other states and with no regard for their interests. No activity of the state-military or economy should harm the environment, both within and beyond its national jurisdiction. All states should comprehensively assess the ecological consequence of
economic and other activities in their territories, and supply other interested states, as well as international organisations, with the results. They should not undertake any economic or other activities whose ecological consequences defy prediction.

Hence there is a need to establish a system of efficient control, globally, nationally, regionally to monitor the state of and changes in the environment and natural resources on the basis of the internationally accepted criteria and parameters. States should be made accountable as to their environmental protection activities, as well as ecological accidents, both actual and those prevented, in their national territories. States should help each other in ecological emergencies. In this inter as well as intra states affair, the role of ecological diplomacy came into being at the global level. Rapprochement between diplomacy and environmental protection has necessitated certain changes in the state structure in many countries. Last but not least, the solution of ecological problems, including on the diplomatic front, is only possible on the basis of a genuinely scientific analysis and evaluation of the processes taking place inside states and on the global and regional level and a scientific forecasting of the dynamics of their development. The ecological diplomacy needs a scientific approach to deal with the current global environmental issues as explained by John and Carroll:
"Without direct contact with scientists and the scientific expertise of the planned initiatives in the ecological sphere, there is the risk that diplomacy may again be sidetracked to the worn out path of approximate and superfluous decisions. The blend of diplomacy and ecology is a blend of diplomacy and ecological science".

Historically speaking the word ecology was first used by a German biologist, Ernest Haeckel, in 1870, derived from the Greek meaning 'house' and words 'oikos' 'logos' meaning 'understanding' which makes ecology the means by which we understand our planet, to qualify as a green. But it wasn't until the 1930s that ecology assumed full professional status—the last of the sciences to do so. The parallel strand of the global environment debate was the anti-nuclear debate which foretold the sudden and macabre end of the world through a nuclear holocaust. Emerging from the horrors of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, this debate was fuelled by the various radiation disasters in nuclear power plants, notably three mile Island and, more recently, Chernobyl and Bhopal Gas tragedy.

In the early seventies, there emerged a fresh concern for the future of the earth. This time the critical factor was depletion of 'natural resources' and growth of the human population. On April 22, 1970 the first Earth Day was celebrated, which evolved from an idea by US senator
Gaylord Nelson, more than 20 million Americans rallied under the banner of mother Nature. Their action led to the passage of America's Clean Air Act and the creation of the now powerful body, the US Environment Protection Agency. In 1972, the Club of Rome (founded by Aurelio Peccei) published a report where they concluded: If the present growth trends in world population, industrialisation, food production, and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limit to growth in this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years. In the same year, a conference on Human Environment was convened by the United Nations at Stockholm, on June 16, 1972. It adopted a Declaration on the Human Environment consisting of a preamble and 26 principles. Here, again, country after country spoke of the degradation and depletion of natural resources. But again, the concern for environmental protection was seen by many as irrelevant, even antagonistic, to the concerns for social and economic development. This conference led to the establishment of United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

During the 1980s came the West Germany's Green Party, founded by Petra Kelly and others. It was basically a political group of radical environmentalists of West Germany but gradually it has become entire Europe's movement. There are now green parties in Germany, Belgium, France, Ireland, Sweden, Austria, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Holland, as well as in the U.K. Green groups in final and, Spain, Portugal and Greece are planning to become parties in the near future. Die Grunen was not formally constituted.
as a Political Party until January 1980, and the way this came about is an interesting example of the very close links between Green parties and broader green movements. It was the issue of nuclear power which served as a catalyst for the emergence of Die Grunen as a political party. But from 1977 onwards green candidates began to contest in local elections. The continuing failure of all other strategies led to renewed call for a green party, so that extra-parliamentary efforts could be backed by radical parliamentary involvement. The environment movement became increasingly politicized and began to realize that getting rid of nuclear power would only be possible as part of a much broader political and social transformation. A joint platform between the different groups was rudimentarily cobbled together for the 1979 European elections, and in the next year the party was formally set up.

