3 The ‘Political’ Dimension of the Domain of Human Ecology

The political dimension of the environmental issues can be approached at three different levels, i.e. conceptual, as lived-experience, and as part of the political process. Considerations of these three levels may enable us to represent the political dimensions with different and varied configurations. Part three hopes to show by way of examples, how the political has actually implicated in issues generated by the human-environment relation. At the conceptual level we have systems of thoughts like deep ecology, social ecology, ecofeminism, reform environmentalism etc. where there are implicit or explicit references to the political. A discussion of the political implications in these thoughts is attempted in the first section of part three. The political implications of the actual environmental issues however vary according to their contexts. Accordingly the impacts of the environment-human interaction have immediate, recurring or anticipated repercussions in the social life of the people concerned. This often results in social conflicts that call for urgent solutions, sometimes leading to emergence of social or environmental movements that take up the issues. A random number of such contexts involving such struggles are examined in this part. At the third level a discussion of the formation of green parties and its entering into the political processes as a response to the experience of new social movements politics, in European countries is included for the sake of completeness.
3.1 The Conceptual Level Engagement

3.1.1 Deep Ecology

Deep ecology is sometimes viewed as an apolitical\(^1\) doctrine, in the sense that they do not provide us with a model for a renewed political system or recommendations for any reform in the government policies or any institutional changes, to deal with environmental issues.\(^2\) Rather they find problem with the human subjectivity. They seek to change values from within the individual. The argument is that individuals must change their inward relationships to nature.\(^3\) For the deep ecologist, the values, interests, worldview etc. of the humans determine their behavior or attitude to other humans and to the nonhuman nature. They require the humans to shift their lifestyle from a market-oriented culture to one of nature-centered. Deep ecologists are radical in their social philosophy since they question the existing paradigm by bringing forth a new set of key values and principles. For example, the intrinsic value argument radically challenges the prevailing notion that ‘nature is a resource’, an essential and hither to unquestioned axiom of Western history.\(^4\)

Thus the theory of deep ecology looks forward to a radical change in the individual, which they spell out only as an ideology, but

\(^{1}\) The North American Environmentalism is said to be apolitical due to the following reasons. i) It lacks a human political dimension. ii) There is little criticism of existing political systems. iii) Pluralist system is so dominant that people do not perceive it as a political model. See Timothy Doyle and Doug McEachern, *Environment and Politics*, Routledge, New York, 1998, p. 69.

\(^{2}\) *Ibid*, p. 36.

\(^{3}\) *Ibid*, p. 69.

not as a political programme. They fail to give suggestions as to how the outlook of an individual can be influenced by, translating their ideas into social policies. However, deep ecology is radically political in the sense in which they bring in fundamentals such as the concept of the ‘human’ and the latter’s approach to nature as the factors determining any favorable change in the environmental matters.

The deep ecology movement called Earth First! conceives itself of as an ideology, a way of life. Rather than as a corporation with by-laws governed by the United States, it was created as “a tribe of eco-warriors”. Activists do not call themselves “members of Earth First!” rather they are “Earth First!ers”, which suggests a much closer relationship to the movement. They feel a strong almost spiritual relationship to their organization. They have a strong relation to indigenous religions and the use of symbols. Earth First! a direct action NGO, can be said to be political since it is engaged in protest activities against the American Political System, for not addressing their concerns. So the Earth First! people tried to reject the system and to fight against it. They conducted nationwide demonstrations and rallies, as well as the Earth First! Road shows. Besides they adopted many political tactics which included Civil Disobedience activities such as tree-sitting, monkey wrenching etc. Dave Foreman, one of Earth First! founders and most important leader, always promoted

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6 Earth first! does not rule out militant actions (most specifically property damage) in its efforts to ‘protect Mother Earth’. This method is known as ‘eco-sabotage’. See Timothy Doyle and Doug Mc Eachern, Op. Cit., p.91.
ridicule as a political tactic, visible also in many of Earth First!ers’ essays, songs and debates. The strong commitment and attachment enabled the group to build a close web of grass roots chapters all over the country.

Though the Earth First! Movement emerged criticizing the American Political System they did not give recommendations for any reform in the government policies or any institutional change or any alternative programme. Due to this, their position is often represented as apolitical in the conventional political sense. Their radical deep ecological position of bringing change at the individual level is more reflected in the millenarian group of Earth First! activists than the apocalyptic\(^7\) group. The former believed in the importance of Earth First!ers in the creation of a post-apocalyptic, environmentally aware society and therefore advocated the education of the public as well as their own children. Their focus lies on the “re-wild (ing of) humanity” by reconnecting the people with their natural roots and nature itself. They claim that there is no solution without educating the public, social justice and co-operation with other movements.\(^8\) The millenarian group’s position is more in tune with the deep ecology theory in that both take a philosophical position emphasizing on rethinking of the ‘human’ aspect and its relation to nature as important in tackling the

\(^7\) The apocalyptics, did not expect the continuation of the existence of the human race after the apocalypse. They worried that the world would be overtaken by famine, genocide, war, totalitarianism, plagues and economic collapse. This group considered overpopulation as one of the key factors that threatens ecological balance.

\(^8\) Mass mobilization strategies are aimed at a widespread change including alterations in mass consciousness and individual value systems. See idem.
environmental issues, whereas the latter points towards the social and economic causes. Thus the Earth First! can be said to be radically political by the way they view the ecological problems and deal with it on a practical level.

3.1.2 Ecofeminism

Ecofeminists are radically political in the sense that they unravel the hitherto unnoticed problems of patriarchy by extending the issue of the domination of women by men to the domination of nature also. Under man’s reign, exploitation of both women and nature occurs at various steps in the process of production and reproduction. Patriarchy pervades through all the fields of social structure and social practices, through various institutions, influencing each and every aspect of the life of women, like labor, health (physical & mental), education, nutrition, sex etc. and their interaction with nature. These male dominated institutions include family, religion and those come under the legal, economic, political and knowledge systems etc. Ecofeminists disclose many life instances, where, practices that oppress or subordinate women and nature are reproduced through these institutions, reiterating the necessity of correcting them and so they challenge these institutional structures. In addition, they highlight the question of power that works in the interactions between man and woman, between man (indirectly include women who are also part of the institutions created by man) and nature. For them it is the male power that controls each and every institution. This is again problematic when the state takes decisions regarding the functioning of these institutions, favoring hierarchy and domination of men. Here the
state also acts like a part of the social structure that reinforces patriarchal value and hence the ecofeminists identify the state ‘power’ as corresponding to male ‘power’.

Though all the strands of ecofeminism seem radically political in the effort to problematise the realm of human–environment interaction, they differ among themselves in suggesting solutions to overcome the status quo. For example, the liberal ecofeminists do not question the structural arrangements of the state’s policy-making authority but suggest a reform in the human affairs with nature, by implementing new laws and regulations from within the existing structures of governance. Their political position is thus an adherence to a state-oriented ideology and practice. For cultural ecofeminists change at the individual level i.e. a change in the human consciousness assumes importance, before implementing any change at the institutional level and hence is radically political in their approach. The social ecofeminists, who are critical of the existing state of affairs, demand changes in the socio-political and economic structures, which only can liberate women and nature. This strand of ecofeminism can be considered as taking a conventionally political stand. But they haven’t formulated any definite programme for implementing these changes, either in the form of social policy or for adopting at the level of government. Though some of the social ecofeminists come up with the recommendation that male power should be replaced by female power, the concept of power itself is not challenged rather it is only shifted from one agent to the other while still within the existing socio-economic and political structures. However, ecofeminists in general try
to bring forth the behavioral qualities like love, care, friendship etc. (identified by them as attributes of women nature) to the interpersonal affairs and also to the sphere of human-nature interaction and in this sense take a radical political position in their environmental approach.

3.1.3 Social Ecology

Social ecologists recommend for a total replacement of the existing political system including the political parties and the related structures, boundaries like nation-state and its bureaucratic structures and the economic institutions based on capitalism. According to them, by retaining the current systems of production and reproduction based on hierarchy and power, we can never overcome the problem of exploitation of people and of nature. Thus they find problem with the human-human affairs, which has implications on nature also. The alternative they suggest is an ecological politics, which is structured around an organic ethics that is rooted in organic relationships between people as well as between people and nature. The social ecologist rejects the center-state as the authority and takes communities, towns, villages etc. as the arena of decision-making processes. Here the emphasis is on grass roots power that is located and confederated, rather than centralized power. According to the social ecologists, an ecological movement should never compromise on its principles, for entering into the parliamentary system. Rather they should follow the idea of libertarian municipalism as the political alternative.

Though social ecologist highlights the problems of power, domination and hierarchy etc. they differ from the ecofeminists in the sense that they conceive it of as pervading all human relations, whereas
for the latter it is a problem concerning the relation between men and women only. Also they, unlike deep ecologists, do not recommend for a change at the individual level, since the problems are assumed to have arisen from the structural arrangements only.

3.1.4 Reform Environmentalism

Reform Environmentalism mainly aims at reform through legislation. They do not challenge the existing social, economic and political structures rather they try to bring modifications in the structural arrangements according to the consequences of the actions of human agents or according to the newly arising needs of the people. Thus for example, when pollution was recognized as a problem, affecting humans, new laws like Air Act, Water Act etc. were introduced. The environmentalist organizations that recommend reform are in agreement with the centralized power structure of the government in policy-making activities. So these groups try to influence the authority by lobbying or through advocacy groups. What makes one group different from the other is the way they influence the government while the direct action groups differ in the method of protest they choose. The reform environmentalist groups are pragmatic in the sense that they look for sudden remedies at action level on understanding about any environmental problem. Usually these do not function as permanent remedies, but only as temporary solutions. Also they try to bring in the necessary changes in the form of social policies, which have a bearing in the social practices of human beings.
3.2 ‘Political’ in Cases of Social Conflicts

The contexts of social conflicts are usually varied in character, which have a bearing on many different fields of human life. These issues generally arise when (i) governments or other external forces deny the people the right to use forests and other natural resources on which they depend for their daily subsistence, (ii) exploitation of water and other resources of a region, by multinational companies, put the life of local people in trouble or deny the people their right for a hygienic environment necessary for their well-being, (iii) government displaces local or indigenous people, in the name of development activities, and finally (iv) there is a perceived threat to biodiversity and endangered species of plants and animals etc. When the issues that require immediate solutions are delayed indefinitely or defeated by the use of power, people join together against the injustices they face in their day-to-day affairs. It generally takes the form of movements (environmental and social), which have both social and political consequences.

The distinctive feature of this perspective is that there is the presence of a ‘power factor’ that controls the relations between people in a specific manner. A situation of social conflict becomes complex, when the number of dominant agents involved in it is too many and the relations between them take multifarious dimensions as determined by power. Those who are more powerful i.e., having access to wealth or having capacity for political lobbying etc. try to influence the decision-making activity of the governments, which usually have an adverse effect on those who are the real claimants to the locally available
natural resources in the existing socio-economic and political system. Thus the question (politics) of power often outgrows other concerns of vital importance, including the question of survival, for a larger group of people. Similarly, the approach to nature or environment is often influenced by the ways, how people are related among themselves politically and this will have a bearing on the tactics adopted for tackling the environmental (and also social) problems. That is, many environmental conflicts are driven by dominant power relations over the environment, which often benefits the few, threatening the survival of the majority. Usually the questions of survival or displacement, which are, at a glance, ‘social’ issues, also have environmentally significant dimensions. For example, when the regions of natural importance are destroyed for construction activities or other purposes of profit or self-interest, they may undergo modification in quick and multifold ways, whereas the activities of local people may have comparably less or nominal impact in the natural surroundings. Thus any unlawful power relations may result in irreparable consequences both in the people’s life and in the natural environment.

Thus the movements that arose from this crisis demand political solutions, which are supposed to ensure the protection of rights of individuals as assured by the constitution in a democratic set up. As a result, the governments are forced to intervene in the issues in order to resolve them, in which sometimes government itself forms a party in generating them and often they resort to strategies including rearrangements in the existing institutional structures, modification of policy framework, enactment of laws etc. Thus the political dimension
of the environmental issues, which these movements address, form a distinguishing feature of the human-environment interacting sphere, since it has global and long-term impacts, putting the lives of millions of people in trouble. The nature of each movement is varied depending upon the political complexity, determined by the number and the kind of the agents that surrounds the issue in question.

In this section an attempt is made to analyze the different contexts of the emergence of various environmental movements, with the purpose of exposing the patterns of power relations in each case and their influence on the decision-making processes. The case studies taken here for analysis are classified on the basis of the nature of agents involved in each case with whom often the people have to confront for justice. This study relies on various accounts of the environmental movements emerged from 1970 onwards, in and around India, Asia and worldwide, given by different authors. These works are mainly descriptive in nature, which provide us with the details of the political context such as judicial intervention, policy formulation, role of the political parties, involvement of media and activist groups etc. of the movements under scrutiny.

3.2.1 People versus State

a) Concern for biodiversity – Movement against Silent Valley Project

The proposal for the Silent Valley Hydroelectric project was the first case that attracted public attention worldwide. It was initiated during the colonial period by the British rulers as early as 1929\(^9\) as

ideal for the generation of hydropower. Silent Valley is one of the few tropical rain forest areas\textsuperscript{10} that remain relatively undisturbed by anthropogenic activities for at least 50 million years. It occupies an area of approximately 8950 hectares in southwest India, primarily in the state of Kerala. Combined with the Nilgiri and Nilambur forests to the north and the Attappadi forests to the east, the Silent Valley comprises part of 40,000 hectares of forest in the broader ecosystem known as India’s Western Ghats. Kunthipuzha, the stream which flows along the Silent Valley, originates at a height of more than 7,000 feet in the outer run of the Nilgiri forests, descends rapidly to approximately 3,500 feet on the northern edge of the plateau, and then pursues a southward course before cascading down to the Mannarghat plains through a gorge at an elevation of over 3,000 feet. This gorge was the site selected for the Silent Valley Project.\textsuperscript{11}

The first stage of the Silent Valley Hydroelectric project envisaged the construction of 2-power units initially and ultimately four units of 240MW. The scheme was expected to contribute 522 MU of electrical energy per annum. Furthermore, the water released from the powerhouse was expected to irrigate about 10,000 ha of land lower down in Palghat and Malappuram districts. The Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) published a legally required notification in the Gazette

\textsuperscript{10} Some remark that Silent Valley can be considered as a shola forest rather than as tropical rain forest, since it has not year round rainfall, there is not rain at least a couple of months every year. Sholas are the thick vegetation that is found only at the base of valleys in the western hill of south India and Silent Valley is a good example of this. See Darryl D’monte, \textit{Storm Over Silent Valley}, Ahmedabad, Center for Environment Education, 1991, p.15.

of India in June 1973 regarding the commencement of the more than 390-feet-high, 120-megawatt Silent Valley hydropower dam. The first phase of the project was sanctioned by the Planning Commission in 1973, but it could not be taken up then owing to the financial constraints until 1976. In 1976, the National Committee on Environmental Planning and Coordination (NCEPC) had set up a task force to study the ecological problems in the Western Ghats region including the Silent Valley area. The Task Force recommended that the hydel power project should be abandoned and the area be declared as a Biosphere Reserve. The Task Force suggested some safeguards in case the project cannot be abandoned for any reason. The Kerala government opted for the inclusion of safeguards as suggested by the Task Force and the Kerala State legislature unanimously favored going ahead with the project.

