Chapter-6

Local environmental movements: Episodes of protest

Environmental movements are networks of informal interactions that may include individuals as well as the groups who have no organizational affiliation. Organizations of varying degrees of formality are engaged in collective and concerted action. Motivated by shared identity or concern about environmental issues, environmental movements by definition cannot be equated with organizations or with episodes of protest. It is only when organizations are networked and engaged in collective action whether or not it involves protest that an environmental movement can be said to exist.

Environmental movements have been the most dramatic and visible social movements in the post-war period. Modern environmental movements emerged from the late 1960’s. Incessant process of industrialization leading to indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources provided enough grounds for the alarms of conservationists and preservationists. It was the radical critique of capitalist industrialism and representative democracy associated with the new left and the counter-culture that created the public space for the development of new social movements, as well as furnishing their tactical repertoire. “Earth day started from 1970 onwards and it is often said to represent the debut of the modern environmental movement” (Hunnigan-1997:5). Concern with interaction between physical environment and social organization and behavior is has been the predominant them of environmental movements.

Some social mobilization of people in the surrounding areas of mining seem to have been going on sporadically though, given the diversity of ways in which villagers have been involved in mining and allied activities benefiting in one way or another it is extremely difficult, if not impossible to set-up collective
organizations which can be sustained over long period of time and it also lack’s dependable and responsive leaders, lack of resources and lack of environmental education creating a strong sustainable movements against mining has became almost impossible. Despite of all these constrain some episodes of collective protest against mining have registered and created among people an intense awareness of the adverse effects of mining.

Experience shows that awareness along is not a sufficient condition to check effectively illegal mining. Leader’s who are capable and indeed have the capacity to translate this awareness of people in to concrete action is an indispensable aspect of environmental movement in the circumstances that are prevailing in the surrounding villages. Generally environmental activism generate around the cause of environmental degradation and the rise of environmental consciousness.

Dramatic rise in the environmental movements and environmental consciousness has been the striking feature of the modern era. (Ibid). Environmental issues have a great deal to do with dynamics of human behavior. The role of social activist groups occupies an important and significant place in the preservation, conservation and protection of environment and environmental resources.

**The concept of environmental movement:**

“Environmental movement is an organized social activity directed towards promoting sustainable use of natural resources halting environmental degradation or bringing about environmental restoration”. Modern environmental movements have created more awareness among the human nature interactions.

Radha Kamal Mukerjee emphasizes that the relationship between nature, nurture and culture are both interactive dynamic with humans trying to mould environment to their own ends but always having to work within the limits set by nature (Guha, 1998).
Environmental degradation in India has almost always followed the use and abuse of natural resources by vested-interests. The main agenda of the environmental movements among much else, is basically three fold:-

- To prevent further ecological destruction.
- Bring about ecological regeneration.
- To put environment at the service and control of the people, the people usually being defined as the local communities who live within that environment (Agarwal, 1998).

**Modern development has been taking place at the cost of environments:**

Ramachandra Guha comments that in the name of development systematic attempts have been made to loot natural resources resulting in misuse of increasing volume of natural resources, through the intervention of the state apparatus and at the cost of the state exchequer to sub serve the vested interests of the rural and urban omnivore. This has led in recent years a tide of protest by the victims of development. Chipko Movement, Narmada Bachao Andolan and a host dozens other protest movements and Appiko movement in Karnataka are the best examples.

These protests have been taking place against a backdrop of visible ecological degradation, the drying up of springs, the decimation of forest and the erosion of the land. Environmental movement has developed mainly with the issue of equity as its focus. The movements have largely taken the routes of conflicts between the omnivores who have gained disproportionately from the development policy and projects and the large ecosystem people whose livelihood have been seriously compromised because of the overuse and even misuse of natural resources. The latter has been affected by environmental degradation. Environmental movements have been the political expression of the struggle of the
victims of environmental degradation or abuse of resources through the organization of social action group. Unabated proliferation of voluntary action group over the last two decades has marked the beginning of environmental movements in India. An attempt has been made here to illustrate major environmental movements. This will be a prelude to local environmental protest movements against mining and its mafia.

**Chipko Movement:**

The origins of the Indian environmental movement can be traced to the most celebrated of forest conflicts involving the Chipko Movement of the central Himalayas. In April 1973 the peasants of Mandal an interior village in the Garhwal Himalaya, effectively thwarted commercial felling of trees in a nearby forest by threatening to ‘hug the trees’. The Chipko Movement is probably the best known example of grass roots protest against environmental destruction in world. It has branched out into a much broader tendency which looks at the basic causes of resource degradation, poverty and unemployment.

The Chipko movement became a classic example of non-violent resistance and struggle by thousands of ordinary hill folk without the guidance and control of any centralized apparatus recognized leadership or full-time cadre. The movement in the last decade and a half, not only spread across the Himalaya, but also inspired similar struggles in other parts of India. It is a spontaneous reaction against destruction of forest resources by people for whom forest is everything.

To begin with the Chipko Andolan was centered on economic considerations. The demands were for the cessations of forest-exploitation contracts to outsiders, for the payments of guaranteed minimum wage to forest laborers, for the protection of ancient village forest rights and the provision of materials to small-scale local industries at concessional rates.
The tenets of the Chipko Andolan had strong links with the Gandhian tradition. The defacto leadership of the movement came from the ranks of Gandhian Sarvodaya workers and consequently, the techniques employed by the activists were taken from or were an adoption of Gandhian Satyagraha. Political oppressions, economic oppressions and exploitations rest to a large degree on the acquiescence of the exploited. With this in mind, Gandhi noted that the exploitation of the poor can be extinguished not by effecting the destruction of a few millionaires, but by renewing the ignorance of the poor and teaching them to be non co-operative with the exploiters. And this was the job that the Sarvodaya activists and constructive workers, set out to do when they began their active work in the Uttarakhand hills in the 1950’s and 1960’s.