Then it took another seven years for the next 'world report' on the environment to appear, this time the "Bruntland Report". This report emanated from the World Commission on Environment and Development, set up by the United Nations in 1984, under the stewardship of Gro Harlem Bruntland, Prime Minister of Norway. The commission report, titled our Common Future, was published in 1987. The commission members represented almost all the significant section of the world, the rich and the poor, the east and the west, the capitalists and the socialists. This report produced what must so far be the most wide-ranging statement on the world's environmental crisis. It mentioned almost all points of views, and shown a rare sensitivity
to a surprisingly diverse set of values. However, perhaps because of this very breadth, no clear action plan seemed to emerge. Global environmental rhetoric, with this report, had come of age, but global environmental action still lagged far behind.

The first-ever "Earth Summit"—the United Nations conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)—took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 1 to 12 June 1992. The primary goal of the summit was to lay the foundation for a global partnership between developing and more industrialised countries based on mutual need and common interests, to ensure the future of the planet. Among the tangible achievements of the Rio conference was the signing of two conventions, one on Biological Diversity and another on climate change by 153 nations. The delegates also approved by consensus three non-binding documents: a statement on forestry principles, a declaration of principles on environmental policy and development initiatives, and Agenda 21, a programme of action into the next century in areas like poverty, population and pollution. The environmental linkage gave Third world countries a new bargaining power at the conference and although funding commitments fell far short of expectations, many Development countries increased their specific contributions. While in assessing the outcome, opinion was sharply divided. There were some who felt that as the beginning of a new political process in post-cold war world of global cooperation, the summit was a landmark event and there were others who expressed bitter disappointment that at the end of it all the world contin-
ued to be divided as sharply as ever between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, between the world's structured mechanisms and great bureaucracies and those that are its perpetual victims. The summit failed to obtain specific financial resources urgently needed to contain global environmental degradation.

The 1993 has been declared by the United Nations as the year of indigenous people. The Nobel peace prize for 1992 has been awarded to Rigoberta Mencku, the leader of indigenous people in Guatemala. With all this high profile attention it would seem that the plight and cause of these people have became a serious concern for the ruling elites of the world. Nothing could be farther from reality. As Juan Manual Kopez Garduno, an anthropologist in Mexico puts it:

"What we are hearing and reading now is all just lip service.....you cannot reverse five centuries of injustice overnight, no matter now much media hype and political rhetoric there is".

This is the situation in the Americas. While in India there has been five Millenia and more of injustice and oppression, though of a more accommodative and subtler kind. The Indian Government does not accept its tribal people as indigenous in the current usage of the term. It keeps aloof from the world concern and initiatives focussed on these people. Of course, it has its own constitutionally enjoined definitions, obligations, programmes and commis-
sions for the tribal and other marginalized communities. But these are honoured more in breach than in observance. Meanwhile, the juggernaut of development rolls on, displacing millions and taking over and destroying their ancient habitats, ways of life, knowledge, techniques, values and visions.

The vision of indigenous communities is like poetry. It is integral to their mode of being, consciousness and expression. It is not readily available to others, especially those who have distanced and alienated themselves from their roots and, wittingly or not, subserved the domination, distortion and denial of cultures and knowledge of communities close to nature. Perhaps this sense of guilt combined with the loss of confidence in the prevailing paradigm explains the revival of our interest in the ways and wisdom of indigenous people. This is becoming manifest in world affairs.

Thus to sum up, the political dimension of ecology movements, has to be seen in broader global perspective. The recent (April 15th 1994) Uruguay Round of General Agreement on Trade and Tariff, (GATT) and newly formed World Trade Organization (WTO) has to be analysed in this context. The trade and environment debate has until recently been about the virtues of regulation and deregulation of commerce, in contemporary phase, however, the discourse has undergone a massive shift and realignment. Politically it has shifted from the clash of interest of citizens and commercial organisation to being primarily a
issues of ecology to issues of power. The closing phase of the Uruguay Round have shown, that the GATT's decision-making is dominated by only two or three major countries or entities, and a majority of parties have to accept the decisions or deals arrived at by these few.

The reality of this decision-making process in GATT (and, in all likelihood the same will prevail in the WTO), and the current state of the international political and economic power relations, any rules developed in this asymmetric forum would most likely serve to legitimise the use of trade weapons which the north and the powerful can use against the South and the weak. But the south will be unable to use these against the north. There is thus the danger that through particular and narrow definitions of the trade-environment link, the First World will try to shift the economic burden of ecological adjustment to the Third World countries in order to preserve and expand their own unsustainable consumption patterns. Opportunistic use of economic power by the north in the form of trade actions cannot protect this fragile earth. The solution is more democratic power to south and global policy framework that makes citizen control possible.
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