Chapter 4

State and Society in the context of Development and Environment: A Sociological Analysis

"State and the structure of Society are not, from the standpoint of politics, two different things. The state is the structure of society. In so far as the state admits the existence of social evils, it attributes them to natural laws against which no human power can prevail or to the inadequacies of the administration which is subordinate to it."

-Karl Marx [1961:222]

"Today the relation between the state and violence is an especially intimate one. In the past, the most varied institutions—beginning with the sib—have known the use of physical force as quite normal. Today, however, we have to say that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory".

- Max Weber [1970:78]

The above epigraphs of giant classical sociologists draw home the much debated and controversial relationship between society and state and different dimensions about the role of state vis-à-vis society. At present there exists a voluminous literature on emergence, development, nature, changing structure and functions of state and reciprocal and impinging relationship with society. Theorists have posited the growing antagonistic, hostile relationship between society and state and state’s repression and dominance on society and language of civil society also assumes importance here. This chapter is an attempt to understand the theoretical and empirical underpinnings between state and society in the light of development, environment and growing social movements against state. We would like to ask at the outset the questions which are pertinent and key to our theme of discussion:

a. “Though derived its existence from the people why the state with authority confronts and haunts them through its various actions and plunge into a slippery of persecuting its own citizens who protest against its actions of transgression, insensitivity and above all threatening the order and rules of order of society i.e. common well-being of all?”
b. Why state robs, who are direct producers, from their livelihood, though paths available to think and act on the alternative lines which are considered to be more viable and emancipatory?

c. How viable is still to conceptualize the process of ruthless accumulation of capitalism, in the form of industrialization, ultimately results into transition towards socialism. This has to be asked in the context of environment, social movements and changes in understanding the reality through theories? An ontological question?

Present chapter is divided into four sections: the first section deals with the relation between state and society through classical sociological literature and philosophers. Second is an attempt to understand the relationship between state, development and society with reference to Indian context. Whereas, third section, tries to understand the relationship between state and society in the light of environmental changes or depletion.

4.1 Society and State through the Classical Sociological Literature

Politics for Weber is about leadership and of political association which is today state. State cannot be understood from ends point of view but only in terms of specific means peculiar to it that is the use of physical force [Weber, Max, 1970:77-78, italics are added].

Karl Marx throws invaluable light on the relationship between state and society. State is founded on the contradiction between public sphere and private sphere between general and public interests. Marx asserted

"The contradiction between the aims and good intentions of the administration on the one hand and its means and resources on the other, cannot be removed by the state without abolishing itself, for it rests upon this contradiction"[Marx, Karl 1961:222]

For Marx state is one of the superstructures erected on production relations and gives expression to actual production relations of economic system. Moral system is another superstructure: if state is related to force; moral, whereas, is associated
with the **ideology** of ruling class. State is an organ of class domination, an organ for oppression of one class by another and a device to build order which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression (Popper, Karl 2007: 128-129, italics are added).

Marx and Engels in Communist Manifesto categorically expressed their views on state as: "Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another" (Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick 1965:59, italics are added)

For Marx state is:

"Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the mediaeval commune; here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable "third estate" of the monarchy (as in France), afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick, op. Cit: 33, italic are added).

Modern state including liberal democracy is a convenient tool and veil for class dictatorship. Just as state under capitalism is a dictatorship of bourgeoisie, after the social revolution, it will be state under proletariat: proletariat dictatorship. But according to Marx after revolution it will be once class society (proletariat class) and therefore, no class dictatorship. State therefore loses its functions and eventually disappears.

Hegel, whereas, has viewed state from other side of vantage point. For him state is realized ethical idea or ethical spirit. State is the will which manifests itself, makes itself clear and visible, and substantiates itself. State finds in ethical custom its direct and unreflected existence and indirect and reflected existence in the self consciousness of individual, in his knowledge and activity. Self consciousness, Hegel understood, in the form of social disposition has its substantive freedom in the state as
the essence, purpose and product of activities of state. Power of reason is expressed in
the form of state. State is rational in a sense that realized substantive will in the form of
individual consciousness is transformed into universal plane. It is the unity of
individuality and universality (Hegel, GWF 2001:194-196, italics are added).