To reach the Chipko message to distant villages, different techniques were evolved and perfected. They include padayathras, the use of folk songs and stories concerning previous heroic actions to save forests and about India’s forest cultural heritage as well, running of eco-development camps. Chipko foot marchers took in village schools, temples and mosques. The activists spoke wherever people gathered. They carried taped message from popular leaders and slides of the effects of deforestation. Accompanying folk singers sang stirring songs, pamphlets were sold nearby landslides and the increased drudgery of women was pointed to as the consequences of deforestation. The Chipko movement was led by Sunderlal Bahuguna.(Tapan Biswal, 2007).

**Appiko movement:**

The Chipko Movement caught the imagination of the villagers in other parts of the country. In Karnataka it is known as Appiko (Kannada equivalent of Chipko). Here, the people fight against the plantation of eucalyptus apart from its adverse ecological repercussions eucalyptus has no social value; The Chipko movement created a strong opinion to value the forests for their ecological role and
for the support they give to local people’s livelihood by providing food, fodder and fuel. Chipko’s influence was felt almost all over the country in significantly reducing the commercial use of reserve forests on the other hand, social forestry—especially its farm forestry component—which the National Commission on Agriculture (NCA) recommended as a sources of biomass for local needs, emerged as a source of raw material for industry. In Karnataka, there is also another movement waged against Harihara Poly fibers, a Birla Company, which has obtained permission to set up a joint venture with State Government to plant eucalyptus trees. (Hegde, 1987).

**Sundarlal Bahuguna & Tehri Dam:**

Sundarlal Bahuguna and his opposition to the Tehri Dam have been a reference point for environmental movements in India. Diversely acclaimed as the father of the Chipko movement, a freedom fighter, a true disciple of Gandhi and Vinoba bhave, an environmental thinker and writer, a gentle crusader, an unobtrusive messiah, a rishi, the face (TBVSS) Tehri Bandh Virodhi Sangarsh Samiti, Convenor of Himalaya Bachao Andolan and much more, Bahuguna has maintained an important presence in the environmental movement of country and in Uttarakhand. Movements like Chipko Tehri, Silent Valley, and fish workers struggles were transforming a passive environmental consciousness of Indian Subalterns into an organized power. The Tehri dam movement was particularly seen as demonstrating the growth of grass roots mobilization and forging of transnational linkages among big dam opponents. The unusually heavy monsoons of 1970, devasting floods in Alakannada Valley, other upcoming big projects in the region and a brewing discontent against their perceived impact also become anchoring points for the dam opponents.

The movement tried to establish connection between ecological and social mythical values through scientific studies environmental campaigns and cultural
religions references, thus engaging in a wide gamut of environmental politics (Economic & Political weekly, 2009).

The successful campaign till early 1980’s against the Silent Valley Project in Kerala also proved to be a trend-setter against environmentally destructive projects. Though initially conceived in 1963, the proposal for the project was revived in the 1970’s to generate 240MW of electricity and irrigate 10000 hectares of land. The campaign against the project was rather unique in the sense that there was no direct threat to local rights and there was no problem of displacement of human population. On the contrary, local people were initially sympathetic to the project expecting employment benefits and increased power availability for local needs. What were at stake were the rich virgin tropical forests with tremendous biodiversity. Several rare species of flora and fauna were threatened with extinction. Several voluntary organizations launched a nation-wide campaign against the project, which was led by Kerala Sastra Sahitya parishad (KSSP). This voluntary organization has also been actively working with people in popularizing science and appropriate technology and in campaigning against environmentally destructive development projects. In this campaign also, the voluntary organization educated local people about the long term importance of preserving biodiversity. The campaign resulted in abandoning the project and declaring the Silent Valley a national park (Prasad, 1987).

A similar issue rose in the Uttara Kannada district to Karnataka also towards the end of the 1970s when the Bedthi project was proposed for generation of 420MW of power. This would have resulted in the displacement of a few thousand people. The campaign against the project was launched by local people initially under the leadership of Anusuya Sharma, a woman member of legislative assembly from the district. Soon intellectuals and voluntary organizations joined the campaign. A national seminar was organized in December 1980 at Sirsi supported
by local people and institutions as a part of the campaign in which Kerala Sastra Sahitya parishad (KSSP) and stalwarts in environmental movements like Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Sundarlal Bahuguna and a famous kannada writer, K.S.Karanth participated. The weakness of project evaluation prepared by the Karnataka Power Corporation was expounded in the seminar. The government was forced to defer the project (Hiremath, 1984).