However criticism of the project began at local, national and international levels immediately after the project was reinitiated. Arguments and counter arguments were raised for several years. At a conference of the Switzerland based International Union of the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), one of the oldest transnational environmental organizations in the world, a resolution was passed appealing to the government of India to preserve the Silent Valley more effectively. The IUCN along with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and other non-governmental organizations, highlighted internationally the issue of the Silent Valley Project as part of a growing transnational campaign to save rain forests around the world.

\[12\] Ibid, p. 45.
This generated considerable political pressure on Indian authorities. In addition, these actors provided some critical information, such as aerial photography and satellite imagery of the Silent Valley forests, which Zafar Futehally (Vice President of the Indian Chapter of the WWF) and other critics put to strategic use domestically in India. The Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) also recommended that the Silent Valley–Attappadi area should be kept undisturbed and be declared as a Biosphere Reserve. Organizations including *Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad* (KSSP) i.e. The Kerala Forum for Science Literature, the Kerala Natural History Society, the Bombay Natural History Society and the Indian Science Congress etc. strongly urged the government to abandon the project on ecological grounds. Also some other organizations such as *Parisara Asoothrana Samrakshana Samiti* (PASS) i.e. Committee for Planning and Protecting the Environment, and Silent Valley Scheme Protection Committee (SVSPC) expressed the anti-dam opinion. But KSEB, the Kerala government and other political parties in the state opposed this view on the ground that the backwardness of the northern region in particular and state as a whole, was because of the absence of industries and the generation of electricity would help to establish factories. KSSP was able to rouse public opinion on the need to save Silent Valley by its many activities.\(^\text{13}\) It had many science groups spread over different villages, publishing journals, enacting street plays, conducting book exhibitions and had an impressive membership, at the time, of 7,000 thinking people. It conducted its own study to show why the valley should not

be destroyed and how the same amount of electricity could be obtained in other ways. They also argued that the destruction of the Silent Valley could not be justified because forty percent of Kerala’s power was already being exported to other states. They recommended for introducing lift irrigation programmes as early as possible. Other scientific bodies of botanists, zoologists and geologists officially set up by the central government, also lent their support to KSSP. It also collected the signatures of around 600 teachers, prominent citizens and students and sent a memorandum to the Kerala government protesting against construction of the dam. As a result of the KSSP’s activities, even people who until then had little interest in environmental issues were moved to act.

Two writ petitions by a group of voluntary agencies seeking to forbid the state from proceeding with the project were filed with the Kerala High Court, which issued an interim stay against the project. In January 1979, the President of the Indian Wildlife Board, who was also the Finance Minister of the Government of India that time, urged Kerala state officials to halt the project. In May thirty ministers of India’s federal parliament set a similar appeal. By the summer, individuals and organizations outside Kerala, particularly well-known conservationists from Bombay, formed the Save Silent Valley


Committee. The members of this Committee proved to be critical actors in coordinating the anti-dam campaign. In October 1979, Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, the then Secretary of Agriculture, Government of India, who visited the project area, recommended that the hydroelectric project be abandoned and the entire area should be developed into a rain forest Biosphere Reserve. The different ministries of the India government were in opposite poles regarding the issue. For example, the Department of Science and Technology and the Ministries of Irrigation and Power supported the project while the NCEPC and the Ministry of Agriculture opposed it. In the Center, during the interim period between collapse of the Janata-coalition government in July 1979 and Parliamentary elections in January 1980, the members of the SSV Committee lobbied the interim Prime Minister to take personal action against the project. A study conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture reported that the Silent Valley forest is to be preserved and alternative project was to be formulated to meet the irrigation and power needs of Kerala. As a result the interim Prime Minister asked the Chief Minister of Kerala to drop the project because of the growing controversy. In the early January 1980, the Kerala High Court dismissed the two writ petitions against the project and lifted the stay on construction. Thus getting sanction from the Court, the Kerala government led by the Communist Party Marxist (CPM) decided to

17 Idem.
implement the project and the KSEB tried to complete the construction works as much as possible.

The Kerala government was also using many tactics to prevent the people’s move against the project. Thus in October 1979, arguing that any public opposition would be sub-judice while the High court hearing on the original petition was still being conducted, Kerala officials obtained an injunction preventing an open meeting that had been organized by the SSV Committee in the State Capital of Trivandrum.21 The Hindu newspaper took a major role in supporting the anti-dam campaign and greatly contributed to its gaining countrywide attention. Numerous critical editorials, full-page features and letters were published on the Silent Valley Project in the Hindu, as well as in other regional and national papers. In January 1980, after the elections, Indira Gandhi had sworn in as the Prime Minister of India and the anti-dam proponents tried to lobby the Central government to halt the project. Members of the SSV Committee sent letters and cable to Gandhi after the elections. The IUCN Director General also sent Gandhi a letter from Switzerland asking her to take steps to stop the project, coordinating his international plea with the activities of the domestic SSV Committee in India. When the CPM came back to power in elections, they tried to get permission from the Gandhi government for implementing the project. Finally, a joint committee consisting of four members nominated by the federal government and four appointed by Kerala state authorities was to be decided to assess the project. In addition, the Department of Environment created from the NCEPC by Gandhi in November 1980 announced a long-term study to investigate the

environmental impacts of three river basin projects in Kerala including the Silent Valley. In December 1980, the Kerala government declared the Silent Valley Reserve Forest as a National Park, excluding the project area. In the summer of 1983, the joint federal-state committee report on the Silent Valley was completed recommending that it was in the public interest to conserve the Silent Valley Forest. In November, the Kerala State authorities announced their decision to stop the project and by 1984 the areas to be submerged by the dam were incorporated into the Silent Valley National Park.

Silent Valley project is the first case in the independent India, which brought attention of the public to an issue of nature concern, emphasizing the need for protecting biodiversity. The peculiarity of the case is that though most of the studies made by different agencies regarding the viability of the project suggested that Silent Valley must be protected due its natural importance, the Kerala government remained adamant in their decision to implement the project owing to their political interest in it, to the last point. It is the intervention of various NGOs and also activists at the local, national and international levels, which helped to make a favorable political context for discussing the issue. Specifically the activities of organizations like KSSP, both at the local and national levels, contributed very much to make people aware about the reality of the project based on the claims of KSEB and about the importance of protecting the Silent Valley forests and its uses to humans etc. Their studies raised critical questions regarding the necessity of the project, state of the real energy requirements and the existing levels of energy consumption etc. Through their study reports and campaigning programmes the members of this
organization worked as responsible political agents, by disseminating knowledge among the citizens and mobilizing them against the government policies regarding environmental matters. The intervention of the court issuing stay order to the State Government, helped to inform the public, about the seriousness of the issue. The court also revealed its dissatisfaction about the government’s irresponsibility to understand the situations while planning and processing the project and about the policy decision and the assessment of the conditions taken thereafter. The political lobbying done by many individuals in various NGOs, both at the national and international levels, of the high authorities, like Prime Minister and the latter’s communications to the state authority on this basis, helped to politically pressurize the state government in taking a decision against implementing the project. Another important aspect is the role played by the newspapers in exposing the real situations related to the Silent Valley issue and the political play of the government in tackling the issue. Thus it seems that the joined political effort made by the NGOs, various state institutions and agencies, activists, the press, the court and people in various fields, like teachers, students, laymen etc. helped to put pressure on the state government to rethink on the project and finally to withdraw from it by declaring it as National Park.

b) Deforestation and Livelihood issues

Deforestation and its impact on the livelihood of the people who are dependents on the resources at the fringes of the forest became an important issue that motivated many a struggle in different parts of the world. The issues vary widely depending on the socio-economic and political circumstances existing in those places. The nature of the
struggle and the tactics used also differ depending upon (i) the agents who take the leadership in mobilizing the affected people, and (ii) the political context of the regions including the policies taken by the governments with regard to the forests etc. Whatever the differences between the social situations prevailing in different countries, the general trend is that those who are in and close to power tend to deprive the large masses of people of their means of survival. In the following we consider a few cases from India and Japan.

The Case of Conflict in India

The conflict between people and the state over forest resources is the direct result of the situation created in the contexts of the taking over of Indian forests by the governments during the colonial period and after independence. The forests were under the control of the local village communities till the second half of the nineteenth century and there was little state intervention. But the situation changed after the inception of the forest department in 1864.\textsuperscript{22} Indian Forest Act was passed in 1878, according to which the forests were divided into reserved, protected and village forests.\textsuperscript{23} Large areas of forests were taken over by the colonial government as ‘reserved forests’ between 1860 and 1890 and only few were retained as village forests.\textsuperscript{24} Even in these lands, which were retained for the use of the communities, they were denied all rights for regulating the


\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, p. 40.

use of resources. Instead these were treated as open-access lands where anybody could come and harvest produce from, without the sanction of the local communities. This resulted in the overuse of these tracts of land, which was used in turn to justify the progressive conversion of community lands into reserved forests. Thus the extent of such lands was reduced from 7,185.9 km² to 353.3 km² between 1890 and 1920. There has not been much change in the policies, even after independence and the state of tension continued until the latter half of the twentieth century. It is in these circumstances that the local populations including hunter-gatherers, shifting cultivators, peasants, peasant nomads, artisans etc. who could not withstand the loss of traditional rights of access and use, started protesting against the imposition of state control in various parts of the country.

**Chipko Movement**

The earliest form of people’s organized protests, known as ‘Chipko’ movements, was started in 1970s, which were held against the state governments. The major flood that occurred in the Alakananda valley of Himalaya region in 1970, which inundated several villages and fields, made the villagers aware of the connection between deforestation, landslides and floods. In 1971, a demonstration was organized by the *Dashauli Gram*

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26 The Chipko movement is said to be originated in an incident that occurred three hundred years ago (in 1763), in Rajasthan, when the members of the Bishnoi community sacrificed their lives to save their sacred Khejri trees being felled under orders from the Maharaja of Jodhpur. Guha is of the opinion that this analogy obscures Chipko’s origins, which are specific to the conditions of Uttarakhand. See Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1989, pp.173-4. Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India*, New Delhi, Kali for Women, 1988, p. 67. For the detailed information about this movement see Guha, *Op. Cit.*, 1989, pp.152-184.
Swarajya Sangh (DGSS), a co-operative organization based in Chamoli district, highlighting the socio-economic problems such as ending the liquor sale, untouchability etc. and for giving priority to the local use of forests. They also demanded the replacement of the contractor system with forest labor co-operatives (FLC’s) and the setting up of small-scale industries. The kind of ‘Chipko’ (to hug) protest was planned in 1973, in the context when the request of the villagers of Mandal for getting allotment of ash trees in order to make agricultural implements, was refused by the forest department. Instead of ash trees they were asked to use chir trees, totally unsuitable for the purpose. The villagers faced utter injustice when the government allotted ash trees to the Symonds Co., a sporting goods firm. The UP government tried to compromise with the people by allotting the DGSS ash trees on condition that the company would be allowed to take its quota. But the resistance made by the villagers forced the company to run away from Mandal without felling even a single tree. But the government went ahead with its plan of the yearly auction of forests despite the warning of protests by the villagers.

Another site of felling was Reni forest, a locality affected by landslides, in that period. Reni itself was a village inhabited by members of the Bhotiya community who had abandoned nomadic pastoralism in favor of settled agriculture. Meetings were conducted and decisions were taken to adopt the Chipko technique. Fearing opposition to the felling operations, the forest department resorted to subterfuge. By keeping away the men of the village for a vainly cause, the forest department officials planned to fell the trees. But the women of the village on a sudden direct

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27 See Yugvani, 24 June 1973 as cited in ibid, p. 156.
action of hugging the trees forced the authority to withdraw from their decision. Following this, the government agreed to set up a committee to investigate the incident and based on the understanding that 1970 floods were the result of widespread deforestation, commercial felling was banned for a period of ten years in the upper catchment of the river and its tributaries. The committee also noticed the difficulties that arose due to resin tapping and put a restriction on the practice of tapping that it should be according to the rules. The constitution of a forest corporation or Van Nigam was another step taken to examine all forms of forest exploitation. But these conditions were not properly maintained in the later years and the forest auction was continued in different parts of Garhwal. In many occasions, the Chipko activists intervened and helped the local people to respond to the injustices of the forest department. Protests were held in many places like Dehradun, Uttarkashi etc. of Garhwal and Nainital of Kumaun for either challenging the department’s decision to continue resin tapping or commercial felling. A protest mainly led by women\textsuperscript{29} occurred in the Pindar Valley, near the village of Dungri-Paintoli. Here the men of the village wanted to sell their oak forest to the horticulture department, which intended to establish a potato farm on the land. But


Guha argues that it is simplistic to characterize Chipko as feminist movement. In the many cases of protest in UP it is only in Dungri-Paintoli, that women took the responsibility of fighting against the state due to the conflict with the men of that region. Even the protest in Reni cannot be taken as an example of women’s major participation, since the situation necessitated their involvement in this case. He points out that the hill women have traditionally borne an extraordinarily high share of family labor and their participation in Chipko may be read as an outcome of the increasing difficulty with which these tasks have been accomplished in the deteriorating environment. See Guha, \textit{Op. Cit.}, p. 175.
the women understood that if the forests were cut, they would have to walk a long distance to collect fuel and fodder. The intervention of Chipko activists helped by the district administration ensured the protection of the remaining forests.

The Chipko movement that emerged as the predecessor of the people’s organized protest seems to have arisen from the unjustifiable political attitude of the state (especially the forest department) towards the village people. The state government who is obliged to take care of its people has either neglected them or failed to conceive of them as socio-political agents, who also have certain roles in constituting the state functions. When the concerned authority of the state decided to manage the forests on commercial lines by selling the products to private companies and denied the original inhabitants of the region, their rights for using forests, the former actually kept the latter out of

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30 According to Shiva, in the early stages of the Chipko movement, when the exploitation of forest resources was carried out by non-local forest contractors, the women’s special concern with forestry for survival, which provided the base for Chipko, was temporarily with a largely male concern of raw material supply for saw-mills and resin factories set up by local co-operatives. These male co-operatives, set up by Gandhian organizations, saw the Chipko demand primarily as one of the supply of resin and timber for their industrial units. However, a new separation took place between local male interests for commercial activity based on forest products and local women’s interests for sustenance activity based on forest protection. See Shiva, *Op. Cit.*, p. 67.

31 Gadgil and Guha point out that in the aftermath of Chipko there were efforts to modify the forest policy and as part of it the National Forest Policy of 1988 included an official acknowledgment that the biomass needs of the village people must have primacy over the commercial demands of others. Some attempts have also been initiated to set up management systems involving local communities, but these policy initiatives had not been put into practice. Through out these periods the traditional selection felling methods of timber harvesting and the subsidized supply of forest raw material to industries continued, while the large masses of village people still depended on open access lands for their biomass needs. Gadgil and Guha, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 23-24.
the political realm. Besides, the forest officials often misused their official power by aiding the private contractors in making profits. All these malpractices from the state authority made the people to unite for their right to use the forests as the source of their household needs. The increasing participation of women in the protesting activities is an indication of the political awareness that was created among the people as a result of the political intervention of the activists of various organizations. This awareness made them recognize forests as the socio-economic base of their life and argue for their rights to use forests primarily, than any outsider. The protest that emerged out of this outlook of the people forced the forest department and the state government to take decisions in favor of the villagers in many instances. The decision of the state government to manage the forests scientifically seemed to be a one-sided approach and is flawed due to three reasons. The government failed (i) to take into account the way of living of the village people and their customary usage of forests, in policy making (ii) to ensure the participation of these people while taking any decision regarding forests and thereby to ensure the protection of the rights of this group (iii) to foresee the role of the forests in keeping the natural processes in order and to control the ecological damage that resulted due to forest destruction. Though ‘Chipko’ movement is the outcome of a political struggle in a localized context, this kind of resistance against the ruling authority was adopted also in other states of the country, where similar political situations prevailed.
The Appikko Chalewali movement that took place in the Western Ghats in the Uttara Kannada region of Karnataka in 1980s was a replica of the Chipko movement in the North, both in the method and the cause of protest. The movements were launched first in the Salkani village of Sirsi, in September 1983, which continued in Husri, in Nidgod and Kelagin (both in Siddapur taluka) in November and in Bilgal forest in December, in the same year. In all these cases, the people joined for getting sanctioned their rights in the forests, their main source of sustenance, from the authority and for checking the contractors of commercial interests from entering the forests. The locally established popular organization known as Parisar Samrakshana Kendras i.e. Environmental Conservation Centers, worked as the vehicle to carry out these objectives. In all these cases the people succeeded in retrieving their basic life sources like trees including bamboo and those of medicinal importance and other forest products.