Emile Durkheim saw in state an important function of bringing unity in society
characterized by complex division of labour i.e. when society undergoes the
metamorphosis from simple to complex Emile Durkheim [1964:357]. Karl Popper
while appreciating the merits of Marx views on state objected strongly its
doctrine of ‘impotency of politics’. Popper argued that Marx’s theory of the
impotency of politics and his views of democracy are fatal mistakes (Popper,
Karl op.cit: 130-131, italics are added). Marx’s undue emphasis on social
systemic features-economic aspects as base, over domain of politics in
metamorphosis of society is questioned by Popper. For Popper, proletariat
revolution culminating in absolute freedom of proletariat leads to further subtle
problems as freedom has to be understood in the light of paradox of freedom
(Popper, Karl op.cit: 135, italics are added).

Without denying the injustice and inhumanity of unrestrained capitalism critiques
the project of socialist revolution:

“Freedom, we have seen, defeats itself, if it is unlimited. Unlimited freedom
means that a strong man is free to bully one who is weak and to rob him of his
freedom. This is why we demand that the state should limit freedom to a certain
extent, so that everyone’s freedom is protected by law. Nobody should be at the
mercy of others, but all should have a right to be protected by the state” (ibid)

State prior to its modern variant was implied in absolutism- invented and
practised in seventeenth century France and Prussia. Cardinal Richelieu, prime
minister of France was responsible for absolutist notion of monarchical
sovereignty centred in king. But consequences of French revolution translated
Rousseau’s concept of general will into a claim that the person, not the king, was
sovereign. Therefore, popular sovereignty displaced the monarchical
sovereignty by embedding the sovereignty in nation. The modern state became a
nation state and the era of high stateness began'. The idea of modern state has gained currency only after the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. (Rudolph I Lloyd and Jacobsen Kurt, John, 2009: viii-ix)

It bestowed institutional status to the budding concept of state in Europe which had gradually started leaving its imprints in Europe. Transformation of Weberian monarchical charismatic authority to being distributed in general population created the problem of stability and legitimacy which is provided by impersonal nationalism. [Nandy, Ashish, 2007:1-3].

Nation-state is considered as a problematic concept. It was not a natural outcome of forces of societies in third world. Instead it was transplanted from or imposed by Europe on third world societies and promoted as the engine of the post-colonial ideology of development and progress. Modern state apparatus having been bestowed an international recognition as the only legitimate agent of social change and development (Parajuli, Pramod 2009:261, italics are added). D.L. Sheth has observed that people in the third world have to live either as people without a state or in a state which is not theirs (Ibid, italics are added)

There is a large disjunction between idealized goals and actual functioning of modern states. In fact parochial theoretical discourses in social sciences particularly in post world war II situation have propagated the view that all societies had to pass over definite fixed historical stages in order to attain modern nation-state and necessary cultural changes in societies to facilitate this transition. Nation-building became polite term for cultural and ideological homogenization of country’s population. Modern nation state after its birth in Europe has successfully marginalized all other concepts of state existed hitherto in Europe which has two important consequences. First, state has increasingly come to be idealized as ‘an impartial, secular arbiter among different classes, ethnicities and interests. But most of the states witnessed aberration. Secondly nation-state started seeing itself as a repository of specific values. But in reality each nation-state sought to equate the values with narrower territorial aspects of nationality which stood in sharp contrast to broad cultural meanings what they proclaimed, which could not be confined to territorial boundaries. This has led to both England and France acting as spokespersons/defenders of European
civilization. Nazis in Germany on the other hand tried to become *symbol of European civilization*. But in reality, they were constantly vying for supremacy through wars [Nandy, Ashish, op.cit71-4, italics are added].