Movements took place protesting against industrial pollution too, in which voluntary organizations took an active part along with the affected local people. Here too, as in forest issues, the local people were acutely conscious of how they were deprived of potable drinking water and sources of livelihood like fisheries. The voluntary organizations played the role of guiding the movement and giving effective voice to local people so that they could be heard by the industry and government alike. More than the official administrative machinery for pollution control, ensured pollution prevention and control where people demanded to take necessary action. A typical example of such a movement is the case of organized protest against the pollution of Tungabhadra River by polyfibre industry in Karnataka. (Hiremath, 1984). Though the local people had been protesting much earlier, the flash point of the movement was provided by a massive fish kill in 1984. A voluntary organization working in the area, Transnational Centre (now called, Samaja Parivartana Samudaya or SPS), had taken up the cause of the villagers by 1981 itself. Its sister institution, India Development Service, was also active in the area having initiated several development projects. The moving spirit behind both was S.R.Hiremath. The campaign against pollution in the form of workshops, sathyagraha, ‘Vigil line’, etc., forced the concerned industry to treat pollution. Though the problem is not reportedly solved to the complete satisfaction of villagers, its intensity seems to have been reduced.
Another project achievement of voluntary organizations in the environmental context, particularly in Karnataka, consists in checking the blind drive of the Forest Department towards what has been called ‘eucalyptus’ of all available land. The obsession with raising raw material for industry was such that even forests in areas unsuitable for raising eucalyptus were planted with it on a massive scale, as in the Western Ghats. Farmers were also encouraged to grow eucalyptus in the name of social forestry. Vast stretches of other lands, either government owned or those claimed by villagers as common lands used for grazing their cattle or as a source of other biomass, were also taken over for raising commercial species, especially eucalyptus. This meant alienation of the common lands from the local as these ‘developed’ lands hardly met their needs like grass. A public sector company, Karnataka pulpwood Ltd (KPL), was formed for raising pulpwood for industry, which was entrusted with about 16000 hectares of government land for the purpose. The voluntary organizations protested against this as an infringement of rights of the locals over their common lands, and field a legal suit against the government. Ultimately after a protracted struggle of over five to six years, the Chief Minister of Karnataka announced the decision to wind up Karnataka pulpwood Ltd (Deccan Herald, 1991). In the process of the campaign by voluntary organizations against eucalyptus, the Social Forestry wing of the Forest Department shifted its emphasis from farm forestry to community forestry and from commercial species to trees favored by local people, consulting them in the matter as far as possible. Commercial species are raised now by farmers in their own lands procuring seedlings from private nurseries. On the other hand, the social forestry projects on common lands by the Department after 1985 consist now of a variety of trees, mostly local species of fruit, firewood and timber needed by people, although meeting the need for grass is yet to get adequate attention (Nadkarni and Pasha, 1991). The change is also reflected in the Forest Department
nurseries which used to consist of mainly two or three commercial species earlier, especially eucalyptus. No one can see a rich variety of seedlings there. This welcome change is in no small measure due to the activism of voluntary organizations.

There are several other environment movements, such as the ‘Save the Soil Campaign’ (Mitti Bachao Andolan), which may all be important as the ones cited above for illustration. These protest movements can certainly be said to have contributed in a positive way in so far as they forced the government to look for environmentally sound and human development projects. They have even stimulated a search for alternative development strategies and not just projects. In this, they have still a long way to go, though some voluntary organizations are already concerned about developing alternative agriculture, alternative health care and alternative housing technologies which are low cost and environment friendly.

But it must also be observed that quite a few activists in the protest movements have developed a stake in such protests, carried away by the success of their campaigns and the publicity they won. This has led several voluntary organizations to take a strong anti-development stance, opposing all development projects of the larger economy, in the process exaggerating environmental costs and underplaying benefits of every one of them. Local needs of each village have to be definitely addressed by the development process. But micro level development also depends on the development of the larger economy, and both have to be addressed to in any development process. In a country which has yet to go a long way ahead in removing poverty and unemployment, neither an uncritical or overcritical attitude to development would do. Each development project has to be judged on its merits, taking into account alternatives and the social costs and benefits of each in a dispassionate way. Often the benefits of development projects in tend to be undervalued as in the case of power projects where power is valued at
sale price which is usually subsidized. It would be more reasonable to value it at its marginal value product to reflect its social benefit (Dhawan, 1991). If a project provides for rehabilitation and resettlement of displaced person satisfactorily, adequate treatment of pollution and also proper safeguards against hazards to local people, and is also economically viable, there is no reason why it should be opposed. Unfortunately, quite a few activists and voluntary organizations under their control tend to be obstinately negative opening themselves to the charge of environmental fundamentalism.

Two instances are cited below to illustrate this point. The agitation against Sardar Sarovar Project on Narmada River has attracted world-wide attention. The crux of the problem here is Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) of displaced persons. VAHINI-ARCH, a voluntary organization initiated the struggle for the rights of the displaced here, organized tribal’s and launched protest movements. Many other activities soon followed. In response, several corrective actions were taken by the project. A recent paper by activists of the same voluntary organization on the present state of things shows that several other activities have turned the struggle for a better R&R into the struggle against the whole project itself. In doing this, they have exaggerated the number of the displaced and the land required for their R&R, and underplayed the availability of land. Though R&R is feasible, the latter activists claim that it is impossible (Patel, 1991).

To cite another instance, a Tea plantation project under the public sector was proposed recently in Karnataka on degraded government lands in the Western Ghats. The land proposed hill slopes-has practically no trees and is covered with an inferior type of grass, which is just nutritious enough to keep alive, unproductive cattle which free-graze there. Even this grass is threatened now by a non-edible weed which is fast spreading. There was no question of deforestation except in the valleys, which in any case were not proposed for inclusion in the project. A study
group consisting of reputed environmentalists and social scientists, who were all committed to the cause of environment were asked to examine the whole project. After a thorough investigation including field studies, the study group suggested quite a few modifications to the project in order to minimize ecological and human costs involved, taking note of the local use of the concerned land for grazing. In fact, the modified project would have enhanced the local availability of fodder and firewood, in addition to allowing tea production, though at a somewhat reduced scale than in the original proposal. In the meanwhile, activists from some of the VOs brought so much pressure to drop the project that it had to be abandoned in spite of its rich employment potential. More than environmental damage, what was feared was that the increased employment opportunities would be seized more by people outside than by those within the district. But the banner used was that of the environment.