Another movement against the state is the one solely led by a group of women in Asna village of Bastar district in the state of Madhya Pradesh in 1987. It was a struggle to retain access to their local forests, which later took the form of a movement for forest protection. The conflict arose when the forest department decided to cut down the existing trees in the forests and reafforest the area with

plantations. Though these forests were classified as reserved forests, the local people used to treat them as *nistari* (village) forests. They found it expensive to buy timber for house-building and firewood purposes, from the depot nearby, at the rate of Rs.30 a quintal. Apart from this, access to the forests was essential for a variety of other needs. For example, leaves for making plates and cups, twigs for cleaning teeth, fodder, grass, fruits and roots and different types of NTFP (Non-timber Forest Products) like tamarind, *mohua* or *Bassia latifolia*, sal seeds, *tendu* leaves. The forest department began by fencing off the village forest area with barbed wire, as they planned. This made life extremely difficult for the villagers, especially lower-caste and tribal households and the women among them, who in this area were mainly responsible for the gathering of fuel wood and leaves. So the women approached the village officials including the *kotwar* (watchman), the *patel* (revenue collector) and the *sarpanch* (elected headman) for a helping hand to bring into notice of the administration, their grievances. Without getting any support from these semi-official people and also the men of the village, they have decided to act on their own. However, they could get help from a person who was working as a voluntary NGO in Asna. About forty women resorted to direct action like stopping the laborers from digging trenches and putting up fences and holding nightly meetings, where they decided on their future course of action. Though there were threatening activities from the part of the government and several domestic fights on the issue, the women resisted. Also a group of Forest Rangers, District Forest Officers (DFOs) and others persuaded them to withdraw from the protest.
Finally, about 2000 women from Asna and several neighboring villages such as Junawani, Irikpal, Metawada and Borpadar marched to Jagdalpur to present a memorandum to the Collector. In this petition they put forward certain demands, the important one was to leave the forests open as earlier. Besides they requested for reducing the rate of timber and bamboo, the facility for getting free wood during funerals and other feasts, wood to make their ploughs every two to three years and titles to the land on which existing houses were built. They agreed with the department’s plan to plant multipurpose trees like sal, mangoes, *mohua* and *tendu* in open areas and to fence these saplings. In return they offered to help the forest guard to catch people who peels bark illegally and takes out saplings, to prevent encroachment on forest land for cultivation and to catch forest offenders. The Collector agreed to their demands and the Asna women contributed their labor in guarding the forests, though they had to face difficulties in this effort due to the class differentiation in the region. Usually the women who is lower-caste or Adivasi, had to confront the upper-caste landlords on whom they rely for labor or occasional loans and who can afford the price of wood from depot, in their duty of protecting the forests and which often led to unpleasant incidents. The women also participated in Asna women’s co-operative, an income generating unit of 13 women, under the government's DWCRA scheme (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas), constituted in 1990, which the researcher noticed as the center, based on which the further political activities of the women in Asna were decided.
The issue motivated this movement is a clear example of the political mismanagement of the forest resources by the concerned department of the state government who while making forest policies excluded the people who had a stake in the forest resources. As is clear from the foregoing examples, when the policies are made regarding forests, the criteria adopted usually did not consider the local subsistence economics of the villagers, rather commercial interests and market often influenced and determined the politics of policy making. This kind of a political negligence from the part of the state government pushed the people into confronting the former to get their rights over forests protected. In other words, there is a lack of political ingenuity and sensibility on the part of the government that forced the people to think and act politically and overcome the crisis by evolving an alternative programme that suits them. So the movement could come to a halt only when the government approved the programme of the people.

The Case of Conflict in Japan

Japan is the largest buyer and user of tropical hardwood (timber) and timber products like woodchips, pulp, plywood etc. in the world.34 Until the Second World War, Japan’s domestic forestry production satisfied its demands for wood, but the demand quickly outgrown the domestic output after 1955. The timber was mainly used for industrial purposes and housing construction and fully-grown natural forests in various parts of Japan were cut for commercial use and replaced by

artificial forests. Rising costs and shortage of domestic timber supply ultimately compelled the Japanese government to lift all controls on timber imports in 1961. Thus Southeast Asia formed its next source of timber resources and timber import from this part of world goes back some 70 years. Japanese logging began in the Southern Philippines in the pre-Second World War years by small and medium sized companies and in the Post-War period the forestry investment returned first to Philippines, during which, the timber trade was mainly done by the large general trading companies (GTCs).  

By 1960s the GTCs were moved to the forests in Kalimantan and Southern Sumatra in Indonesia, often with the Japanese government’s assistance and loans. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the Philippines and Indonesia were the major suppliers of timber to Japan. When Indonesia banned log exports in 1985, Japanese forestry investment turned to non-peninsular Malaysia: Sabah and Sarawak. In 1987, 96 per cent of its tropical hardwood came from only three places: Sarawak, Sabah and Papua New Guinea. Increasing log export restrictions in producer countries in Southeast Asia, rising prices and declining supply have prompted many Japanese companies to turn to the import of softwood from North America and to diversify their sources of tropical timber imports. Between 1960 and 1963, Japan’s total log imports more than doubled, and those from Southeast Asia increased by 70 per cent. By 1973, the peak year of Japan’s tropical log imports, consumption increased by nearly six fold to 27 million cu m from 4.5 million cu m

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35 About 90 companies were said to be active in importing logs from Southeast Asia, of which the top five giants were Mitsui, Marubeni, Itochu, Mitsubishi and Sumitomo, see ibid, p. 138.
in 1960. The manipulation of Japanese forests for the purpose for fuel wood and timber for many years has created different kinds of socio-political responses from the part of the people.

The Anti-Tropical Timber Campaign in Japan

Until 1986, there was no serious move against Japan’s tropical deforestation processes. It was in 1987 that JATAN (Japan Tropical Forest Action Network), Japanese anti-tropical deforestation NGO emerged in the first council of the meeting of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), which became the principal Japanese NGO to concentrate on the tropical deforestation problem. JATAN conducted a series of lectures to raise public awareness and organized an international conference to bring together Japanese and foreign activists and researchers concerned about the problem. Petition campaigns were also launched to protest against the Malaysian government’s actions against tribal peoples in Sarawak and to appeal to the Japanese government to reduce the country’s massive consumption of tropical timber. A comprehensive study report ‘Timber from the South Seas’ was made in Japanese on tropical timber trade in Southeast Asia, which was completed in 1988. Environmental activists and forest peoples from Sarawak, Papua New Guinea and other places were invited to Japan to speak in public forums to publicize tropical forest destruction and related issues. Japan took initiative for publishing the report by WWF in English and it was launched with substantial media coverage in Japan. JATAN also organized intensive campaigns and demonstrations targeted at Japanese GTCs for their role in tropical deforestation in Southeast Asia. Dramas were staged in
front of GTC offices and the ‘Destruction Award’, in the shape of a chain saw, was given to these companies, which caught attention through national and international media coverage due to the novelty in the techniques of demonstration. JATAN was also effective in influencing a GTC, Obayashi, to decide to reduce tropical timber use to 35% in 1990. Another effort was made by JATAN to request to the local governments of the country to end the use of tropical timber imports, by which 66 local governments had agreed not to use tropical timber in public projects, by August 1995. The acceptance of NGOs in the Western democracies and international organizations worldwide put pressure on the Japanese government to act similarly. Also, in the face of severe international criticisms, the Ministry of foreign affairs and the Forestry Agency in particular, became more receptive to dialogues with NGOs. After making both the public and the government aware of and acquiring credibility, JATAN shifted its attention to research on tropical deforestation and related problems, building organizational membership, forging ties and exchanges with environmental NGOs in the producer countries, and continuing public education in Japan.

The report points out that JATAN could succeed in their effort of making the Japanese people more responsible for their nature, by using certain strategies. Firstly, instead of blaming them for their greed and insensitivity in consuming tropical timber, JATAN targeted the GTCs. This was made possible by urging the Japanese public to reduce their consumption of tropical timber and to support the domestic campaign based on their sympathy and empathy for the damage to nature and
human lives. Secondly, the NGO was careful to use Japanese communication style, culture and norms, due to which the movement did not appear as a mere extension of white environmentalism and foreign pressure. Thirdly, along with academic and research interest in tropical forestry and its associated issues and problems, the domestic campaign has also stimulated interest in the broader subject of Japan’s role in international development and the global environment. Besides, it raised popular consciousness about the connection between Japanese domestic consumption and the external environment.

This campaign in Japan is the result of the awareness of a few citizens about their political responsibility. The government of Japan seems to be engaged in highly irresponsible activities regarding timber trade without being conscious about either the country’s natural environment or the people’s sustenance related to it, both of which are presumed to be their duties. The activities of NGOs like JATAN have contributed largely for making changes in the political sphere of Japan at four levels. Firstly, it helped to politicize the issue of deforestation that was intended for satisfying the commercial interests of those who are in power in the government. Secondly, it opened the way for common people’s participation in national politics, through its entry to the latter. Thirdly, it exposed the role of NGOs in making the public aware of such national issues. Fourthly, it brought forth the need for developing public debates over such politically important matters both at personal and institutional levels. The NGOs thus succeeded in influencing many local governments to act politically by ending the use of tropical timber.
The Forest Grant Movement in Japan

Another movement of political significance under the initiative of the forest dependent people of the country was the Forest Grant Movement. In Japanese culture, the mountains are said to be the sources of village prosperity in both upland and lowland areas. Here the ancient people depended on the timber value of the forests for survival, which is said to be lost now. This made the mountain village people to start a movement in upland areas, which called on the government to provide them with new resources for forest protection.\(^{36}\)

The history of the Japanese forests reveals that they have long been manipulated for the supply of fuel wood and timber, with the preferred patterns of growth varying from one period to another i.e., while firewood forests were grown sometimes, on other times it was replaced by timber or conifers. By 1970s foreign timber displaced domestic timber resulting in the collapse of domestic forestry due to which forestry has greatly diminished as a source of employment in upland Japan. In addition to this, the rapid economic growth in the cities along with the failure to establish alternative industries able to provide local employment caused the large-scale out-migratory depopulation and economic decline of mountain villages in recent decades. Hongu, an upland municipality is such a place, which has undergone large-scale depopulation in the post war period, the population of 10,276 in 1955 declined to 4,345 in 1994. In 1965, there were 861 employed forest laborers by 1994 this has fallen to less than 150. The Hongu population

was decreasing steadily as the employment base contracted and other attempts to generate occupation like local industry have not found success.

In these circumstances, the Forest Grant Establishment Promotion League was founded by thirty-six municipalities in 1992. It held its first conference in February 1993 in Hongu at which more than 600 people gathered, representing over 100 municipalities. This was followed by a second, larger conference held the following year in Sapporo City, Hokkaido, attended by some 1,200 people representing 326 municipalities. By November 1994 the league had a membership of 431 municipalities representing a third of depopulated municipalities, and 13 per cent of all Japanese municipalities. The demand of these conferences was for a ‘forest grant’ to be paid to upland areas in recognition of the vital role they play in maintaining the nation’s forests. The subsidy would be allocated in proportion to the amount of forest each municipality has. That is, this grant represents a return that the government should make to mountain villages in recognition of the public benefits derived from the forests over which villagers exercise stewardship. So it is not a subsidy, but only a proper compensation for their environmental care taking. Thus the remote upland districts like Hongu, which is covered almost entirely by forests, are shown to be deserving of the grant. In other words the mountain villagers are asking for their rights to the authorities.

The emergence of the idea of the forest grant movement can be situated in two contexts: First, it is the result of the need for developed
countries like Japan to protect its national forests in order to get rid of the pressure to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions which result in global warming as the Rio summit emphasized. The Climate Change Convention also requires the nations ‘to prepare national inventories of GHG (green house gas) emissions and sinks’. So this situation can be taken as permitting the Japanese forests--and their mountain village custodians--in effect to come to the defense of Japanese industry by subtracting their absorptive capacity from the total emissions of industry. The author points out that while they may claim a global role as a site of carbon-fixing, in practice they can be seen as playing a national role on protecting Japanese industry from international pressure to reduce carbon emissions. In this way international carbon politics presents Japanese upland municipalities with a new opportunity for domestic leverage. Secondly, it is argued that the urban people are to be responsible to the mountain villagers because of the close relationship between Japanese forests and Japanese culture. The Japanese culture is based on and predominantly shaped by the livelihood long provided by the forests. The contemporary abandonment of the mountain villages resulted from the modernization processes of the downstream villages is tantamount to breaking the last link with the forests, the foundation of Japanese Culture. That is, it points towards the importance of mountain villages as sites of traditional culture, which supported the downstream village people. Also the regional unity that was enjoyed between the upstream (rural) and down stream (urban) villages has been affected adversely, as the mountain village life has suffered a ‘loss of autonomy’. A third aspect is the acknowledgment of the ancestral people of the mountains who
has planted the trees and grown them into forests due to which the environmental well being of the nation is maintained. So the present generation is arguing for the grant in the name of the past generations.

This case is an example of the utilization of a global political cause for a local political support. The local livelihood problem is said to arise from the different forest policies adopted by various rulers in different periods. The priority was given not to the sustenance of the village people there, but to the industrial market demands, which determined the future of the forests. The degradation of the upstream-downstream domestic, resource transfer, practice is also a factor that made the economy of the mountain village people problematic, which forced them to think of some economic alternatives. The rural-urban life was very much depended on the mutual co-operation between the two and this traditional informal arrangement of resource transfer between the two regions was disturbed by the influence of the politics of the market-oriented economy on the latter, which in turn affected the self-reliance of the former. So it seems that the mountain people were politically motivated by making use of the national and international political contexts as the background, the politics of which cannot be denied by the government or the larger public, on which they raise their claim of rights for the forest grant.

c) Development and Displacement issues

Narmada movement in India

Narmada river project forms the most important case of study that pictures how the short-term, current development policies of the various state governments and the politics encompassing it can result
in the pauperization of a large mass of people and in their continuing struggle for the right of living. Narmada river valley project consists of Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) at Vadgam on the Gujarat-Maharashtra border and Narmada Sagar Project (NSP), later renamed as Indira Sagar at Punasa in Madhya Pradesh further upstream. SSP is an inter state multi purpose project comprising the four major states of Western India, i.e., Madhya Pradesh (MP), Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan with a terminal major dam in Gujarat. The specialty of this dam project is that the command area of major beneficiaries lies in one state, Gujarat, while the major displacement problem affects Madhya Pradesh though Maharashtra and Gujarat are no exceptions. The Narmada river valley project is a scheme, envisaging the construction of 30 major dams, its tributaries, 135 medium and 3000 minor dams on the Narmada. The focus of popular opposition has been the Sardar Sarovar reservoir, the largest of the project’s individual schemes, which called into question the policy behind it. In order to get an idea about the complexity of the issue it seems relevant to contextualize its emergence historically.

The proposal for constructing a dam harnessing Narmada waters has a history beginning from as early as 1950s. The thrust for a large project on the Narmada came as a part of the development policy adopted in the country after independence. From the beginning, the height of the dam was a focal point of issue. In August 1960, the Planning Commission cleared the Broach Irrigation Project, the

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precursor to SSP, in Gujarat, with a height of 162 feet, for irrigating 9.97 lakh hectares of land and in the second stage, the height of the dam was decided to be 300 feet, to which Planning Commission did not agree. Gujarat and the Center proposed for a dam of 425 feet at the SSP site, but the Madhya Pradesh government contested the claims of Gujarat on Narmada waters reinforcing their ownership of it. The Narmada Water Resources Development committee appointed by the Union government, proposed a dam of over 500 feet near Navgam in Baruch district of Gujarat in 1965. In July 1968, the Gujarat government submitted a formal complaint under the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956. The government of India decided to constitute the Narmada Water Dispute Tribunal (NWDT) in November 1969. In this, Gujarat claimed a larger share of water on the basis of the projected needs of its ‘drought prone area’ on the far-off Kutch region. In this effort, Gujarat also made Rajasthan a party to the dispute, though the latter has nothing to do with Narmada. The state of Rajasthan was brought in through political doors in a meeting with the Prime Minister on April 12, 1974. Rajasthan was included to strengthen Gujarat’s demand for an increased height of the canal and the dam, disregarding the objections of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

The Nimad Bachao--Narmada Bachao Samiti i.e. Save Nimad-Save Narmada Committee was formed in the mid-1970s, which presented its case before NWDT. In this representation the samiti pointed out the possible harmful impacts of such a large reservoir, like the displacement of people including tribals, farmers, backward castes and classes, leading to their unemployment, destitution etc., and
submergence of the fertile lands of Nimad region, along with issues like earthquakes, increased silting etc. The samiti also submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The NWDT rejected the claims of Gujarat to provide irrigation for 11 lakh hectares in Kutch and water for Rajasthan and finally declared its award. According to this decision, the height of the SSP was decided to be of 455 feet and that of NSP\textsuperscript{38} as 860 feet from the mean sea level. Madhya Pradesh was allotted 18.25 MAF (million acre feet) water, Gujarat, 9 MAF, Rajasthan, 0.50 MAF and Maharashtra, 0.25 MAF of the Narmada waters. Though SSP with a height of 436 feet and dead storage level of 307 feet was adequate for the irrigation needs of Gujarat and Rajasthan, it was raised to 453 feet for compensating the power loss to Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Without any reason, the height was again raised up to 455 feet, which in effect would cause submergence.