State is considered as privileged subject matter of political theory. But this need not be taken for granted. State as a subject assumes central importance in social theory and of sociological interest due to its overarching influence on society. There are intense debates about the conceptualization of state in relation to society. Some theorists have proposed the thesis for autonomy of state as state is independent of society. They are called as ‘*statists*’ Statists rejected society-state centred approach and reversed the causal importance from society to state. State is seen as a *complex of administrative and coercive apparatuses* in harder version of statism. [Chandhoke, Neera 2004:49-53]

**State, development and society in Indian context**

The role of state assumes significance in the context of development. Whether it is a society characterized by liberalism or socialism, state asserts itself as an entity and people domain of experiencing the state increases one or in another way. In a liberalized economy, though the role of state is popularly believed to be reduced it is protracted as it significantly affects people life by trying to uphold and embed the policies of capitalism.

State in an era of neo-liberalism has changed its nature from *regulator to contracting party*. State signs memoranda of understanding (MOU) with large corporate sector which demand state to implement such promises made in MOU as expediting the process of land acquisition, environmental clearances and forest permissions. (Ramanathan, Usha 2010:73, italics are added). State as a key manager of production, allocation and distribution has deep impact on the life of people and their consciousness.

Partha Chaterjee critically interrogates the role of state in relation to development:
“What does it mean to say that 'state' acts? Does it act on one's own? Do others act through it? Whom does it act on one's own? Do others act through it? Whom does it act upon itself? To talk about the state as an ‘actor’ is to endow it with a will: to say that it acts according to coherent and rational principles of choice is further to endow it with a consciousness. How are these will and consciousness produced? (Chaterjee Partha, 2000:115, italics are added)

State being a key manager of economic activities at the time of independence laid the foundation for capitalism. Accumulation is a core feature of capitalism. Accumulation implies the taking away the direct producers (peasants) from their soil which is source of livelihood and paving the way for industrialists. Politics of development plays its role here. Since robbing the people from their soil will seriously pose the problem of legitimacy which political leaders have to confront in process of representative democracy-elections. Therefore, institution of planning was projected to be outside and above the political process to conciliating accumulation with legitimacy. But planning process in reality can never be above and outside the sphere of politics and projection of it as an instrumental rationality is firmly ruled out (Chaterjee, Partha 2000).

Nehruvian government, first representative of post-colonial independent regime, talked much about socialist pattern of development and ending unequal structures -equality in distribution of income and wealth particularly in rural areas. There was a heated debate and exchange of perspectives, comments and counter comments between Gandhi and Nehru about the developmental path and nature of state in independent India. Nehru believed in the efficacy of high modernist development state through city, big dams and large industries, whereas Gandhi firmly believed in village, civil society, craft production, and simple living (Rudolph I Lloyd 2008:21-23). Lloyd I Rudolph observed:

“Gandhi started with the village and the villager, with local autonomy and employment, with work in small-scale industries, crafts and agriculture. Nehru started with the city and urban life, with centralized state planning, and with production and work in large scale, impersonal industry and offices” (Ibid, 24, italics are added)
Gandhi did not want continuation of legacy of colonial modernity in independent India. It should not be an 'English rule without Englishmen'. Nature of state should be, for Gandhi, characterized by decentralization. Gandhi's concept of Swaraj, self rule and as self-government, is a radical departure from and alternative to 'modernist view of the objectified, disempowered individual and bureaucratized state and economy' (Rudolph H. Susanne and Rudolph I Lloyd, op.cit 142-143, italics are added).