The criticism of voluntary organizations made above should not be taken to indicate that the protest movements have been undesirable on the whole. Not at all. They have stimulated a more critical look at the development process, a search for sustainable alternatives and also respect for human rights. They have reversed the unsustainable use of natural resources for commercial purposes at least in some of the areas of protest movements and sometime’s beyond. They have in the process improved the access of the local people to natural resources. These are not small gains. Because of the successful protest movements, voluntary organizations are a force to reckon with today. They wield considerable influence over the government and also international agencies, including the World Bank, which finance development projects. Since this is quite desirable, it is advisable for voluntary organizations to make sure that their influence is not needlessly lost due to an obscurantism and purely negative attitude.
There has also been a protests movement against the mining. The Jharkhand movement in Bihar, which stands for the demand of autonomy, has also a movement against mining. The mining of limestone is opposed by the whole hill region. Women in Gornwal are concerned about open –caste mining for soap stone and other minerals in a highly sensitive ecosystem (P.C.Jain & S.L Doshi, 2001).

Campaign against iron ore mining and for mine workers' rights:

Bellary district in Karnataka is a key mining district and is the hub of iron ore mining in the State. Before indiscriminate mining began the region was a rich agricultural belt having rich forests. Recurrent droughts and mechanization of agriculture forced the agricultural labour to look for other sources of survival and this coincided with the mining rush in the region which fast grew into an unchecked free market zone where it is widely reported that the mining mafia dictated the very governance of the State.

While the international demand for iron ore increased, bringing with it larger profits for a few, the environment and the social fabric of the region began to take a beating. Miles and miles of agricultural land were soon converted into iron ore mines where men, women and even children worked in exploitative and inhuman conditions at the mercy of the mine owners and contractors. At the peak of the mining activity, Bellary boasted of the highest number of private aircrafts. In stark contrast the human development indicators of the district like infant mortality, life expectancy, and literacy are abysmally low indicating that a large population of the district was deprived of even basic amenities.
**Women mine workers of Bellary and the post-recession scenario:**

A representative from Bellary presented the post-recession situation of women mine workers in the iron ore mines. Bellary had a huge workforce of unorganized women mine workers who lived and worked in extremely exploitative, hazardous and insanitary conditions. For a measly wage the women toiled in the mines working as loaders and crushers for more than 10 hours a day. There were no facilities for housing, toilets, drinking water or creches. They faced sexual exploitation and physical abuse at the hands of the mine owners, contractors, and other male workers and even from their own spouses. They also suffered from a number of illnesses and health problems, but had no access to any kind of health care.

The recent collapse of the global markets and the fall in demand for iron ore, have adversely affected these women mine workers. Poverty, drought and illiteracy had forced them into mining and today they have neither labour opportunities in mines nor agricultural work. They are struggling to survive. In desperation, many of the women today wish for mining to be continue in the region as all other sources of livelihood were destroyed when the lands were converted to mining. Mine owners and contractors have walked away with no responsibility for land reclamation or for workers’ rehabilitation. At present the mining mafia is being replaced with the hotel mafia and as a rude irony, advertisements promoting camel rides in the red dunes have sprung up in the district.

Fight by local people though largely unorganized to protect their rivers, their lands, their forest, their cultures and livelihoods and social life with dignity/human right. People are fighting for the future of Mother Earth.
Participation of women in the campaign:

Women, whether in the mining area or the refinery sites, have been at the forefront of the campaign; their demand has been unanimous no to mining or refineries and preservation of their land and forests. At the consultation women came from both the proposed bauxite extraction and refinery sites. In Makavarapalem, which is the alumina processing plant site of Anrak Aluminium Ltd, in spite of hunger strikes and strong opposition from the women against the Anrak refinery, they were forced to take compensation for their lands and are now living in fear of being evicted from their homes. At the time of the relay fast which went on for 56 days the political parties and administration assured them that the demands of the people would be considered, but once the fast ended they reneged on their promise. A number of promises made regarding jobs, schools, house sites, etc., have also not been kept; labour for constructing the roads leading to the refinery were brought in from outside. Roads have been constructed cutting across their tanks and ponds depriving them of water for agricultural use. They also gave testimonies of the undemocratic public hearings conducted amidst police intimidation and tear-gas shells. Adivasi women came from Araku and Anantagiri, the proposed bauxite mining project area of JSWHL. The women were firm that they did not want mining in their lands as they did not see a future without their land.

Anti-uranium mining campaign:

The movement against uranium projects (MAUP), a confederation of concerned individual citizens and voluntary organizations, is campaigning against proposed uranium mining in the districts of Cuddapah and Nalgonda. The uranium mining project proposed in Nalgonda and to be taken up by the Uranium
Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) included extraction at the Lambapur and Peddagattu villages with the refinery being proposed at the Seripally village. The villagers here have, however, been opposing both the mining and the refinery and have been able to prevent the same from commencing. In Cuddapah the proposed Pulivendula project, also of UCIL involves extraction in Vemulapalli mandal and the processing unit is to be set up in Tummalapalli village. MAUP has been involved in campaigns against both these projects. The protests have been carried out by media advocacy, by organizing women's groups, by networking with nongovernmental organizations (NGO) and individuals for the cause, and by mobilizing and participating in the public hearings.