The award of NWDT generated widespread agitation in the plains of western Nimad area, as it will cause the submergence of its fertile land. But due to lack of political unions and also of organization leadership, and the absence of appropriate process, demands and strategies, it soon dissipated. But when the political situation changed in Madhya Pradesh (Arjun Singh sworn in as Chief Minister) the government signed a ‘confidential’ agreement with the Gujarat government, in 25 August 1981, for exploring the possibilities to resolve the problems of the displaced people as much as possible. In

\textsuperscript{38} It was stipulated that the NSP would be built mainly for the regulated releases of about 4MAF water for the SSP and that the benefits of the SSP were dependent on the proper completion of the NSP. See, \textit{ibid}, pp. 16-17.
the meantime, the World Bank entered the scene with granting loans for the purpose of resettlement and lobbied the Gujarat government to accept the Bank’s conditions regarding settlement. The Indian NGOs also accepted the WB intervention. Tata Economic Consultancy Services (TECs) was appointed for economic appraisal. In 1980, the Central government created a new Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) and in 1983, it formulated guidelines for River Valley Development Projects for the union and state governments. Till 1987, MoEF did not accord clearance to the Sardar Sarovar and Narmada Sagar projects due to the incompleion of plans for rehabilitation, catchment area treatment, compensatory afforestation and command area development. But due to the political pressure made by the Gujarat government, the then PM, Mr. Rajeev Gandhi took necessary steps to get sanctioned the conditional clearance for the dams in June 1987, by the MoEF. However, the MoEF laid down the conditions that the following eight important studies were to be completed before December 1989, namely—resettlement and rehabilitation, catchment area treatment, command area treatment, flora and fauna, carrying capacity, compensatory afforestation, seismicity and health impacts.

On October 5, 1988, the Planning Commission gave conditional clearance, retaining the conditions laid down by the MoEF.

People’s resistance - From the outset of the proposal of the construction of the dam, there was confusion about its aftermath and people in the valley organized in groups for opposing such a move from the part of the government and they started questioning development projects. In the 1980s, people’s environmental awareness was increasing in the
light of the experiences of some of the earlier projects in different parts of the country. In MP, protestors including prominent social activists, legislators and local leaders opposed the ‘High Dam at Navagam’ (SSP), as it would submerge the fertile lands in the Nimad region. *Narmada Bachao Samiti* i.e. Save Narmada Committee, raised vital issues ranging from the submergence of fertile land and displacement, to the loss of cultural heritage and natural resources in 1972-75. In 1983, ‘Kalpavriksha’, a group of activist-researchers of the Delhi based organization published a report, exposing the environmental and human costs involved in the Narmada valley projects. SETU, an NGO in Ahmedabad, the Center for Social Knowledge and Action, problematised the resettlement project of WB, in 1986. In February 16, 1986 *Narmada Dharmagrastha Samiti* (NDS), i.e. Narmada Displaced People’s Organization, shared people’s anxiety about the fundamental questions regarding their right to know, to participate in the decision-making process, their own displacement, the evaluation of their own lives and resources, proof of the government’s ability to restore these etc. They also doubted the availability of land for resettling all 33 adivasi villages. In several memoranda of 1986, 87, 88 and during district level meetings with the government, the samiti demanded full information regarding the dam, the likely displacement and the proposed resettlement. They tried to know whether all those who were affected directly or indirectly by the dam would be included as ‘project affected’. And considering the nature and magnitude of displacement, they questioned the authorities’ claim of ‘public purpose’. The resistance strengthened when the people understood that the government could not respond to these issues and they held padayatras,
village level meeting and magni parishad (Demand Conference) in Dhadgaon on November 1986. In 1987, the samiti also conducted a people’s survey of the number of oustees and an assessment of their natural resources, to counter the inadequate assessment and disinformation by the government. NDS tried to present the issues such as the tribals’ right to information, the right to decisive participation, cost- benefit of the project, the spiritual, social and aesthetic aspects of their lives, along with the issues of non-availability of land, the consequent impossibility of resettlement in their dealings with the government authorities.

NDS made contacts with the Khedut Mazdoor Chetna Sangath (KMCS), i.e. Farmer Laborer Organization, an organization fighting from the early 1980s on the issues of land and other resource rights, livelihood and self-respect of the adivasis. Narmada Ghati Navnirman Samiti (NGNS) i.e. Narmada Valley Reconstruction Committee, was established in Nimad with the participation of many veteran Sarvodayi leaders in 1986, totally opposing the dam. They took out a Narmada Jan-Jagaran Yatra i.e. Narmada People-Awareness Journey, in 1986 with the purpose of raising awareness about the adverse impacts of large dams in the valley and stressed the needs for decentralized, sustainable development planning by the villagers themselves for agriculture, water and energy. In Bhopal, the ‘Campaign against Indira Sagar Project’ (CAISA) started in 1988. Thus the attempts of the Narmada Bachao--Nimad Bachao Andolan in the 70s got strengthened with the connections with these various organizations and their support, which led to a mass-based and comprehensive struggle that
emerged towards the end of 1980s. Medha Patkar contacted with NGNS around mid-1987, along with many other activists and launched campaigns to organize, mobilize and link up the people of the entire Nimad stretch. In 1987, a ‘Meeting Against Large Dams’ was convened at Anandvan by the social activist Baba Amte with the participation of the activists from the Narmada valley and published a ‘Declaration Against Large Dams’ which linked a number of issues like displacement, environmental destruction, adverse cost-benefit, overestimation of benefits etc.

People of the six villages, who were affected by the earlier projects, were organized as the *Narmada Asargrasta Sangharsha Samiti* (NASS), i.e. Narmada affected people’s struggle society, Gujarat, in early 1988, with the help of NDS activists. NASS worked in close coordination with organizations in Maharashtra and MP. The villagers and the representatives of these organizations contacted the officials of the ‘Rehabilitation and Resettlement Sub-group’ of NCA, in order to get clarification of their basic concerns regarding the number and definition of oustees, land availability, community resettlement, cost-benefit of the dam and to provide any additional information and documents. But they could not get any answers, which made the organizations in Maharashtra, MP and Gujarat to oppose the dam. A major rally held in Kevadia colony on January 30, 1998, which was the first signal that a united struggle of people from all the three states (which included people from Dhule, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Indore, Mumbai and Delhi) was evolving. Support groups for the struggle in the Narmada valley also evolved over this time, starting
from 1987 in Dhule, followed by Mumbai, Delhi, Pune, Indore, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Baroda and later in the 1990s in Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Rajasthan etc. The emerging collective was recognized as *Narmada Bachao Andolan* (NBA) i.e. Save Narmada Movement, from 1988-89 onwards.

In 1988, over 25 organizations and a number of social activists and experts gathered in Ahmedabad to deliberate over the SSP. Trade unions, organizations of tribals, dalits etc. formed the *Narmada Yojana Vichar Samiti* i.e. Narmada Project Deliberation Committee, to work in Gujarat on the issue of the dam. The *Lok Adhikar Sangh*, (LAS) i.e. Association for People’s Power, and other organizations pointed out that the Narmada project would aggravate already existing inequities and exploitations in Gujarat. At that time NBA became more active against forced displacement and destructive development. A detailed and nation wide action plan for the Narmada struggle was charted out in May 5-6, 1989, at a major meeting of NBA supporters in Mumbai. The Andolan took the responsibility for mobilizing the people’s organizations for the ‘Convention against Destructive development’ at Harsud, on September 28, 1989. Over 50,000 people from 300 organizations throughout India participated. Meanwhile the state governments have tried many times to weaken the struggle in Gujarat and MP using police force. The agitation was also intensified against the World Bank in 1990-91. The NBA highlighted the Bank’s errors in its analysis and evaluation of its data and understanding of the issue.

Another important event was *Jan Vikas Sangarsh Yatra* i.e. People’s Struggle for Development, in which men, women, tribals,
peasants etc. from all over the country were united in the border village between MP and Gujarat. They demanded a review of the dam in a time-bound manner and with independent experts, for which the leaders started an indefinite fast on January 7, 1990, an occasion, when hundreds of people and organizations from every corner of India expressed solidarity with the struggle and it was called off after 22 days, on January 30, only after the World Bank announced an Independent Review of the Project. The Review was made by Bradford Morse, the former Chairman of UNDP, concluding that resettlement according to laws and regulations was impossible, that environmental stipulations had been violated, and that the expected benefits would not accrue. Thus the Indian government withdrew from the loan agreement thus forming an important step in the struggle. In the Monsoon of 1991, the village, Manibeli in Maharashtra was threatened by submergence, as the height of the dam was close to 32 meters. By that time villagers became bold enough to take the decision to die in water. On July 11, 1993, a house at Vadgam, the first village near the dam was submerged. Following this, the Andolan declared its *Jal samarpan* i.e. sacrifice in water, on August 6, 1993. The Union government was put into pressure due to the appeals from all over India and international community for a comprehensive review of the case and on August 5, the government declared the review. The review committee report was not fully made and the Supreme Court asked the Committee to complete it, providing recommendations.

By 1994, the dam reached a height of 56-57 meters and at this time NBA filed a comprehensive petition in the Supreme Court against
the dam and displacement in May 1994. However the dam work was allowed to proceed further, despite the report by the Five Member Committee (FMG) i.e., the review committee. An eight-day warning dharna followed by an indefinite dharna and fast held at Bhopal in October-December 1994. On December 13, the Supreme Court made the FMG report public, saying that the Central government and the three state governments must give their written responses within four weeks and the discussions in the NCA (Narmada Control Authority) must start forthwith. Also the MP government promised to put the demand of reducing height of the dam before the Court and the 22-day long fast ended. In December 1994, NCA decided to suspend the riverbed construction on the dam. It was another victory for the people. In the meantime of the suspension of dam work according to the court order, the government continued other dam-related works and efforts to relocate the people to show ‘progress in resettlement’ with false affidavits in the court. However, a major change occurred in the court’s approach during the four years of interim period, with the retirement of Chief Justice, which had a serious impact in this case. On February 18, 1999, the court, with the new Chief Justice, gave an interim order allowing the Gujarat government to go ahead with the construction of the dam, with a total height of 85 meters. It also approved an in-house ‘Grievance Redressal Authority’ appointed by the Gujarat government, limited to the oustees to be resettled in Gujarat. The Gujarat government had filed false affidavits in the Court regarding resettlement and the availability of land. Though the MP government submitted affidavits for the reduction of dam height from 455 feet to 384 feet, it helped the Gujarat government by falsely
submitting that, land for oustees was available in MP, when it was not available. On April 1, 1999, two thousand men and women launched *Manav Adhikar Yatra*, i.e. Human Rights March, traversing the villages and towns of MP and Maharashtra, culminating in Delhi at the Social Welfare Ministry. The Yatra aimed to reassert the right to life and to oppose displacement under threat of submergence. Various organizations of tribals, dalits, backward classes, minorities, fish workers, industrial laborers, mill workers etc. who have been victims of displacement and destructive development joined the march. A *Satyagraha* (i.e. seeking truth), a non-violent method of political protest and resistance, against the unjust submergence was also launched from June 20, 1999 in Domkhedi (Maharashtra) and in Jalsindhi (MP). The Supreme Court gave its verdict on October 18, 2000. It sanctioned construction in the dam up to 90 meters and thereafter, at each subsequent stage, by the consent of the NCA, which was contrary to the NWDT provisions.

The Review Committee of NCA decided on August 18, 2001 to raise the height of the dam up to 100 meters, after resettling all oustees below it by December, despite the fact that there was no land for resettlement. The MP government in the 50th meeting of the R and R Sub-group of the NCA held on August 29, 2001, at Bhopal proposed an amendment to the NWDT Award to facilitate cash compensation instead of land for land. NBA pointed out that the government so far took position that the NWDT is inviolable, but when they found it difficult to provide the land for oustees, this law is open for ‘amendment’. So NBA argues that such a move is in violation of the
NWDTA, Supreme Court Order and International Conventions, to which India is a party. They opine that it also tampers with the basic values and premises of the Constitution of India, which confers on all citizens the right to life and equality. As a reaction to the state government’s anti-people stance, activists launched an indefinite fast from September 17, due to which the Maharashtra government promised to verify the number of oustees, land availability and the lapses in rehabilitation through a Task force with the participation of NBA. Also that it would ask the NCA not to increase the height of the dam, above 90meters. It also agreed to prepare a master plan for resettlement with NBA participation in the Planning Group and Overview group. On January 24, 2002, the Chief Ministry of Gujarat, Narendra Modi and Digvijay Singh of MP, in the presence of Prime Minister Mr. Vajpayee, decided to take up the height of SSP from 90meters to 100meters by June 2002.

As of now, the dam height has reached 121.92 meters in violation of the NWDTA as well as the Supreme Court Order. As per those, rehabilitation of families up to that height should have been completed before taking the dam walls to that height. The NBA has filed further cases in 2002 and later in 2005, challenging the construction of the dam without completing rehabilitation.39 In 2006 when the dam height was cleared to 121.92 meters, it was clearly at the expense of the constitutional rights of the affected people. Due to vociferous protest at all levels, including a 21-day fast by three

39 The up-to-date information (after 2002) regarding the Narmada issue has been provided by Philip Mathew, an activist in the Narmada Movement.
affected people and Medha Patkar in New Delhi, the Prime Minister directly intervened and appointed the Oversight Group (OSG) headed by Shri V.K. Shunglu. Though having many drawbacks, the Shunglu committee report clearly showed that rehabilitation is incomplete at 121.92 meters thus justifying the voice raised by the NBA. At present, the gates of the Sardar Sarovar Dam remain to be installed but permission is not yet received as the Rehabilitation and Resettlement sub-group has not yet cleared the request from Gujarat government. The Environmental sub-group has already given permission for the full height of 138.68 meters in spite of obvious evidence that environmental measures stipulated by NWDTA is far from completion. Even in other dams in the Narmada like Omkareshwar, Maheshwar and Narmada Sagar, the cases are going on and the rehabilitation measures are far from satisfactory. ‘Land for land rehabilitation’ is nowhere implemented and what the Madhya Pradesh government has offered is ‘cash based rehabilitation’, which is not only inadequate but does not fulfill the purpose of rehabilitation, which is to ensure alternative livelihood.

Narmada river struggle forms the most important case of how states can misappropriate their political power throughout such a long period for such a shortsighted project in the name of development. From the outset of the project, it is visible that the governments remained insensitive to the poor and the underprivileged communities and disregarded them as a class, who are not qualified for a secure life like other citizens. It seemed that both the government and the court tried to step back from their responsibilities towards the people, the
former of ensuring the fundamental rights of people in a democratic society and the latter, of granting justice to those who became the victims of development. The project was getting implemented by giving a number of faulty promises like assurances of rehabilitation programmes, when actually there was no proper plan or availability of land and other facilities of life.

The development plan itself was rested on untrue and unfounded assumptions. First of all, the projects were conceived of without the consent of the affected people. The construction works of the dam were started without completing the basic studies regarding dam. The criteria put forward for deciding those to be considered as project-affected persons, were not justifiable. The central and state governments many times betrayed the courts and the people by submitting totally false data regarding the rehabilitation of the oustees and compliance with the environmental conditions. The approach of the court also seemed not justifiable since most of the time its instructions were not helpful to the affected people because the verdicts were not based on evidences and true arguments. The claims of the affected people and the NGOs, especially that of NBA, were neglected. The court seemed to rely on the government alone acknowledging it as final authority, on matters regarding the number of the displaced, the programmes for rehabilitation, and other claims on the benefits of the project. Also the court seemed to be interested in the completion of the project but not in the resettlement issues. There are also indications that the power structures in the government influenced the court. The Supreme Court earlier took a sympathetic stand to the
affected people by putting a limit on the height of the dam but this consideration was taken away with the sworn in of the new Chief Justice and thereafter the height of the dam increased to the maximum and the construction works are continuing without objection. So the complexity of the situation persuaded the poor people of the affected states to come forth arguing for their rights for survival and justice. This situation, in which there was the intense opposition against the project, can be seen as an outcome of a preplanned political game from the part of the governments. While on the one hand, the government totally failed to acknowledge the affected people’s natural ways of living, whose lives were enmeshed with the nature’s cycles, on the other, it persuaded the people of various states to sacrifice their lives for the ‘national interests’ like development.