Though democratic socialism of Nehru had the objectives of poverty alleviation and redistribution, it had to confront the capitalist development and ultimately succumbed to the capitalist pressure. Sustained growth rate was projected to be panacea for ills and was convinced to government. As a consequence was piecemeal approach and radical re-distribution approach took backseat in order to protect the interests of propertied class. Thus the task of redistribution was entrusted to bureaucracy and socialism unfortunately became a Bureaucratic socialism [Ray, Raka and Katzenstein M.F, 2005:6-7, italics are added]

Indian state after independence is a continuation of colonial legacy in several aspects. All India services of the Indian state, according to Francine R. Frankel represent major colonial legacy. With the inauguration of institution of planning for economic development, state laid the foundations for the 'bureaucratic and managerial state and whose functions, powers and personnel grew in exponentially. Bureaucrats commanded heights of power in economy by presiding over key posts in organized industrial sector and administered formidable apparatus over economy such as licensing and expansion of private sector. Bureaucracy was omnipresent in a sense that apart from industrial sector, they also dominated the planning process by authoritative recommendations for discretionary transfer of funds by the centre for plan grants. Using the power of centre to legislate on economic and social planning, plethora of programmes were introduced in states which were administered by bureaucrats of Indian Administrative Service (Fmakel, Francine R, 2000:233-235).

Nehru's political project was to ensure that a new order would be built in independent India where everyone would dwell and prosper. Blend of liberal democracy and Indic civilization, Nehru believed, would establish democratic
state which would check state power and subject state to accountability. Democratic states are thought to be ultimately accountable to and responsive to its citizens' aspirations and goals. But in post-colonial India there is always disjunction between democratic state and society leading to severe problems for governance and development [Sharma D. Shalendra 2003:1-5]. But Francine R. Frankel bluntly remarked:

"Whatever social configurations the congress party confronted in the various states, its leaders, like the British before them, did not attempt to change the social order but to adapt to it" (Fmakel, Francine R, op.cit:237, italics are added)

Shalendra Sharma interrogates:

"Specifically, why we have five decades of democratically guided programmatic state interventions committed to building an egalitarian socialistic society [the so-called noble mansion] not been realized?" [Sharma D. Shalendra 2003:2]

Post colonial Indian situation is fraught with contradictions. Dismantling the agrarian structure hitherto not subject to violent upheavals and shattering the lives of farmers started in colonial rule. Independence from colonial rule was expected to free the farmers from chains which wedged them viciously [Jodhka, Surinder, 2007]. Development in the light of changed framework was needed to be emancipatory. But it has perpetuated the colonial ills and our programmes, planning and policies have started producing consequences which negated the noble intentions of our constitution [Desai A.R:1969, Parthanath Mukherjee:196, Jodhka, Surinder:2007]. Agriculture, weaving and other occupations started receiving death blows. It is criticized that Indian sociological fraternity has neglected the economic dimension of colonialism with few exceptions like A R Desai, D.P. Mukherjee and Ramakrishna Mukherjee [Saberwal, Satish, 1979:241-243].

Liberation from colonial rule and establishment of independent government has witnessed inheritance of colonial strategy in many areas such as police, army, judiciary, legal system as well as civil service. It was at this bureaucracy new leadership looked into for the herculean task of planned transformation
India while framing her own constitution borrowed more than 250 of clauses of 1935 *Government of India Act* which was devised under colonial administration for weakening national integrating functions of Congress and to keep India dependent upon the Britain.

Two colonial legacies were bequeathed to India: *electoral representation* and *communal problem* entered into state structure and inflated role accorded to bureaucracy as policy makers and guardians of society [Washbrook, David, 2008:37-40, italics are added]

Historically, Indian state has performed three common functions such as collection of taxes; Maintenance of bureaucracy; Maintenance of army and police for law and order. Evolution of Indian state passed through 4 stages: classical state with agricultural civilization: medieval state with feudal structure: colonial state under the reels of colonialism: post-independence autonomous state (Sharma K. L 2007:293).