**Anti-thermal power plant and coal mining campaigns:** (Dumka district-Jharkhand)

The State of Jharkhand is divided into 24 districts under four administrative divisions—Santhal Paragana, North and South Chhotanagpur and Kolhar—each of which have specific laws protecting the land and resource rights of the majority adivasi population. However, the administration has been involved in exploration, mostly done in a secretive and insidious manner, with nearly 101 companies both national and multinational waiting to take up mining activities. At present coal and uranium mining and quarrying are the main mining activities in the State. Both these mining activities have severely affected the environment and the social fabric of the adivasis living for hundreds of years in the region. Where mining has been happening, no agricultural activity has been possible for a 5 km radius as a result of pollution caused by mining. The government’s promise of providing power to the adivasi villages is yet to see the light of day. Jobs promised to them are being given mostly to outsiders. Adolescent girls who do find employment are vulnerable to sexual abuse mostly from the very people who employ them.
The People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) has reported cases of rape and has helped advise girls file cases and represented them in court as well. However, very little of these issues come out into the open. The company, contractors and the administration take advantage of the ignorance of the adivasis to exploit them. Whenever the adivasis question the injustice of the government policies, protests are ruthlessly quelled by the administration with the adivasis being branded as naxalites or extremists.

**Rights of stone and quarry workers (Maharashtra):**

Maharashtra, a State in western India, is endowed with diverse mineral reserves. In addition to major minerals like iron ore, manganese, coal, limestone, etc., there are a large number of stone quarries in the State. Rapid industrialisation and population growth were followed by a rising demand for housing, roads and civic amenities that fuelled the large demand from the construction industry. Stone quarry workers employed in these quarries are from marginalized and impoverished communities. Most of them are landless migrants who have moved here for various reasons drought, displacement, etc have been uprooted from their homes and have come to eke out a living from these quarries. They are unorganized workers who face immense exploitation and abuse at the hands of the quarry owners and contractors; this is more so in the case of women and children, particularly adolescent girls, who form a large part of the workforce.

Participants from Maharashtra included women quarry workers as well as activists of the organization, Santulan. The participants spoke about the conditions in the quarries: women had to toil from dawn to dusk, face wage discrimination, sexual harassment and suffer from several illnesses [silicosis, tuberculosis (TB), pneumonia, anemia, stomach aches, back aches, lung diseases, injuries from
accidents and lack of work gear]. In the absence of any creches, infants and young children also accompany their parents to the work sites and are exposed to the same hazards as their parents. With no hope of education they spend their time doing house work and taking care of their younger siblings. Most of them go on to become a part of the labour force at a very young age.

Interventions and women mine workers collective movement; Santulan (Social animation towards united liberative action), a non-profit organization, works with the twin approach of constructive development and advocacy policy towards transformation of these marginalized communities. Its interventions include an education programme called Pashan Shalas (schools for children of mine workers), women’s empowerment, organization of quarry workers, legal aid and counseling, health and nutrition, research, documentation and publication.

Santulan began its work bringing together the women, organizing meetings in their communities, urging them to think about the future of their children and asking them: did they want their children to lead the same life as they were leading now? After multiple meetings with the women and discussions there was a change in thinking. Women came together to form self-help groups (SHGs). The SHGs were then together formed into an independent Credit Cooperative Society that is today handled entirely by the women of the SHGs. To address the problem of alcoholism, women collectively filed a case against the liquor dens and ran a social ban on consumption and sale of liquor in their settlements. Women also agitated to get ration cards for procuring commodities at subsidized rates from the public distribution system and also fought to get cooking-gas cylinders. The Workers’ Cooperatives now issue identity cards so that owners and contractors no longer dodge responsibility towards any workers who get injured at the mine site. Through this the women have been able to ensure that compensation and treatment
for accidents could be claimed. Insurance schemes, to protect the quarry workers, have also been accessed through different government programmes. First aid kits, health camps and referrals are also ensured by the workers’ cooperatives at the quarries as there normally are no hospitals in the vicinity. A special programme for young adolescent girls, one of the most vulnerable groups in the area, was initiated to provide vocational training like sewing. What started with door-to-door meetings with women has today developed into a cooperative of more than 3,000 women successfully agitating for their rights as mine workers.

With the intervention of Santulan, an innovative education programme was developed—the Pashan Shalas. The main objective of the programme was to provide education to children of quarry workers in a meaningful manner and ensure that children did not end up as child labour. The schools were located in the quarries itself and children could be admitted without any documentary evidence at any time of the year. Mid-day meal scheme initiated has ensured that children have better access to nutrition. Thanks to the efforts of Santulan, the SHGs, the Credit Cooperative Society and the dedicated cadre, there is a greater awareness among the workers who feel that their lives have distinctly improved. This has given a confidence to the women workers who are confident of achieving more rights and social security for themselves. This includes, for example, securing pension for widows whose husbands worked in the quarries.

**Anti-bauxite mining campaign: (Kasipur and Niyamgiri-Orissa)**

The State of Orissa is located on the east coast of India and is covered with forests that are home to a very large adivasi population. It is also a State rich in mineral resources like bauxite, iron ore, chromite and manganese. Participants
from Orissa came from two regions—Baphlimali hills, Kasipur block, Raygada
district, and Niyamgiri hill, Lanjigarh, Kalahandi district.

**Anti-bauxite mining campaign- Kasipur:**

In Kasipur the communities are fighting against bauxite mining and alumina
refinery project of the Utkal Alumina International Limited (UAIL). UAIL was set
up in 1992 and is today a joint venture of Hindustan Aluminum Corporation (part
of the Aditya Birla group) and the Canada-based Aluminum Company of Canada
(Alcan). Norsk Hydro, a Norwegian company that had a stake withdrew in the year
2000 following criticism in Norway for its complicity in human rights abuses. The
adivasis in Kasipur have been protesting against bauxite mining on Baphlimali
hills, which they hold sacred, and the struggle against mining has been going on
here for over 16 years. The protests have been met with severe State oppression
with three people being killed in a police firing at Maikanch in December 2000.
However, in spite of intimidations from the State, companies and the police, the
people here are continuing their struggle especially in the present scenario where
the company has applied for expansion of its operations.