In this case, the most significant political development was the participation of the NGOs especially of NBA. It has done a great job of politically mobilizing the affected people and of making them aware of their fundamental rights, like the right to information, right to life, land and other natural resources and also the right to participate in the decision making processes. They made people conscious of the illegal tie between the governments and other power structures. The people were also politically empowered to question the illegal practices and aggressive and unlawful behavior towards them. NBA tried to communicate with people by participating in both conventional and non-conventional political processes, and thereby compelling the parties and conventional political forces to take notice of issues
emerging as basic to people’s lives.\textsuperscript{40} NBA’s approach towards the village people was radically political in the sense that they tried an integrated strategy of making relations with people from village to national and international levels. It also seemed to be careful in not forming prey to the political play of the rulers. In spite of all the resistance efforts, the dam works are coming to an end, which is possible only by denying justice and rights to people by the government, the activities that are extremely undemocratic and unconstitutional.

\textbf{Victory of the oustees in Narmada}

Oustees of the dams completed, during the 1970s and 80s started asserting their rights and confronted with the government on issues of the cost-benefit, social and environmental destruction. While Tawa, Bargi, Barna and Sukta dams in Madhya Pradesh were completed during the 1970s and 80s, work has started on Narmada Sagar, Maheswar, Man, Goi and Veda. The oustees started organizing and demanding their rights and just resettlement in Tawa, Bargi and other completed dams. In the proposed and ongoing claims, the people’s organizations started questioning the dam builders about the propriety of the dam and displacement.

The oustees of the various early dam projects had started protests to get sanction their rights over the natural resources of their local region from 1992. The oustees of the Bargi dam started protests for their rights over water, land, forest employment etc. in the resettlement

\textsuperscript{40} Sanjay Sangvi, \textit{Op. Cit.}, p. 158.
area. They conducted Satyagraha at Bijasen in 1992, and a fifty-five days Satyagraha in the monsoon of 1993 against the filling of the reservoir beyond 418 m. They also conducted a boat rally of hundreds of fishing boats to proclaim the fishing rights of the oustees over the reservoir. The rallies, long marches, confrontations with police and politicians etc. made the Madhya Pradesh government to declare their exclusive right over reservoir fishing on May 11, 1994. This opened a way out in the life of the resettled people. The organization of the oustees and people affected by Bargi dam, Bargi Bandh Visthapit evam Prabhavit Sangha organized 54 primary fishing cooperatives of over 2000 oustees in the 3 districts, capped by the Oustees’ Fishing and Marketing federation. The federation, despite stiff opposition from the fish mafia, ice-mafia, contractors, politicians, the State Fisheries Cooperation and bureaucrats, succeeded in increasing food production, the rates to the fisher people and also repaid the government loan of Rs.5 lakhs. These successes of people in Bargi prompted other claim affected-people in the valley to fight for their rights. The Bargi people then protested for their right to cultivate the drawdown land for the winter cropping season. Again they resorted to Satyagraha even in submergence water at the dam, at the level of 418 m for 36 hrs, resisted police repression in the monsoon of 1995 and finally they withdrew when the government granted their requirements. But the government seemed to break their promise in 1997 and 1998, each time the oustees held dharna and in definite fast. People wanted the draw down lands to be opened up immediately, even if the gates of the dam had to be opened. Though the administrators and engineers opposed this, in December 1998, the government opened the gates of the dam and it
was assured that the reservoir level would be kept at 418 m. But as
against the Madhya Pradesh government’s order for a fresh lease to the
Bargi oustees for fishing, the bureaucrats and vested interests filed a
petition through the Madhya Pradesh State Fisheries Corporation, in
June 2000 and stayed the lease. By the time, the Sangh has equitably
distributed about 8000 hectares of land, by 2001 and got ready for the
winter agriculture. By these experiences, the oustees became aware
that a full and just rehabilitation was nearly impossible and they have
to struggle a lot to get the government to implement its assurances. The
oustees of Tawa dam, who had been fighting for their rights from the
early 1980s, were also secured their rights over the reservoir by 1996.
They organized themselves into cooperative societies and handled the
production and marketing of the fisheries. Their success turned out to
be a model of management and development of reservoirs by people
for themselves.

The oustees’ struggle points towards the insincere and
irresponsible attitude of the Madhya Pradesh government in keeping
the promises they have given to the displaced people. The oustees
seem to be rehabilitated without having proper arrangements for their
livelihood. This situation forced them to protest for the rights over
natural resources. However, the government due to the pressure of the
protest movements decided to grant them rights over land and water
resources. Here also the power structures of the region tried to defeat
the people’s movement, yet the government support led them to
succeed in the struggles.
Fishermen’s movement

Chilika is a brackish water lagoon, the largest in Asia situated in Orissa, with a length of 72km and width of 25km, covering approximately 1,000 sq km.\textsuperscript{41} Fishing has been the traditional occupation in the Chilika region for centuries. Chilika formed an earning source of 192 villages, dependent on fishing and particularly prawn fishing as their major source of livelihood. More than 50,000 fishermen and over two lakhs total population depend upon the Chilika for their living and livelihood. Fishermen have their right to fishing in the Chilika lake very early probably since Afghan rule. The right was protected even during the British period who aided the fishermen by setting fishermen’s cooperatives. Thus Chilika has a rare and inspiring history of fish producers, cooperatives and village level democracy since early times. In post-independence India also this situation continued. Ecologically the Chilika lake is having much importance. It is a stupendous collector of water and sunlight. The solar energy is converted by the process of photosynthesis by grass and phytoplankton into food for brackish water fish and grass for cattle, in turn providing food and livelihood to the thousands of traditional dependents of Chilika.

The year 1977-78 saw the development of prawns as an important export commodity. In 1986, the Janata government decided to form a company for aquaculture targeting Chilika, jointly by Tatas, the country’s most well known corporate giant.\textsuperscript{42} Together the partners


have conceived the Integrated Shrimp Farming Project (ISFP) in the backwaters of Chilika. As part of the project it proposed to begin intensive prawn cultivation in 6000 ha, to be leased for 15 years and produce 1500mt shrimps annually. The harvest will be ensured by a hatchery, 400mt feed mill and a 1500mt processing plant. A Rs.0.2bn ($5.7m) public limited company, Chilika Aquatic Farms Limited, has been floated with the state government holding 49% shares, Tata Iron and Steel company next with 30%, Tata Oil Mills Company 18% and Otto India Private Limited 3%. The deal has been brokered by the Orissa Maritime and Chilika Area Development Corporation. When the project gets underway, many kinds of modifications had to be done which would transform the naturally important lake onto an artificial one.43 According to the plan, a part of Chilika will be enclosed by a 13 km embankment, which will be parcelled into small ponds and will be filled up with seawater or freshwater as and when required. Some 150 pumps will operate overtime to maintain the right proportion of brine and freshwater needed for prawn cultivation. The project also proposed to breed 250-300g shrimps in 30-40 days as against the natural period of 90 days for shrimp larva to grow to its full size at 50g. To achieve this breeding rate, protein-rich feed, chemical fertilizers and pesticides will be pumped into the waters. The poisonous effluents will be dumped into the creek joining Chilika with the sea.

When Janata government proposed the project in 1986, the fishermen of the region resisted, joined by the opposition political party, the Janata Dal. However in 1989, when the Janata Dal came to power, it

43 Idem.
changed its approach to the project and in 1991, the government invited the Tatas to form a joint sector company for prawn development in the Chilika.\textsuperscript{44} They explained it as an important step in the context of economic liberalization and reforms, to promote all export oriented initiatives to augment foreign exchange reserves of the nation. In this effort, it did not matter, if the beautiful, low cost, high efficiency, balanced ecosystem of the Chilika was being destroyed in the process forever. From 1991, people started an intense struggle objecting the project. The group of fishermen from the 192 villages of Chilika united under the banner of \textit{Matsyasibi Mahasangh} i.e. Fishermen Association, to fight for their rights. They were also joined in this struggle by a group of students from Utkal University who had been named as \textit{Krantidarshi Yuva Sangam} i.e. Revolutionary Youth Organization. This united struggle on 15 January, 1992 at Gopinathpur village saw the formation of a people’s movement, the \textit{Chilika Bachao Andloan} i.e. Save Chilika Movement, against the pattern of development which threatens peace, development, ecology and livelihood of the poor people of Chilika and to protect it from commercial exploitation by big business operating under political umbrella and to restore to the people their right to manage Chilika. Though the Chief Minister of the state assured the huge mass not to establish any prawn manufacturing company there against their livelihood, he did not keep his promise since politics entered the scene. So the people of protest, with the active support of the Sangam started to break the dam, which was built by the Tatas inside the Chilika. The leader of the movement was arrested and then freed on agitation by

\textsuperscript{44} Pravin Sheth, \textit{Op. Cit.}, pp.251-52.
the students. However, as a result of the struggle, the government of Orissa thought over the issue and withdrew the lease and finally cancelled the project in December 1992.

This case points towards the power politics that is played in the name of development throughout India, after independence. Here the political party, which formed a support for the fishermen in their struggle for preventing the project, before coming into power, tried to manipulate the same circumstance after coming to power, for another cause, which will fulfill their profit motive. Rather than taking this situation as an occasion for acting as responsible political agents, the leadership of the party seemed to play a game with people. The change in the attitude of the concerned political party towards the fishermen’s issues reflected the manipulated political atmosphere. This forced the people to politically mobilize themselves in order to resolve the livelihood and displacement issues. They did it with the realization that they have the true privilege over the natural resources on which they rely in their day-to-day life and that they can claim their right over their environment. The participation of the student activists helped the fishermen’s struggle by bringing the issue into the notice of the public, the result of which was the withdrawal of the authorities from the development project.

Indonesia – Movement against Bali projects

In Indonesia, concern over the environment has begun in connection with the exponential growth of tourism industry on Bali.45

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45 Carol Warren, Symbols and Displacement: The Emergence of Environmental activism on Bali in Kalland and Persoon (ed.), ibid, pp.179-204.
From the late 1980s itself the regional economic development based on agricultural intensification, small-scale tourism and handicraft export etc. assumed a very different character, when deregulation of the banking system fed a boom in tourism investment. Official figures show a tenfold increase in foreign and domestic investment in major projects on Bali between 1987 and 1988 from US$ 17 million to 170 million, almost doubling again in 1989-1990. From the early 1990s itself, luxury tourism developments were affecting Bali very adversely causing socio-economic and environmental impacts. People started feeling discontent about this kind of development and their reactions were gradually finding way into the public domain with the projects like Garuda Wishnu monument and Bali Nirwana Resort. A major change was the conversion of agricultural land at the staggering rate of more than 1,000 ha per year, primarily for the large-scale resort and residential developments, along with infrastructure projects to provide the already insufficient electricity, water and roads to serve them. Immigration from other parts of Indonesia, initially attracted by employment in the booming construction industry, reached levels of 60,000-80,000 in 1992-1993, resulting in serious ethnic and religious tensions. Replacement of small local hotels, displacing land and labor formed another area of change. An increasing traffic seemed an added burden to the already overloaded road system and caused raising levels of air pollution. The waste problem had become ‘an epidemic’. The huge new tourist facility like the high-class hotels (e.g., the Nusa Dua area) are areas that would place further demands on water reserves in other parts of the island already showing signs of crisis. Land expropriation and the displacement of farmers was another issue that
reflected political disaffection with a pattern of capital-intensive development on a grand scale that has caused social unrest throughout Indonesia. The environmental problems connected with these developments were being noticed from 1990s onwards including unregulated mining of limestone and coral for hotel construction and extension to the airport, the incursion of high-class hotels into the remotest parts of the island against the provisions of the 1971 master plan for tourism, the erosion of beaches, increasing levels of plastic, sewage and air pollution, salination of underground aquifers, the diversion of water from farms to hotels and golf courses etc.

In the period between 1990 and 1994, the press played a critical role in promoting consciousness of environmental issues and in defining the relationship between these issues and broader questions of politics and culture. The regional press played a pivotal role in mobilizing resistance to the Garuda Wishnu monument and Bali Nirwana Resort projects. The regional newspaper ‘Bali Post’ has tried to expose the environmental degradation that these projects had introduced. It gave front-page announcements of both projects, which helped in erupting public controversies, soon followed by a number of by-line articles, editorials and letters to the editor. Several innovations in the media presentation of these issues were deployed to arouse and maintain public interest. The paper organized seminars through which the opinions of the government officials and public figures could make out their positions regarding the projects supported by arguments and information. Another novel feature, which functioned, to mobilize public opinion and maintain momentum was the special comment
column ‘Your Turn’ in the Bali Post. The column invited responses on topical themes of serious import and gave space for about hundred contributors to express their opinions. Along with playing a key role in bringing these projects under public scrutiny, the paper self-consciously set out the terms of discourse. From the outset, the connection between environmental and cultural integrity framed the debate. This is the link that captured the public imagination and that has contributed to a significant shift in attitude among Balinese towards the large-scale tourism development that was entering a new phase in the 1990s.

The proponents of the projects put forward plans to solve the environmental and other issues with technology. They claimed that the project would rehabilitate the barren and eroded land of the Bukit site, making it productive by conversion to an alternative use. Local people who had only been able to scrape a meager existence from dry farming would now be able to find employment in the more lucrative tourist sector.46 Regarding local water supply the landscape manager points to plans for establishing a three-stage wastewater treatment facility, the first of its kind in Indonesia, for garden and golf course maintenance. But only when environmental exploitation became tied to the appropriation of important cultural symbol that it generated various public opinions and hence opposition to the Tanah Lot development was more intensive than that of the Garuda Monument. Though in the latter, appropriation of the religious symbols to outside interests

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formed the cause of opposition, in the former, an additional factor also worked i.e., here the development was to be physically located at one of the most important sacred sites on Bali. Thus a more organized response to the BNR development coordinated by a coalition of student groups and scholars culminated in the first major political demonstrations on the island. The power of religious symbols in the debate was such that questions of environmental protection were ultimately subordinated to those of cultural preservation, so intimately bound up with social and economic tension between center and periphery. There were many indications of the cultural or religious anxieties among those who participate in the opposition struggles. For example, most of the groups joined in the struggle bore religious or cultural names like Society for Balinese Studies, Forum of Hindu Students, Balinese Youth and student Alliance and others including Hindu, Muslim and Catholic student groups from outside Bali. The metaphor of erosion was overtaken by images of invasion and the question of environmental discourse became one of cultural appropriation and physical dispossession. This anxiety that Balinese were losing control over both environmental and cultural resources comes through very strongly in Bali Post reporting as well as in readers’ comments in letters to the editor and the ‘Your turn’ column. Powerful front-page color images of earthmoving equipment moving across the flattened landscape, maps indicating the layout of the BNR Complex and the adjacent location of nine other projects to follow suit in the Tanah Lot tourism zone, and the BNR’s own sketch of golfers playing at hole3 in view of Tanah Lot Temple reinforced the conflated sense of physical dispossession and cultural displacement.
Press publicity for the activist campaign of protest demonstrations and marches to the regional parliament (DPRD) and Governor’s office, sit-ins, poetry readings and prayer meetings at Tanah Lot temple eventually had an impact. The Newspapers induced groups like the *Parisada Hindu Dharma*, the Hindu religious organization of Indonesia and the regional parliament, through strongly worded headlines in order to force them to move into a public position. The Parisada issued a religious pronouncement (Bhisama) interpreting traditional religious texts on the sacred space at temple sites and they effectively prohibited any development that might pollute the ‘zone of sanctity’ within a 2-kilometre radius around Tanah Lot Temple. Hereafter, the controversy seemed to concentrate entirely on this question. As religious faith and tolerance are key principles in the ideological constellation that underpins the Indonesian nation-state, such a declaration could not be ignored. The President also issued a statement through the State Secretariat, indicating that the decree should be the basis for resolution of the conflict. The regional parliament suspended the project, until the environmental impact assessment report, (AMDAL) could be reviewed, by the regional AMDAL Commission, explicitly given the directive to take account of the Parisada decree.