State has expanded its presence throughout the nuke and corner of India as a modernizer, intervener and mediator. State has been conceptualized in different ways in relation to its nature and functions: state as a set of administrative, legal and coercive apparatus, state as an autonomous entity to act vis-à-vis society, soft state, weak and strong state. Some scholars have observed that state in India is looked as perpetuation of domination in post colonial situation and democracy under the state auspice is a nexus between imperial bourgeoisie, feudal forces and weak national bourgeoisie. This has limited the capability of state in cherishing the ideals set forth by constitution.

Formation of Indian constitution and civil society in post colonial India has roots in 'literati' who were new educated class in colonial India exposed to western education,, particularly western law. Learning western law proved to be of use more than one aspect in terms of lucrative profession, as an effective medium in forging association with colonial rulers and they were, hence, drawn into prominent roles in public sphere. When constituent assembly was formed to give shape to constitution, this literati class dominated the constitution building.
This led to many of the social assumptions and legal techniques borrowed from the west, outside India and had trajectory [Saberwal, 2006:9-10, italics are added]

When India attained independence from colonial rule several challenges were perceived by nationalist elites before the new government. They were listed as problems of sovereignty, unity, diversity, order, a strong state, secularism, democracy and parliamentarism, economic self sufficiency and social and economic reform. Therefore, achieving these ideals for elites necessitated and overwhelming justification for the need of strong and centralized state [Brass R. Paul, 2008:10-12]

Upendra Baxi while analyzing Indian constitution from governance and justice point of view has divided constitution into two aspects: hardware and software. Hardware constitutes ‘materiality of state power’, ‘the institutions’ and ‘apparatus of governance’, the ‘webs of coercion’ and state as a ‘war machine’ and whereas, cultural software provides access to justice but without entertaining questioning the validity of constitution and this, according to him, opens up the boxes of justice, rights and development [Baxi, Upendra, 2006:33-34, italics are added]. He sees a great divide between governance and justice in Indian constitution; while the governance institutions determines and interprets the paths of development and justice associated with constitutional rights within the domain of judiciary.

Rajani Kothari regrets that we are living in an age of turbulence and sources of this turbulence and confusion are not clear. In post colonial India there is an encounter between the forces of status quo and those of change and expresses as dominant structures and those opposed to dominant structures. Existing ideologies and their off shoots, which are of European origin, capitalism, explosion of technology and its pervasiveness in all domains of life such as political, economic and other dimensions has damaged ecological resources on which people have depended for material base of lively hood. Ideology of modernization has therefore become a forced one for the people of post colonial India [Kothari, Rajani 2002:70-71].
Much of the troubles, people of India undergoing in post colonial situation, stems basically from the normative theory of Indian constitution itself that is linking integrity and unity of nation with development as justice. This even comes in the way of curtailing fundamental rights of people. Indian constitution treats justice and injustice in terms of state security and failure to protect the post colonial border amounts to injustice to people. Hence citizens have very much little role to play in devising foreign and defence policies which may thwart genuine developmental aspirations. Constitution therefore facilitates that all aspects of power directed towards maintaining internal and external order are, in the words of Upendra Baxi, justice enhancing. Therefore, any popular mass movements which expose the developmental flaws, illegitimacy, and illegality of developmental paradigms invoke repressions which are constitutionally justified [Baxi, Upendra, 2006:36-37].

Atul Kohli examined the relationship between state and poverty in post colonial situation. He used the lens of type of regime and poverty alleviation. He poses the question that in spite of democratically guided economic development programmes, why Indian state is not able to alleviate its substantial number of citizens from abject poverty? Then under what broad conditions India’s poverty will be alleviated effectively. He problematizes the inquiry in the following words:

“Can Political authorities utilize the machinery of a democratic regime to counteract the vested social interests so as to reform the social order? If so, to what extent and under what political and organizational conditions? If not, why not, and again under what conditions”? [Kohli, Atul, 2006:1-5]