One of the participants, who attended, spoke about the multiple false cases
that were filed against him and the many months he spent in jail as a result. Even
today many of the community members continue to be in prison on false charges
of murder and theft. The company has also created rifts within the community
using divisive tactics. They offer money to a few who have become agents
providing information to the company about the people’s campaigns. The company
constructed a wall around the refinery site that resulted in displacement of three
villages and 125 families. Families that accepted compensation and moved out
have today returned as most of the promises of housing, schools and jobs by the
government remain unfulfilled. Houses provided were extremely small with no place for them to keep their livestock. The only jobs available were as daily wage labourers.

Compensation money did not last long, often used up by the men for consumption of alcohol. Today the very same people who accepted compensation have realized that they have been duped and have returned to join the struggle. One of the first actions they took was to lock the gates and prevent company officials from entering the walled-in refinery site. The Baphlimali Surakhya Samiti, Sasubahumali Surakhya Samiti and Ankuran, along with the Orissa Adibasi Manch have been supporting the people and helping them in their campaign.

**Campaign against bauxite mining in Niyamgiri:**

In Niyamgiri the Dongria Kondh women do not want to leave their lands and their sacred hills. However, Sterlite Industries, the Indian subsidiary of Vedanta Resources Plc., is using its money and muscle power to make the State machinery of Orissa violate all human and constitutional rights. Even women are beaten up by the police and agents of the company while peacefully demanding for their rights.

The Niyamgiri hill, rich in bauxite deposits, is held sacred by the ancient Dongria Kondh community. An agreement to mine bauxite in the region was signed between the Orissa government and the London based company Vedanta Resources Plc., in 1997. In 2003 Vedanta signed another MoU with the Orissa government for setting up an alumina refinery in Lanjigarh and land acquisition for the project was also initiated. Since the beginning of the project the company along with the State has been involved in a number of violations with regard to human rights, and acquiring forest and environmental clearances. The Norwegian Ministry of Finance, taking note of these violations had decided in 2007 to exclude the
company from the Norwegian Pension Fund. In the same year, the Supreme Court in India in its decision on mining bauxite said that Vedanta could not take up mining. However, it diluted its own judgment by saying that the Indian subsidiary of Vedanta-Sterlite-Industries could be allowed to mine. The affected adivasi communities meanwhile are waging a determined battle against the company and the State to protect the hill and forests around the region. One of the representatives asked how the government, that says it has no land for rehabilitation of adivasis, is able to provide land to private companies a question echoed by other adivasis in the region.

**Rights of stone and quarry workers: (Udaipur-Rajasthan)**

The State of Rajasthan has the most number of mining leases in India of minor and major minerals as well as leases for quarries. These mines have a huge workforce, including that of women and children, who work under deplorable conditions. The women mine workers from stone, granite and marble quarries in Rajasthan along with a coordinator of the Mine Labour Protection Campaign (MLPC) gave a brief account of the working conditions of women in the quarries. Repeated drought has forced a large population in the State to abandon agriculture and take up the work of mine labourers. Women come from far off to work for long hours under extremely hazardous conditions with no protective clothing or protection from the elements.

The only rest they get during the whole day is a half hour break for lunch. In the absence of any child-care facilities, their children are forced to accompany the mothers and are in turn exposed to the harmful conditions. Blasting of rocks without warning has left many with injuries and has affected the hearing of children as well. A number of health problems like TB and silicosis plague the
workers but there is no facility of health care provided by the employers. Like in other mine sites across the country, there is a complete absence of basic amenities like water or toilets.

One of the main problems that the workers here, including the women face, is that they have no identity cards to prove that they are working in a particular mine or quarry which makes them vulnerable to mine owners’ exploitation and their lack of accountability in case of accidents. There is no compensation or financial assistance of any form provided in the case of death or accidents. Mine owners and the contractors, concerned only with profits; exploit the illiterate workforce at every opportunity. Wages promised are never paid in full and often they register lower number of workers with the Labour Department than actual number of people working to avoid paying minimum wages. There also exists a disparity in wage rates; women are paid lower than men. While the mine owners claim that men are involved in more heavy work the women say that this is not true. There also exists no clarity on the wage rates or transparency in payment. With no records the workers are often paid lower than the number of hours actually worked. Alcoholism is rampant among the men, and women face abuse and violence in their homes. The liquor shops are again owned by the contractors who benefit doubly in the process.

Campaign to secure women mine workers rights:

Mine Labour Protection Campaigns work focuses on diverse areas that include empowering and supporting women mine workers. Mine Labour Protection Campaign (MLPC) has helped women mine workers form self help groups (SHGs) and encourages their participation in the cooperatives. The cooperative is an assemblage of mine workers that undertake activities as an
enterprise to earn profit out of their labour and the profit so earned is equally
distributed to cooperative members, the mine workers. This has helped mine
workers become owners of the mineral resources. The self help group is essentially
a group of women to ensure protection of their rights, participate in decision-
making of the cooperatives and lend credits for income-generation activities. The
main strategy revolves around the promotion of self help groups to involve women
in a process of dialogue. Another important intervention of Mine Labour
Protection Campaign (MLPC) has been to access government schemes to address
the problem of child labour. One of the participant, who was once a mine worker
herself, is today in charge of a creche where parents leave the children while at
work. Basic literacy and nutrition of children is taken care of in these creches.
Mine Labour Protection Campaign (MLPC) also provides assistance in fighting
legal cases like fraudulence in ownership of mines, follow-up on mine leases and
exploitation of workers as explained by one of the participants who herself was a
victim of her husband’s mining leases being enjoyed by a benami (false) lease
holder.