At this point two political interventions constrained the opponents of the project. First was the replacement of the early military commander who had permitted the demonstrations to continue so far, with another, who tried to crack down the demonstration, which resulted in attacking students and hospitalizing
them, after which large public demonstrations as a form of resistance ended temporarily. The second event was the closure of three national weeklies—Tempo, Editor and DeTIK. A few months earlier, the critical coverage of the issue stopped in Bali Post also. On August 9, it was announced that the GWK monument proposal had been approved. And on September 12, after an eight-month suspension, the AMDAL Commission presented its report, announcing that the Tanah Lot project will also proceed. However, the Environmental Impact Assessment Commission allowed the projects with certain concessions. It required that the ‘essence’ of the Bhisama ruling must be observed and that the project be redesigned, eliminating condominiums, relocating all dwellings away from the temple and planting a green strip to screen the project from view. But after the banning the press was not open to the issue as earlier and the gaps in the newspaper coverage and silence of them made the public to a reverse reading of the issue, i.e., as a manipulative strategy from the part of the authority. However, at the end of 1994, opposition to the project was very strong and the depth of antagonism to the BNR project in particular and the government in general had deepened. Students and academics that had organized the protests were still committed to upholding the letter of the religious ruling. A group of farmers were joined with them who had sold the land to the project, but due to different reasons, disagreed with the arrangements later. This was a better development in this case since up to that point the weak link in the opposition movement had been the fact that proponents could claim that the majority of landholders had sold out willingly for reasonable compensation. The landholders had been
given little information about the project and were under considerable pressure to sell from regional government officials, for satisfying the latter’s profit motive. By the end of 1994, the religious factor and the experiences of the former landholders finally led to an outright opposition of the project. On the 20th of October, a petition signed by ninety-six villagers affected by the BNR development was presented to the head of the regional parliament. This asserted that the land had been resumed through threats and deception. They demanded the return of the project site so that they could manage it with care and thus be free from blames for the wrong and improper use of these ancestral lands. The concern about ancestral displeasure was a major factor in the farmers’ changed position. The destruction of a small shrine belonging to one of the former landholders, despite guarantees of protection of these sites by the Bakrie group, exacerbated the discontent and turned the land holders to political action, which again intensified at the developers’ offer of financial compensation for the desecrated shrine. The later resistance made by the alliance of the combined student’s and farmer’s succeeded in (a) halting the project for eight months at considerable cost to the Bakrie group (b) forcing some redesign of the project to distance dwelling from the temple and (c) signaling a significantly changed attitude among the general public to the new direction of development.

This case is an example of social protest by the people against the destructive impact of development in a political context. The government who is supposed to protect the natural and cultural wealth of a region seemed to remain politically insensitive to the
social life of the region including the environmental and human resources. In such circumstance, it was the intervention of the press, which took the responsibility of exposing the intricacies of these two development projects and of making the people aware of the extent of destruction this kind of development might bring in terms of environmental degradation and people’s survival basis. The activists and the editors of the newspapers and others, who took the lead in mobilizing the people for protesting against the governments’ development policies, strategically made use of the cultural symbols of Wishnu and Bali, the Hindu deities of the local people. They made people conscious of their right for protecting their cultural values, which formed the pillars of their life. It seemed that the factor of cultural dimension rather than the environmental factors made them politically active, even though they would be affected seriously with the loss of the latter. In other words, the people were mobilized for the protection of the rights for livelihood and a hygienic atmosphere, by placing these needs within the cultural context. The involvement of the student groups also gave them support in the resistance struggles. Though there is no intimation of an outright withdrawal from the project by the government, they were politically put under pressure to reexamine some of the decisions, which caused intense resistance from the part of the people.

Africa

The emergence of the environmental movements in Africa has a history, which can be traced and connected to the context of the
growing social struggles for power, space and resources. The environmental movements in Africa are embedded in the continent’s history and the daily struggles of its peoples to make a living from their lands and waters. The African people had a rich knowledge of their environment before the colonial invasion. The natural resources like land, water and forests were held in sacred trust and symbolically insured against abuse, in many cultures of Africa. It was the forceful integration of the African environment into the world market through the instrumentality of the colonial state that laid it open to predatory extraction, disease, pollution and degradation by external hegemonic forces. But it is pointed out that the African nationalist movements had strong environmental components, especially in the rural, anti-colonial movements and rebellions. The African environmental history has provided evidence of the dialectic of state intervention (in the environment) versus local resistance (to the appropriation of natural resources). It has also underscored the role of environmental considerations in the logic of anti-colonial movements and its social constituents. But with independence, the ‘social’ dimension was delinked from the ‘political’ realm, which implied the subordination of popular movements and so the subordination of environmental movements also i.e., after independence, the political parties flourished

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whereas the social movements wilted. The anti-colonial, anti-nationalist movements were a coalition of social movements, peasants, workers, students, the elite and political parties. After independence this coalition disintegrated, with the ruling elite jettisoning the popular forces and rival forces.

By the late 1960s, as the contradictions within the post-colonial ruling elite in Africa deepened, the party in power crushed the opposition and suppressed social movements leading to one-party rule resulting in military rule. Within this context of authoritarianism, social movements were suppressed. By 1980s only the single-party and military regimes were challenged by the democratic forces in the circumstances of the internal contradictions and crises of legitimacy within the former. Social movements re-emerged to organize struggle for the liberation from the elite group of the country itself. Apart from the internal contradictions arising from long years of dictatorship, corruption and misrule, the refraction of the global recession into the dependent monocultural African economies led to severe crises with far-reaching, adverse social and political consequences. As a result the rural areas were more affected by the deregulation of the economy, the further commodification of Africa’s natural resources such as forests, water and minerals and the intense exploitation by multinationals, the logging industry and state monopolies, in order to extract more profit, surplus or revenues. Likewise, the poor people living off the land (in


cases where they were not dispossessed) exerted more pressure on the environment in order to thrive the situation in the face of rising costs of essentials and social services. It was in this context of the sharpening of social contradictions, partly as a result of the conditionalities and impacts of structural adjustment, that the legitimacy of the state was increasingly eroded and subjected to growing challenges by popular forces. In this dire struggle of survival, the ongoing exploitation of environmental resources was overlooked, thereby further degrading the environment in the process. This also suggested the intensification of struggles over shrinking or relatively scarce resources. It was in this context that the excluded groups organized themselves into environmental movements. This enabled them to protest their exclusion, stake claims and defend the right to gain access to environmental resources critical to their survival and reproduction.

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People-

The Ogoni are the group of people found on the plains of the Niger Delta, east of Port Harcourt, the capital city of the Rivers State. With a population estimated at approximately 500,000 occupying an area of 404 square miles, the Ogoni are an ethnic minority group in a region of many (and mostly larger) ethnic minority groups. These people had been in the quest for self-determination, from the British colonial period and thereafter under the regime of the elite group of the country. In 1908, they protested against inclusion in the Opobo division and by 1947 were granted their own Ogoni Native Authority under the then Rivers Province. In the late 1950s they were a part of the struggle for a state for the minorities, which was only realized
seven years after independence in 1967, when the Rivers State (an administrative region in the Nigerian Federation) was created. The circumstances for the movement arose, when oil was struck in commercial quantities in the Bomu oilfields (in the village of K-Dere) in 1958. This resulted in opening up Ogoni lands to further exploration and exploitation in the oil fields of Bomu, Bodo West, Tai, Korokoro, Yorla, Lubara Creek and Afam, the concessions were owned by Shell, the Petroleum Development Company. The intensive exploitation of oil in Ogoni territory further aggravated the pressures in the land in one of the most densely populated parts of Nigeria. The small space of Ogoni land was thickly concentrated of six oil fields, two oil refineries, a huge fertilizer plant, petrochemical plants and an ocean port, leaving the people with poverty, unemployment, pollution and misery. According to MOSOP estimates, about $30 billion worth of oil was extracted from Ogoni lands within 30 years, while the Ogoni contributed as much as five percent of Nigeria’s total oil production in 1973. There were also strong feelings among members of MOSOP that they were being denied their rights to oil by a federal government dominated by the big (three) ethnic groups in Nigeria because the Ogoni were ethnic minorities. It was these feelings of alienation and anger and the quest to give voice to Ogoni aspirations for self-determination and the control of their environment, which gave

birth to MOSOP during 1990 and 1991. The expectations of the Ogoni people to realize their dream of self-realization, with the formation of a regional state of their own and direct access to oil within their territory, were destroyed when, during the war, the federal military government, through legislation, transferred the control of oil revenues to itself.

The ecological damage of oil production had begun to manifest itself on Ogoni land following an oil blowout on 19 July 1970, which destroyed cassava farms, yams, palms, streams, animals etc. of miles long lands, through which oil flowed like a river, polluting even rivers, the only source of drinking water. Though many letters were sent to Shell, British Petroleum (BP) and the state government by various groups, on Ogoni land, little was done to ameliorate the impact of the ecological disaster that struck during the harvest period. Compensation for crops destroyed was not adequate and the cleanup of the spilled oil was not comprehensively addressed. Thus the Ogoni were further marginalized, both in relation to the highly centralized Nigerian federation after the war and with regard to the control of their land, which was now exposed to oil exploitation, pollution and environmental degradation. Apart from losing out in terms of the allocation of oil revenues to the states of the federation, the Ogoni were adversely affected by the Land Use Decree of 1978. The Land


Use Decree (later Act) vested all land in each state of the federation solely in the governor of the state (who, during military rule, was appointed by the federal government). According to the Constitutional Rights Project (CRP) report, the decree (section 28.2) provided that the right of occupancy could be revoked in the public interest, including “the requirement of land for mining purposes or oil pipeline or for any purpose connected therewith”, which brought to a head the alienation of the Ogoni people from their land. In an area of fragile ecosystems, mangrove swamps and relatively scarce land, the power to grant oil concessions rested with the federal government and officials far away in the federal capital. The concessions were given without consulting the local inhabitants whose lives were tied to the land. Thus they were forced to give up their farmlands, fishing grounds and ancestral shrines to create a right of way for the pipelines of the oil industry that offered no real employment to the locals who had little or no skills to sell to the capital-intensive and powerful oil multinationals.

The situation was further aggravated by the fact that those directly dispossessed ended up with little or no compensation. With Nigeria being under military rule at the time of the Land Use Decree, and the collapse of the democratic experiment of the Second Republic (1979-1983) after barely four years, the Ogoni were largely unable to have their complaints heard or addressed. Thus they suffered the consequences of their political powerlessness and the domination of

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their lands by the partnership of the federal government and Shell, which excluded them from direct access to oil revenues, while they bore the full environmental impact of oil production.

In this situation, with the purpose of renegotiating the power relations in the oil-rich Niger Delta, the people of Ogoni formed MOSOP. It was an umbrella body of the Ogoni affiliate organizations like the Federation of Women’s Associations (FOWA), the National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), the Council of Ogoni Churches (COC), the Council of Ogoni Professionals (COP), the Council of Ogoni Traditional Rulers Association (COTRA), the National Union of Ogoni Students (NUOS), the Ogoni Students’ Union (OUT), and the Ogoni Central Union (OCU).\(^{58}\) It sought to contest and block further exploitation, pollution and marginalization of Ogoni oil-rich lands and the Ogoni people by the state-oil business alliance and to assert Ogoni rights to claim and control their own resources. MOSOP adopted a high-risk confrontational strategy against Nigeria’s military federal government and deliberately targeted Shell.\(^{59}\) MOSOP also tapped into global discourse on the environment, indigenous peoples and human rights to empower its local claims and protests and put international pressure on Shell and the Nigerian state to respect the rights of the Ogoni to control

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their environmental space (and land). MOSOP’s ‘high-risk’ strategy was predicated upon the mobilization of social power to block the extraction of oil from under its land until its complaints were addressed. This was because of the strategic importance of oil as the provider of over 80 per cent of Nigeria’s national revenue and over 90 per cent of export earnings. By catching the attention of the government by their blocking power MOSOP issued a list of demands through the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) on 2 October 1990, which included among other things political autonomy including political control of Ogoni affairs by the Ogoni people, the right to control Ogoni resources for Ogoni development and the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation. The OBR was debated at all levels of Ogoni society in the local dialects and was adopted and signed after massive grassroots mobilization by traditional Ogoni rulers and leaders. An addendum to the OBR was sent by MOSOP to the federal government of Nigeria on 26 August 1991, since they did not get any reply for the OBR, after another round of broad social mobilization, consultation and adoption.\textsuperscript{60} The addendum went beyond OBR to include criticism of the 1979 and 1989 Nigerian Constitutions for legitimizing the expropriation of Ogoni rights and resources because they were a minority group. The addendum also sought restitution for the harm done to the health of the Ogoni people by the flaring of gas, oil spillages, oil blowouts and related problems caused by shell, Chevron and their Nigerian accomplices. Again, MOSOP received no real response from the Nigerian state or the oil

companies, which continued with business as usual. It was at this point that MOSOP internationalized its local struggle.

In 1992, MOSOP contacted the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) based in the Netherlands and began networking with NGOs from other parts of the world. It presented the Ogoni case before a global assembly, the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, painting a picture of the Ogoni as an indigenous people suffering discrimination, expropriation and imminent genocide as a result of the wanton destruction of the environmental basis of their existence by the oil industry and the repressive Nigerian military government.\footnote{Ibid, p.8.} It made use of news media, public lectures, publications, documentaries, the internet, personal contacts, letters and the lobbying of pressure groups, politicians, parliaments and foreign governments. On 4 January 1993, MOSOP successfully organized a peaceful rally against the state-oil alliance on which over 300,000 Ogoni people participated as part of the celebration of the UN’s International Year of the World’s Indigenous People. The success of the rally underscored the strength of MOSOP as an environmental movement contesting the power of the state-oil alliance over its oil-rich land. In the months that followed, conflict ensued between MOSOP, as a local force of resistance and the state-oil alliance, which wanted to continue the process of oil-based capitalist accumulation. On 30 April 1993, Ogoni villagers, protesting damage done to their farms by an American oil service company working on
behalf of Shell, were fired upon by soldiers. Many were wounded and one was killed. In June 1993, Ken Saro-Wiwa, the spokesperson for MOSOP, was arrested and detained by security forces. At the same time, the leadership of MOSOP was immersed in a struggle between moderate and radical elements. The Ogoni territory was militarized by the state, leading to repression, intimidation and a climate of fear. The tactics of the security forces included beating, detention of activists and MOSOP supporters, shootings, burning of houses, rape and even murder. Misunderstandings between the Ogoni and their neighbors were exploited and manipulated to punish the Ogoni. Similarly cracks within the leadership of MOSOP were exploited by the state-oil alliance to divide and weaken the environmental movement of resistance. Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine other MOSOP leaders were arrested and charged for a murder case and were later hanged. Following it, waves of repression were unleashed against the Ogoni, while numerous activists were detained or forced underground or escaped into exile. Ogoni refugees were found in neighboring countries and dispersed across Europe and North America, thereby seriously weakening the environmental movement of the Ogoni, then into retreat. After the return of Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999, MOSOP has been trying to overcome divisions and rebuild itself. Shell withdrew from Ogoniland in 1993 as a result of popular pressure and there were signs of changes for Ogoni. A development Commission has been established for the Niger Delta, while federal revenue allocations to oil-producing states have been raised from five to 13 per
cent on the basis of the principle of derivation. A Federal Ministry of Environment has been established, while the Department of Petroleum Resources, the monitoring arm of the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, has been granted autonomy. However, the power relations between the state-oil alliance and the Ogoni, which are skewed against the latter, remain unchanged.

The experiences of the Ogoni people reveal that the existence and even life of these people were problematic, not just their political identity. Though their requirement for a regional state was fulfilled in 1967, they were not self-sufficient in other political needs like the control (power) over their environment (oil-rich), right for the access to oil within their territory and a pollution free environment etc. In addition to these needs, basic issues like the dispossesssion of the Ogoni people out of their living lands, farm lands, fishing grounds and ancestral shrines, which arose consequent to the large scale oil extraction by the multinational company without any compensation, created the context for a mass political movement. The absence of a democratic political setup and the unjustifiable political tie made between the military government and the oil company seems to worsen the situation. The federal military government was not found to be responsible to the people of the state, as one would expect from a democratic government. The interim period of four years of democratic rule during 1979-1983 was so short a time period, within

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which the Ogoni people hardly could move people for achieving any of their demands. The realization that they are weak in terms of power and strength inspired them to unite and mobilize themselves, to protest for the rights, and thus to confront with the military government, with the joint effort of all other groups, who face similar difficulties. The decision of the Ogoni people to contact with other local and international organizations in other countries was the result of the awareness that similar political context exists all around the world. Thus such a movement with a strong support worldwide could only make the company to withdraw from their land in 1993 and to take steps giving considerations to the Ogoni people and their environment at administrative level by 1999 and thereafter, by bringing back the democratic rule.

3.2.2 People versus State and Industries

Movements against wood-based industry

Forests were being depleted all over India even after independence, in the context that trees were needed in large amounts to meet industrial demand. Usually paper, rayon and plywood companies, apart from the subsidies they were granted from the government, tried to acquire a firm control over the forests. Though Indian law prohibited large-scale ownership of land by private companies, the joint sector companies (units jointly owned by the state and private capital) provided the most feasible option. In the wake of Chipko movement there had arisen a wide-ranging debate on forest

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policy, with scholars and activists arguing that state forest policies had consistently discriminated against the rights of peasants, tribals and pastoralists, while unduly favoring the urban-industrial sector.\textsuperscript{64} Another factor was the promotion of eucalyptus plantation in state-owned lands by the Forest Department from the early 1960s. As part of this, in many parts of India, rich, diverse natural forests were felled to make way for single-species plantations, the inspiration for this choice was clearly dictated by industry, for eucalyptus is a quick growing species sought after by both paper and rayon mills, and since it is not browsed by cattle and goats thus making regeneration much easier to achieve.

The establishment of the Harihar Polyfibres, a rayon-producing unit located in the north of the state Karnataka, by Birla and the happenings that occurred consequent to it are an example of how a political struggle is emerged for a localized cause.\textsuperscript{65} The company has started its production unit in 1972 on the bank of the river Tungabhadra in Dharwad district, Karnataka. From its inception it has been polluting the river, the water of which was used by about one lakh people in that village, including fishermen, shepherds, farmers and laborers.\textsuperscript{66} Cases of diseases were also reported due to the polluted water. On 14 November 1984, the Karnataka government entered into an agreement with Harihar Polyfibres to form a joint sector company

\textsuperscript{64} Anon, Undeclared Civil War: A Critique of the Forest Policy, New Delhi, Peoples Union for Democratic Rights, 1982. Ramachandra Guha, ‘Forestry in British and Post-British India: A Historical Analysis’, Economic and Politic Weekly, in two parts, 29 October and 5-12 November 1983. For these citations refer \textit{ibid}, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{65} Guha and Martinez-Alier, \textit{Op. Cit.}, pp. 6-11.

called Karnataka Pulpwood Ltd. (KPL), in which the government had a
holding of 51 per cent and the latter held 49 per cent. KPL was charged
with growing eucalyptus and other fast growing trees for the use by
Harihar Polyfibres. For this purpose, the state has identified 30,000
hectares of common land spread over four districts in the northern part
of Karnataka. This land was nominally owned by the state, but the
glass, trees and shrubs standing on it were extensively used in
surrounding villages for fuel, fodder and other materials. The land was
granted by the state to KPL on a long lease of 40 years at Re.1 per acre
per year. This consent was made against the laws of the land,
particularly the Forest Conservation Act. As much as 87.5 per cent of
the produce was to go directly to Harihar Polyfibres, the private sector
company also had the option of buying the remaining 12.5 per cent.
The government of Karnataka was even willing to stand guarantee for
the loans that were to finance KPL’s operations, loans to be obtained
from several nationalized banks, one of which was the National Bank
of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Within the months of its establishment, the new company became
the object of severe criticism especially in the context of this wider, all-
India debate. In December 1984, the state’s pre-eminent writer Dr.
Shivram Karanth wrote an essay in the most popular Kannada Daily
calling on the people of Karnataka to totally oppose the joint sector
company KPL. The opposition grew after 15 July 1986, the date on
which the state actually transferred the first installment of land (3,950
hectares) to KPL. When the company was preparing the ground for
planting eucalyptus, many petitions, representations and also letters from
individuals and organizations protesting against the formation of KPL were sent to the Chief Minister. Meanwhile protest meetings were organized at several villages in the region. The matter was also raised in the state legislature. In the forefront of the movement against KPL was the *Samaj Parivartan Samudaya* (SPS), i.e. Association for Social Change, a voluntary organization working in the Dharwad district of Karnataka. On 2 October 1984, SPS held a large demonstration outside the production unit of Harihar Polyfibres. In December 1985, it filed public interest litigation in the High Court of Karnataka against the State Pollution Control Board for its failure to check the pollution of the Tungabhadra by the Birla factory. Before that petition could come up for hearing, SPS filed a public interest writ against Karnataka Pulpwood Limited, in the Supreme Court of India in New Delhi. SPS was motivated to do so by a similar writ in the state High Court, filed by a youth organization working among the farmers in the Sagar taluka of the adjoining Shimoga district. In this petition submitted in early 1987, the petitioners spoke on behalf of the 500,000 villages living in the region of KPL’s operations, the people most directly affected by the action of the state in handing over common land to one company. The petition described the difficulties of the villagers and exposed its violation of two provisions of the Indian Constitution, the right to fair procedure guaranteed by Article 14 and the right to life and liberty of the village community vested under Article 21 of the Constitution. Finally the petitioners contended that the planting of monocultures of Eucalyptus, as envisaged by KPL would have a ‘disastrous effect on the ecological balance of the region’. The petition argued that claims of time and tradition were counter posed to the legal status quo, through which the
state both claimed and enforced rights of ownership. Thus the petition was perfectly in line with popular protests in defense of forest rights. On 14 March 1987, the Supreme Court responded to the petition by issuing a staying order, thus preventing the government of Karnataka from transferring any more land to KPL. Encouraged by this preliminary victory, SPS now turned to popular mobilization in the villages. In May, it held a training camp in non-violence at Kusnur, a village in Dharwad district, where 400 hectares of land had already been transferred to KPL. A parallel organization of villagers, the Guddanadu Abhivruddi Samiti i.e. Hill Areas Development Committee, was initiated to work alongside SPS. The two groups held a series of preparatory meetings in Kusnur and other villages nearby for a protest scheduled for 14 November 1987, to coincide with the third anniversary of the formation of KPL. On 14 November, about 2,000 people converged at Kusnur, who resorted to a novel protest, termed the Kithiko-Hachiko i.e. Pluck-and-Plant Satyagraha. They moved to the disputed area and first uprooted 100 saplings of Eucalyptus before planting in their place tree species useful locally for fruit and for fodder.

The next major development in the KPL case was the partial vacation, on 26 April 1988, by the Supreme Court of the stay it had granted a year previously. Now it allowed the transfer of a further 3,000 hectares to KPL. Such interim and ad hoc grants of land were also allowed in 1989 and 1990. As a reaction to the court action, SPS prepared once more for direct action. They commenced training camps in the villages, planned to culminate in a fresh Pluck-and–Plant Satyagraha. Meanwhile journalists sympathetic to their movement
intensified the press campaign against KPL. In the context of the mounting adverse publicity and the prospect of renewed popular protest, the government of Karnataka tried to set up a committee and commission, to enquire the issue and to submit a report until which the KPL had to suspend its operations, a decision taken in a meeting attended by the representatives of SPS, KPL and the Forest Department. But this action of government was seen as merely a tactic to defuse and contain popular protest. The commission was never set up and SPS started organizing another Pluck and Plant *Satyagraha* in August 1988. This time the protesters were arrested and removed before they could reach KPL’s eucalyptus plot. In later years, non-violent direct action continued to be a vital plank of SPS’s strategy. In an attempt to link more closely the issues of industrial pollution and the alienation of common land, it organized in August 1989 in the towns of Hangal and Ranibennur, public bonfires of rayon cloth made by Harihar Polyfibres. The following year SPS reverted to the Pluck and Plant *Satyagraha* again.

While these protests kept the issue alive at the grassroots, SPS continued to make use of the wider political and legal system to its advantage. It could obtain copies of four orders issued by the Chief Conservator of Forests, of transferring a further 14,000 hectares of forest land to KPL, an area far in excess of what the Supreme Court had allowed. On the basis of these ‘leaked’ documents, SPS filed a further Contempt and Perjury petition in October 1988. Meanwhile, the SPS persuaded the public sector banks to delay the release of funds to KPL, pending the final hearing and settlement of the case in the
Supreme Court. It had also effectively lobbied the government of India in New Delhi to clarify its own position on KPL-style schemes. In February 1988, an official of the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, making a deposition in the Supreme Court, stated that the raising of industrial plantations by joint-sector companies required the prior permission of the government of India. Next year, a new National Forest Policy was announced, which explicitly prohibited monoculture plantations on grounds of ecological stability. Within Karnataka, resolutions asking the government to cancel the KPL agreement were passed by local representative bodies, including several Mandal Panchayats, local councils etc. of Dharwad. This was followed by a letter to the Chief Minister, signed by 54 members of the state legislature and sent on 11July 1990 asking him to close down KPL so as to reserve village common land for the common use of villagers. With public opinion and the central government arrayed against it, the government of Karnataka decided to wind up KPL. The final order of the Supreme Court in this case was issued on 26 March 1992 based on the government of Karnataka’s order of 24 October 1991 confirming the winding up of Karnataka Pulpwood Ltd. (KPL) and a detailed affidavit of 12 March 1992 recognizing the people’s rights over the common lands.

This case is an example of the misappropriation of political power by a state government for exploiting the natural resources, which has socio-political and environmental consequences. The controversy here is that the government, which is supposed to ensure the protection of the rights of the people in the state, itself created the
circumstances that forced the common people to fight for their rights, both to live in a healthy environment and to use minor forest produce which forms their livelihood. It seems the politically inactive position of the Karnataka government forced the people to protest in both contexts. In the first case, it allowed the company to continue functioning in the state, in spite of the pollution problems it created in those surroundings. The second situation of conflict is the result of the illegal plot made between the state and the company. The people who are in authority in the government have misused their official power to satisfy their own private interests. The participation of the NGOs, especially SPS, is the main factor that led this struggle to a success. Their continued protests in varied forms, using different strategies actually helped the struggle to sustain its spirit throughout these years, highlighting its political significance. The intervention of the Supreme Court made a turning point in this issue, which helped to disclose the conspiracy between the state government and the company and also to resolve the issue by ending the protest of the people for justice. The members of the Legislative Assembly also acted politically by raising questions regarding the issue and succeeded in making the concerned parties reveal their roles in this deceit. Media also played an important role by publicizing the issue and thereby making people aware about it. Though this struggle is a localized one, examples of similar political contexts are common in many places in India, which required of the people to politically come forward to fight for their rights.
Movement against Union Carbide Corporation

The Bhopal gas tragedy has become known the world over for the severe environmental disaster it caused and the role of a multinational corporation in this case.67 The Union Carbide Corporation, a US–based multinational corporation, started its working in Bhopal in 1969, with a small unit for pesticide formulations. Within a few years, it decided to expand and go in for the manufacture of a range of MIC-based pesticides from a carbaryl base, under the trade-name Sevin and the new plant was set up in 1978.68 The company claimed that the new formulations would be safer, more effective and would handle a much larger spectrum of crops and pests. On December 3, 1984, an accident occurred, caused by the introduction of water into the toxic methyl isocynate storage tank. This resulted in a powerful and uncontrollable reaction generated by the liberation of heat and as a result the deadly methyl isocynate escaped in the form of gas. The tank’s vent gas scrubber and flame tower did not have the capacity to either neutralize or incinerate the immense volume of gases released. A large mass of poor people was living around the UC plant, who was the most affected due to the accident. As the gas began to escape, within minutes about 3000 people died on the spot, whereas about 50,000 sustained chronic lung damage and many had vision defects. Initial effects of gas exposure were inflammation of the lungs, acute dehydration coupled with oedema and severe corneal burns. However the Union Carbide authorities did not agree at first that leak had

occurred, but only at a later stage and they also claimed that the leak had been plugged soon when it did not.

Union Carbide’s MIC plant has had a poor safety record almost from its inception. Six accidents had already been recorded which the workers in the industry alleged was an under-count.69 The first accident occurred, according to the government’s records, on November 24, 1978, when naphtha stocks caught fire from sparks from a welding rod. The second one occurred on December 26, 1981, resulting in the death of a maintenance department worker, who during his work had to inhale phosgene. Another major accident was on February 10, 1982, when a mechanical seal of the phosgene pump failed, resulting in the leakage of phosgene. Twenty-five workers inhaled the chemical and all of them had to be hospitalized, though there were no deaths on this occasion. A fourth major accident occurred on October 5, 1982, in which case MIC was released and the workers ran for shelter. They complained of the same symptoms of breathlessness and irritation in the eyes, as it was in the 1984 accident. Each time an enquiry was made by the government, which often ended up in giving instructions to prevent such hazards. No evaluation was done about the follow-up actions or about whether any safety procedures had been adopted at all. In its efforts to increase productivity and profit, the authorities of the Bhopal plant avoided the maintenance practices.70 Norms were frequently violated, equipment rarely checked and raw materials not tested. The economizing had

been carried to such an extent that the plant’s refrigeration unit was
switched off during the overhaul. The government paid no heed to the
warnings by the investigations regarding the possible danger that could
have occurred. The Union Carbide provided certain privileges to the
congress ministers and bureaucrats and they never took the company to
task for safety violations. When the issue of threat to Bhopal city was
raised in the Legislative Assembly, the state’s labor minister was
dismissive. The government made no attempt to indict any UCC or
UCIL official nor did it take any steps to investigate Union Carbide
operations in India. The conspiracy to save the guilty case already
visible when a fortnight after the leak of 1984, the company reportedly
funded a TB clinic in a gas-affected colony that was inaugurated with
much publicity by the then congress chief minister, to dilute the case
against Carbide for punitive damages. In addition, UCIL always
received preferential treatment from government agencies. Financial
institutions vied with each other to sanction loans to the company,
which were often underwritten with extremely favorable terms. It also
enjoyed unlawful tax benefits in several ways and gained substantially
from short-term withdrawal of industrial embargo on licenses.

The issue was taken up by human right activists, the
environmentalists and humanitarian groups who spontaneously arose
against the callousness of the MNC authorities who tried to play down
the extent of the tragedy.\footnote{Pravin Seth, \textit{Op. Cit.}, pp.224-25.} Its negligence was exposed by the NGOs.
Supported by the national and international media, they expressed their
anger against the administration and the medical authorities, which were suspected to have resorted to the stratagem of underestimating the magnitude of the disaster. Regional, national and international NGOs, jurists and environmental/human right activists networked in a concerted way and brought pressure to bear upon the initial hesitant state and union governments. The documents, videos and other evidences bore the blatant underplaying of the reality and the ghastly sufferings of mostly the poor people and workers. As the news about disaster spread all over the world, a lawsuit of $15 m was filed against Carbide, by 2 Indian families in the US, on behalf of the victims and retained human rights champion as their lawyer. This opened the gates for compensation claims and following this, lawsuits claiming damages worth $45bn were filed in US courts, threatening to wipe out Union Carbide’s entire global business. In March 1985, the Bhopal Gas Leak (Compensation Claim) Act was passed by Parliament, which made Government of India the sole representative of the victims seeking punitive damages from Carbide. Government took up some 6000,000 claims in US federal courts. The Judge ordered interim relief of $5-10m to the victims, at the first pre-trial hearing of the consolidated Bhopal litigation. Carbide only reluctantly agreed to pay the sum while it started playing tricks of delaying the case. The case dragged on as Government of India and Union Carbide haggled over

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72 Though the forensic team was almost certain that the killer poison was cyanide, a fact confirmed by traces found in some cells and the administration was advised to use sodium thiosulphate as an antidote, the doctors did not heed it because of the strong influence of the Union Carbide. If the easily available antidote had been used, perhaps hundreds of lives could have been saved. See Vinod Raina et.al, *Op.Cit.*, p. 142.

the compensation amount. Union carbide lawyers got shifted the case to Indian courts, since they expected that here they would have to pay far less compensation than they would have had to if the case was fought in New York. The litigation went on till February 1989 when the Congress (I) government led by Rajeev Gandhi suddenly agreed to an out-of-court settlement for $470m, a paltry sum, which could not cover the long-term healthcare needs and restitution of the victims. The settlement was upheld by Supreme Court, which absolved UCC of all civil and criminal liability in the disaster.