Campaign against copper smelting plant: (Tuticorin-Tamilnadu)

Tamil Nadu, a State located in southern India, also has large reserves of
minerals, especially lignite. The copper smelter of the Sterlite Industries India
Limited, a part of the Vedanta group in Tuticorin, was set up in 1995 amidst
considerable public opposition and no consultation with the community
whatsoever. From its very inception the company has been guilty of several
violations; from location of the plant, to production capacity as well as toxic waste
disposal. It has created rifts within the communities and at the same time seems to
have ensured that all political parties in the region are kept happy so that no
criticism is heaped on its functioning.
The company has even organized picnics and excursions for the media and their family members to prevent the media from exposing their crimes. While the company hushes up accidents on its smelter and dumps toxic wastes in huge mounds within the city endangering the lives of the people, huge hoardings adorn the city congratulating the company for winning awards for environmental protection and upholding human rights. Tuticorin also has one of the highest incidences of cancer and medicines that are hardly stocked in other parts of the State for treating rare diseases are available in plenty in this region.

Campaign against copper smelter Veeranganai, which means courageous women’ has been campaigning against Sterlite from its inception. From stopping ships carrying copper at mid-sea using small fishing vessels, to providing information to national networks like the P, Veeranganai has tried to highlight the violations by the company. Learning from mistakes in the past the organization continues to take an active part in campaigning against the company from the local to the national level.

The extent to which mining industry impacts depends not only on magnitude of the environmental destruction, but essentially on how exactly people in the mining area connect themselves to mining. This intern depends on people’s awareness, knowledge their attitude and perception of the mining industry. It can be seen in the table no 4.1 that majority of the people 66.67% reported being aware impact of mining industry, where as only 33.33 percent of the reported not being aware of impact of mining industry.
Table No -6.1 Awareness of the impact of mining activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl no</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>200</td>
<td>66.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33.33</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

‘Mining activities have already caused serious social and environmental impacts in areas and regions where mining activities have been going on in Karnataka particularly in Tumkur district as the present study confines to this. Mention may be made of problems of like for example soil degradation, contamination of water quality, air pollution and harm to livestock and wildlife including biodiversity. Although there is growing awareness of the importance and need for efficient management of environmental resources, amongst mining
stakeholders. There has been large-scale displacement and dislocation of people which among other thing led to food insecurity to landless people, loss of livelihood and increased unemployment. Displacement has led to mobilization of people against mine owners have taken up their leading serious conflicts.

**Table No -6.2 – Mobilization of people against mining industry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl no</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>165</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>11.67</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
It can be seen in the table No-6.2 that repeated efforts have been made to mobilize local people against mining that majority of the people 55% reported to fight against mining activity and 33.33 % reported doing nothing and 11.67% refused to report. Success of campaign against misuse and even abuse of natural resources in general and iron ore in particular depends upon, among much else, the organization. Organizational structure lends continuity to the movement which is absolutely essential to ensure that ‘vested-interests’ responsible for environmental destruction are promptly brought to book. There will almost always be counter attempts to break the Unity, solidarity and sustainability of the movement by the politically powerful vested-interests. A solid organization is indispensable to make the fight against misuse of natural resources. With this in mind a question whether local people set-ups an organization or not. This naturally elicited mixed response from the sample population.

Table No.6.3 whether local people set-up an organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SNo</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>165</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be seen in the table No-6.3, 55 percent of the sample reported to setup organization to fight against mining activity and 45 percent of the sample reported not set up organization. Given the adverse consequences of mining, the question arises here is how exactly people seek to cope with this. Have people in the study area done anything to check the mining activities. Discussion with the sample population shows that they were not silent spectators and that they did react in ways that they could depend upon the exigencies of situations.

Table No – 6.4 People have been successful in getting mining work stopped

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SNo</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be seen in the table No-6.4, 60 percent did various things but they were not successful in getting the mining stopped and only 40 percent reported that this could succeed in getting mining stopped. Local people being small farmers, landless agricultural labourers, marginal farmers are not able to do anything because mine owners are politically, economically powerful and that the latter have people and government officials with money and the movement against mining inevitably becomes week and only sporadic attempts are made against mining industry.

**Protest against mining:**

“Vijaya Karnataka” date24-07-2008 on23-07-2008 Prajapragathi daily reported that the farmers of Honnebagi, Ballenahally, Gollarahally, Manchekatte, Jogihally, etc, protested against mining in their villages. Owners of the mines have given contract to middlemen. These middlemen harass the farmers. Farmers protested in front of the Abbige Malleshwara temple on the hill. Because of mining farmers and people face many problems and difficulties. They went in padayathra to the hill to demand their rights.

**Villagers complaint:**

Abbige Malleswhara temple has got 800 years old history. Four years back mine owners had written in writing saying that we won’t take up mining within
200 metres of the temple. They had also said that we would take up mining activity only in Honnebagi, Bullenahally, Gollarahally, and Jogihally. But now mining activity is going on within 50 metres of the temple hence, temple has reached dilapidated condition, mine owners had also told that they would be in direct contact with the farmers and respond to their demands. Now the owners have violated their word and alleged the farmers.

**Anger of protesters:**

Mining owners have license to extract one lakh ton iron ore but, they are extracting five lakh ton of iron ore without using government’s license. They are using some duplicate license. There are nearly thirty crushers in the mining area, which are all unauthorized. Hence, there is heavy loss to the government revenue. Mining owners must stop mining until there is a dialogue between the two, formers said. Until they come to dialogue the protest will continue they said we are even ready to go jail the protesters said. Taluk Experiment H.M. Surendaiah had led the protesters. Zailla panchayath ex-member B.N. Shivaprkash, Malleshwara Temples Development committees chairman Basavaraju and hundreds of farmers participated in the protest. Because of mining dust the area is becoming a drought Area – leaders are worried.