The grossly unfair settlement raised a public outcry and the National Front government challenged the verdict in Supreme Court in 1990.74 Anticipating a judicial review, Madhya Pradesh government had, just before the 1989 elections, conducted a fresh medical survey of gas survivors. The survey listed only 19 persons as permanently and totally disabled and 155,000 people, whose records were examined, were found to have suffered no injury at all. The medical fraternity and human rights groups were outraged and their sustained opposition forced government to modify the survey’s findings. But the apex court, in its final verdict on the Bhopal case passed in October 1991, cited these very findings in rejecting the appeal against the paltry settlement. However, it ordered reinstatement of criminal proceedings, first moved in 1985, against UCC, UCIL to sell its Bhopal plant lock, stock and barrel and move out of the city, as if it had never been. Carbide has since wound up all its operations in India. The case against the company was diluted even more when in September 1996, Supreme

Court, partially reversing its 1991 order, quashed charges of culpable homicide against UCIL officials and directed that fresh charges be framed for causing death due to negligence.

The Bhopal disaster is an incident that generated worldwide reactions against the human rights violation involved in it. This is a clear example that reveals, to what extent a government can be insensible to and negligent of its peoples’ affairs by misappropriating the political power. In this case, there are many contexts, which exposed the conspiracy between the government and the company for personal benefits or ‘to conserve foreign exchange’.\textsuperscript{75} It is evident from the study reports that the government has never tried to prevent the industry either from getting established in a thickly populated area like ‘slum’ or to enforce it to function as per the norms or to adopt the protective measures properly, in the light of the knowledge that the industry had been using raw materials such as monomethylamine (MMA) and phosgene and the ingredients in the various stages of production of MIC such as carbon monoxide and chloroform.\textsuperscript{76} It is clearly this irresponsible attitude of the government authorities that resulted in the unlikely happenings in the capital of Madhya Pradesh. The political insincerity of the government is also reflected in the ways


\textsuperscript{76} It is argued that the government cannot claim that it did not have the sort of data, which would have required it to enforce stringent checks on the plant. The state Electricity Board was in possession of all the requisite documents, which were handed over to it perfunctorily the first time and every time subsequently when Union Carbide applied for an enhancement of power supply. Also at every stage since the inception of the plant, the government has been fully aware of the noxious character of the materials the plant was using for the manufacture of pesticides. What it lacked was the will and the intent to come down strongly on Union Carbide. See Radhika Ramaseshan, \textit{Op. Cit.}, p. 2109.
how they tackled the earlier accident cases. The government always seemed to protect the Union Carbide authorities, forgetting its duty towards its people. Though the workers in the industry could have the knowledge about the risk that is involved in their job, the mass of people who were living outside was ignorant about it. Here also both the industry and the government had been politically flawed to do their duty of ensuring protection to the people by refusing them the right to know about the probable danger that may happen in their living place. The government also seemed to be insensible about its duty towards the victims and remained passive even after the major accident. The act of obstructing the medical camp held in Bhopal, jointly by three voluntary groups, in order to provide medical relief and detoxification measures to the gas victims in the accident, is an example of the political play of the government. The ways in which the cases regarding the compensation claims against UCIL were handled by the government also point towards its liability to the company than to its people. It is the complexity of this political context, in which the people who are the victims remained helpless either from the part of the company or that of the government, who are the culprits, which pushed them to fight for their rights to live and to get medical help or other compensation. These circumstances also led to the worldwide protest against the human right violation that happened in this case. It is the intervention of the human right activists, environmentalists, media etc. that helped to expose the power play between the government and industry. The intervention of the court also did not

77 *Economic and Political Weekly* (editorial), Vol. XX, No.27, July 6, 1985.
help in getting a satisfactory compensation due to the inaction of the government. So the fight for justice is still continuing since no justifiable solution has yet been made from the authorities so far.

3.2.3 People / State versus Industry

Anti-pollution Movement in Gujarat

The Maradia Industrial Complex producing chemicals in Sayla taluka, in the Surendranagar district of Gujarat, which is spread over 1,300 acres of land, started production in 1991. It has not made the arrangements for controlling pollution and as a result the nearby water sources like wells and reservoirs were began to be colored. The untreated liquid effluents were flowed along with rainwater, which polluted the nearby ponds, and caused the death of many cattle. Another trouble was that during night from 12 to 4 am the managers used to dispose off the gas produced during the production process, the pungent smell of which caused suffocation for the people and burning of leaves of even big trees. In the beginning the authorities ignored the complaints of the villagers. Though the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) warned about establishing effluent treatment plants, the owners put forward wrong claims. But things took a turn when on 18 June 1996, torrential rain caused the waters of the polluted pond to overflow which reached the Saburi dam, about 6km away, changing its color red and undrinkable. The danger of this lay in the fact that if the rain had continued, it would have flowed to the nearby Nayika dam and Dholidhaja dam, the water of which was used by about 4 lakh people of both towns and about 35 villages nearby. About 40 per cent of the district population depended upon these two dams for their
drinking water. The people gathered and protested, which prompted the District Collector to give a provisional order for closing down 17 plants of the complex, Under Article 143 of the Indian Penal Code. The water samples of the Saburi dam and the surrounding wells and dunkies were tested in the laboratories. Then five out of six samples of water were found to be completely undrinkable, even the waters of the dunkies were found red, which means waters at the deep down the ground were also polluted. The water was found to have very high level of Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD). A case was filed against the Maradia Complex as public interest litigation because the vital interest of many people was involved in it. In 1995, the Gujarat Ecology Commission (GEC) had appointed a committee of two experts to study this problem in the context of growing complaints of the people. Its report clearly brought out that in spite of the GPCB, right from very first day, this industry had flouted the environmental laws on a large scale.

The Central Pollution Control Board found that the Maradia Complex has started production without getting the permission of GPCB and the company obtained it only in 1995. Even then it cheated the authorities and people by manufacturing naphthalene-based chemical, which was hazardous to environment, without permission. In 1995, the committee has recommended to this industry the adoption of modern technology for treating the polluted water, cautioning the possible dangers to the dams and it blamed the GPCB for approving such a location for the chemical complex without prior investigation about the environmental impact. The Chairman of the Maradia Group
tried to defend his industry by arguing for the workers there and also pointing out its loss per day if it is closed. Many political parties demanded to take action against the industry. But in spite of the orders of the GPCB to close down four plants, which were manufacturing environmentally hazardous chemicals like H-acid and J-acid and also that to stop the process of treating some chemicals collectively, the industry continued its production processes. The political hold of the Chairman of the industry was such that he could manipulate the regulatory power structures of the state like the GPCB and he even challenged CBI inquiry. At this stage only the uprising of the people during June-July could make breakthrough. This time leaders of both the main political parties and people of all the strata have joined together to constitute Maradia Hatao Ladat Samiti i.e. the Committee to fight for removal of Maradia. Many leaders of other villages were united. The industry filed an application in the High Court requesting that it be permitted to run its closed units as it had invested crores of rupees and the closure will affect the company’s financial condition. It also brought workers to pressurize the court for which the court directed the company not to adopt such tactics. Another petition was filed by the farmers of the areas adjoining the chemical units pleading for continuance of the closure orders. The counsel for GPCB brought it to the notice of the court that the industry was a highly polluting one and so it had recommended the closure of its units to government under Section 5 of the Environment Protection Act. The government ultimately has stated taking back the land from Maradia unit signaling the end of this anti-people enterprise.
This case of anti-pollution movement is an example of the victory of the people’s protest against a strong chemical industry, with the help of government. It also points towards the part played by a government, which is bound to protect the people’s rights and nature. This case reveals that initially the industry could establish itself due to two reasons. Firstly, its indecent tie with the top political leaders gave it the opportunity to ignore the laws related to the working of an industry. Secondly, the politically irresponsible approach of the GPCB made clear the way for the industry to get established. The initiation of a movement made by the people for the protection of their right for an unpolluted environment and drinking water created the context for challenging the working of the industry in such a location. Even when people started protest against the firm, the department of pollution control remained inactive without taking any action against it. But the intervention of some of the responsible officers like Collector seemed to be politically motivated who took the people’s complaints seriously and ordered the industry to close some of its plants. The utilization of the political power by the political parties demanding the closure of the industry formed another support for the protest of the people. At a later stage, the intervention of the court, the favorable stand taken by the GPCB and the inquiry reports of the committee opened the way for the victory of the people by permanently closing down it and taking back the land by the government.

3.3 ‘Political’ in Political Process

This section of part three deals with the formation of green parties and their entering into the political processes as a response to
the experience of new social movement politics. The participation of the green parties in the mainstream political arena in many countries reveal the necessity of getting into power or forming part of the political structure or government, in order to address the issues of environmental concerns. This kind of a situation seem to arise from the incapability of the traditional political system i.e., partisan party politics, to resolve ecological problems. Party politicians are often perceived as having little interest in solving difficult environmental issues or pursuing principled activities.78

3.3.1 Green Party

Green political parties have been formed in many countries of Europe, USA and Australia, in the early 1980s, as a response to the experience of new social movement politics (related to antinuclear and feminist mobilization, concern with the environment, the student revolt etc.) or the lobbying practices of environmental NGOs. In most European countries green and alternative movements emerged a quarter century ago.

Between 1980 and 1984 new green parties were founded in 12 Western European countries.79 By the late 1980s, these parties had gained significant electoral and parliamentary success. A few years later, green parties have entered in five countries including France, Germany, Italy (three major powers) and Belgium and Finland (two smaller nations). The German Green Party is Europe’s most successful

ecology party. In West Germany, a history of radical protest in the midst of obvious environmental problems and the nuclear threat of an active phase in the Cold War produced the formation of a Green Party in 1980 (Die Grunnen) which from 1980 to 1982 had enough electoral support to be represented in various state parliaments and in 1983 to enter the Federal Parliament in Bonn. The radical style of the West German Greens, with their commitment to participatory democracy, leadership rotation and gender equality contrasted sharply with the normal politics of the rest of West Germany’s conventional parties.

In 1980, a diverse alliance of activists launched the national West German Party, Die Grunnen, but polled only 1.5% in their first national contest. A national programme based on ‘four pillars’ (ecologism, grass roots democracy, social responsibility and non-violence) was adopted for the 1983 national elections securing 5.6% of the national vote and 27 seats. In 1987 this representation grew to 44 seats. Though the German Greens held on to its grass root aspirations, only one fraction of the party (Fundis) supported such more radical declarations to change the consciousness of society etc. The Realos emphasized reform and entering party politics including experiments with alliances with the social Democrats (SPD). Thus the German

Green Party turned to be very pragmatic by 1990s, causing the Fundis to quit the party.\textsuperscript{83}

In Britain, the ecology party formed in 1973 by a group of small activists from Coventry was renamed as the Green Party in 1985. It has numerous branches in both local and national electorates. The late 1980s to the mid 1990s were characterized by mixed results and internal politics. Though at the national level, the Greens polled 14.9% of the vote, in the 1989 European Union Election, they could not enter into the parliament.\textsuperscript{84}

The French Green Movement had achieved remarkable electoral results in as early as 1978 even before they united into a stable structure. The French Green Party (Les Verts) was officially founded in 1984. The French Greens scored their first significant electoral victory during the 1989 European election in which they gained some 11%. In the 1997 national elections, the Greens gained 5.1% of the total vote and for the first time they were asked to participate in the formation of a new French National Government.\textsuperscript{85} In France, the Greens have operated successfully in their strategic behavior in government, along with the socialist party, abandoning or banning some of the projects that could have much adverse impact on the environment. For example, abandonment of the high capacity Rhine-Rhone canal project, closing of


the fast breeder Super-Phenix, and implementation of a moratorium on genetically modified cultivation etc.

In Western Europe, as the various data show, the electoral as well as the parliamentary performance of Green parties have proved that the Greens have developed into a stable element in most European party systems. The principles, which the greens hold as a movement and the objectives, which they aim to achieve, distinguish them from a conventional political party. Yet in order to execute the political programmes in favor of society and environment, the greens resort to the usual political procedures, thereby to get entrance into the parliament and to become part of a ‘national’ government. This kind of a socio-political approach, referred to as the ‘new politics dimension’, which the Green parties have introduced to European party systems has consolidated itself over the past 20 years.

Green parties have existed in Australia since the formation of the United Tasmania Group in the late 1970s. They existed at the local, state and national levels. The national Australian Green Party formed in 1992. The Green electoral politics in the US is relatively poor. Several green parties have been formed at the local and state level. At the national level, the ‘Green Politics Network’ was formed in June 1995. In both Britain and US, there is little prospect of greens gaining representation at the national level. Here, green parties use elections to

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86 Ibid, p.68.
89 Ibid, p. 115-16.
attract media attention to their cause. There are also financial gains in playing party politics.\textsuperscript{90}

3.4 Comments

From the case studies discussed in section two, it follows that generally environmental problems arose as an outcome of the government policies or decisions, victimizing a group of people, usually poor and backward classes. In cases where the government acted politically i.e. responsibly and equitably towards its people, it helped to resolve the issues immediately. The anti-pollution movement against the Maradia industry is a good example of the victory of the people with the support of the government. In other cases, it seemed the government remained either insensitive or inactive, being active only when pressurized by the people’s protests. The duration of each struggle was determined by the time period taken by the authority to take actions in resolving the issues, especially in favor of the people’s movements. The fishermen movement in Orissa was one of short duration due to the meaningful and timely intervention and decision taken, on the issue, by the government. But the Narmada issue seems to be the longest one due to the power politics played by different governments. The case studies considered here point towards the fact that the viewpoints and interests of those who are in power form a crucial factor in the decision-making processes. That is, the approach of the government towards environment, its people and the attitude to the idea of development, foreign aid etc. function as determining factors, in the emergence of a political struggle. The political complexity of each case depended upon

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid, p. 122.
the power relations established between the agents involved in any issue. In cases where there is intervention of powerful agents like industries, multinational companies, political parties, media etc., all these influenced the government, thereby causing delay in resolving the issue. So the political positions taken by the government is most important when dealing with people’s problems. As a democratic institutional set up, there should be generality in the approach of the government in the sense that it should represent the stakes of all groups of people who are the real beneficiaries. The government should identify the problems by collecting data regarding the problem and steps should be taken to find out solutions in accordance with the information collected. Thus the government is expected to protect the interests of those who are the sufferers in each issue by ensuring justice to them. But as it is evident in the above examples other networks make the functioning of the government very complex.

The natural or urban setting where a people have long been settled is their lived space on which they are dependent in ways more than one. It is like their habitat, though not necessarily natural, but become one by regular interaction. There is also the aspect of being part of a system of relations in which living beings interact with the environment and also among themselves, in that setting. Therefore, this habitat can rightly be called an eco-habitat in the sense of people both intervening and depending on it. The lived space i.e., the eco-habitat is also a space to which the people evolve an emotional bond. Their identity is something they come to attain in this process, which is affirmed, from time to time, by their lived experience in their eco-habitat. This adds value to eco-
habitat as a culturally significant system. Now the eco-habitat of a people can be defined as a system, (i) in which people find themselves in a relation of coexistence with the rest of the environment (ii) to which it is physically dependent on for their livelihood and (iii) that provides an enduring setting for their cultural identity. Therefore, when there is an external interference or a disturbance in the eco-habitat it will have an impact on the life of people. It is at this backdrop that the significance of the political dimension of the domain of human agency-environment must be seen. To say that the changes in the environment are partly or largely due to human activities is only a partial representation of what actually happens. Most often the “human” is not the people in their eco-habitat. The interference detrimental to the eco-habitat of a people mostly comes from ‘human’ agency authorized by the state or those who obtained legal sanctions from the state. It is the authority to intervene in an environmental setting that renders the human agency its political significance. When the impact of such activities negatively affects the eco-habitat of a local people and they recognize this and decide to resist the move to intervene in their eco-habitat, then their reaction also assume political significance. In other words, the intervention from the external agencies and resistance to it on the part of the people, when their eco-habitat is affected, reveals that the political dimension is internal to the eco-habitat. It points to people’s tacit recognition of the arrangement of a given eco-social life and an understanding that the power to continue or change it lies solely with the people. Human beings peopled in an eco-habitat are perceived to have an inalienable right to preserve, continue or change the eco-social life that it gives rise to. This is the ‘political’ in the eco-habitat and is reflected in the many
environmental movements around the globe. Eco-habitat can be defined not only locally but globally also, as applicable in the case of the sustenance of the eco-social life of human beings threatened by the consequences of global warming etc. It may be local when deforestation affects the livelihood or development leads to displacement of people in an eco-habitat. But the life of the whole of living beings on earth maybe affected when ozone layer is split. The details of the various environmental movements given in section two of part three have the function of capturing graphically, the political dimension of the domain of human ecology.