As “Samyaktha Karnataka” daily news paper reported on 12.07 2008 mining activity is going on in chickanayakanahally talukas hilly areas from many decades. Villages such as Bullenahally, Naduvanahally, Godekere, Boraligayana playa, Pankajanahally, Malagondanahally, Nagenahally, Honnebagi, J.C.pura etc are facing water shortage this because of miming. Mining dust settles on trees and plants, this cause’s serious hardship on environment. This has been said by Prof. Balekayi Shivananjappa. People were protesting for drinking water from hemavathi channel during this time he told this in front of Taluk panchayat office. Clouds of dust are been created by mining. The rain is also becoming less. In these
hilly areas vain was 500 mm but now not even 5 mm rain is falling. Prof. Balekayi Shivananjappa, has expressed his opinion. Shivaganga, T.P L.D Bank president B.N. Shivaprakash, Thammadihalli Mathas Swamijis, and other leaders of the Taluk participated in the protest.

**Protest to Pressurize Development:**

In May 2008 “Prajavani” daily news paper reported that thousands of people around mining areas have been affected. Hence, too much money is to be earmarked for Taluk development. People protested through “Rastha Roko” programme Taluk panchayat ex-president spoke to the protesters and he said ‘Honnebagi and nearby villages are deeply affected by mining. All the agricultural crops have been destroyed. Water table was very good before mining started. People are suffering from form serious diseases; there is no fodder for animals. Roads have been destroyed. The environment is completely polluted even during monsoon no rain will came. It is almost like a drought area. Since there is no proper irrigation facilities compensation should be issued to the villages. Or else we won’t allow mining to take place in the area, the leader said.

Honnebagi and Godekere village gramapanchayaths protested against mining is from of district office and thasildar office. The local legislator Suresh Babu visited the place and suggested some solutions to the problems and later protest was continued.

**Protest against mining: vehicles torched:**

As “Vijiya Karnataka” daily news paper and “Praja Pragathi” daily news paper reported on 25-07 2008 Abbigegudda comes in Honnebagi village panchayathi area. The protest continued severely in this area. Hence, there was heavy loss. During morning hours thousands people started gathering above Abbigeguddas Malleshwara temple. During this time people argued with the police behaved rudely with three women who were going to protest. Yet, the people went
to the gudda and protested against mining. Some anti-social elements entered way bridge room and fired mobile screening machine, hitachi, JCB machines, tippers, crushers etc... more than five crore rupees loss, occurred in the incident. Mediator contractors are responsible for these incident protesters.

**Against of mining activity:**

The Times of India daily news papers reported on dated 28-08-2008, residents of Chikkanayakanahalhi in Tumkur district, who are fighting the adverse impact of mining in their area, are practical lot. They do not expect mining to stop but want miners to take measures to minimize negative impact, besides compensation their losses. Tumkur is known for iron ore, manganese and limestone mining. Mining also takes place in dolomite, soap stone, quartz gold, china clay and corundum.

Here, iron ore extraction is being done on 7,204.2 hectares of land, manganese on 1,678.18 hectares and limestone on 1,300 hectares. Mining Chakanayahalli a hot bed in the district, has polluted water sources, destroyed crops, damaged roads, caused health problems to people and cattle in the villages around Abbige hills. The most affected area the residents of Abbigudda, Soppinagudda, Gollaected, Bullenahally, Manchekatte and surrounding villages in the Taluk. Impact utilization of the Rs 7.5 crore development funds has enraged people further. In the post couple of years, a committee had collected development fee from mine owners to improve areas affected by mining. Another factor, which has enraged residents, is the employment of workers from outside the state for mining work “why can’t they provide jobs to locals”? Asked Mohan Kumar H.M of Honnebagi. The frustration of these people led to a protest on July 24-2008 as around 2000 people trooped in the mining area at Abbigegudda (hills). Destruction of equipment at the mining site has made them face police fury.
However, the villagers deny setting the equipment ablaze but maintain that it was done by the mining lobby to curb people’s movement against mining. The men in the village field from their villages and took shelter elsewhere for 20 days. They returned home only after several writers and film makers led by Jnanapeeta awardee U.R. Ananthamurthy lent support to them and Karnataka State Human Rights Commission intervened “if not for them we would have been harassed,” said suresh. B.M a resident of Gullenahalli, the villagers demand employment and want mine owners to adapt villages and develop them by providing drinking water, roads and other basic infrastructure, they also demand compensation, for crop loss. “If they can’t do this, let them rehabilitate us at an appropriate place,” said Nataraj of Jogihalli. Environment: several years of mining have had adverse impact and the environment of the region. A Government –commissioned study by National Environment Engineering research institute (NEERI) in 2003 revealed that the Levels of heavy metals in water and dust related particulate matter air in exceeded national health standards. According to the report, the regions wildlife, which once included robust populations of sloth bears, leopards, monitor lizards and white storks all threatened or endangered species “is now observed to be very poor.”

Apart from affecting wildlife and agriculture, the mining dust has produced a “Significant rise” in bronchitis and other respiratory infections. It is also responsible for a staggering incidence of eye problems, mainly conjunctives.

The foregoing discussion has shown that environmental movements in micro-situation are as important as at the state and national level. Though not successful against vested-interests they played a vital and important role in creating awareness of adverse consequences of environmental degradation and destruction. This apparently brings about changes in the behaviour of people around natural resources. Barring vested-interests the common person has become increasingly conscious of their duties and responsibilities vis-à-vis nature and environment.
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