For this he examined the regime types in three states of West Bengal, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal stands outstanding in alleviating poverty through land reforms followed by partial success of Karnataka government and worst performance of Uttar Pradesh. Entrepreneurial elites in India through their nexus with ruling elites were able to seize the substantial benefits and concessions in the name of stimulating economic growth. But state has failed in redistributing the gains among people. As a result only small minority has been able to garner the developmental benefits. Failure of regime, therefore, to achieve its own professed
and avowed goals is a clear sign of regime weakness. Hence to bring redistributive goal into developmental process, an effective regime is needed which is characterized by a coherent leadership, an ideological and organizational commitment to exclude the propertied interests from direct participation in the process of governance, providing stable political conditions for entrepreneurial classes and organizational structure that is both centralized and decentralized [Kohli, Atul, op.cit 8-11].

Philip Oldenburg examined state in India from 'grass roots perspective'. Assessing the core features of state, its capacity, its autonomy, its legitimacy, he tried to understand how state is experienced by people, which is of phenomenological importance. Line of query is how people experience and perceive state in terms of its presence. For which he has chosen two central government departments (postal, services, banking), three state government departments (police, education, health) and departments coming under both purview (rural development). Intention is to explore 'how state, qua its administrative and elected officials, is linked to the citizenry, in terms of the power it wields (capacity, autonomy) and the support it enjoys'. He classified the functions of state into three sets: core functions (judicial system, taxation, and preserving independence), servicing functions (health care, education, communication, transport, etc.); and transformation functions (industrial and agrarian development, redistribution policies) (Oldenburg, Philip 2009:184-185)

State continues to spread its presence through its servicing functions via permissions and licenses. Oldenburg quotes Akhil Gupta’s insight that ‘every day interactions with the state bureaucracies are my way of thinking the most important ingredient in constructions of “the state” forged by villagers and state officials’. People in rural areas regarding corruption, though they get angry for being prevented from full benefit and ill treatment in state departments, they admit that they would do the same if they had a chance. Therefore, he arrives at curious hypothesis:

“The legitimacy of the state is most severely questioned by those who have in fact benefited most from it (the urban elite) and assessed far more favourably by those who have suffered from its inaction. The state that exists at the grass roots
is a loosely coordinated conglomerate of disparate departments, politicians, and half-public half-private service providers" (Oldenburg, Philip, op.cit 204, italics are added)

Post colonial India adopted ‘welfare policy’ for the amelioration of masses and particularly marginalized groups. But path of economic development adopted was capitalist in nature and oriented towards growth, market and profit. Hence consequences generated were contradictions and inimical to interests of masses. Development strategy produced inter-regional and inter-groups, in terms of castes, disparities.

In agriculture farmers in irrigated areas reaped the benefits of assured water resources and extended their interest in such related sectors as sugar and milk cooperatives in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Whereas farmers in dry region continue to be at disadvantageous position. Agrarian transformation policies also created contradictions as benefits of the policies accrued to land owners who are from upper and middle castes and landless labourers mainly from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are deprived [Punalekar S.P, 1995:46-67]

Indian constitution ensures Justice, social, economic and political Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and of opportunity: and to promote among them all: Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation [Basu, Durga Das, 2004:20-21]. Preamble of our constitution reflects the nature of state and society our leaders wanted to build in independent India, a new social order. To materialize the aspirations of principles enshrined in Indian constitution, it requires the expansion of functions of to state and hence the nature of state was socialist with welfare dimension [Ibid: 26]. But many sociologists have raised serious doubts and are highly skeptical about the socialist and welfare nature of state in post-independent India [Desai A.R:1969, Ray, Raka: 2005, Omvedt, Gail: 2005].

Sociologists have concentrated on cultural dimension of colonialism in terms of ‘new structure of opportunities’ [Italics are added] and neglected the economic dimension and its social consequences that was ruthless exploitation of Indian
peasantry and decline of handicrafts by colonial government through two roles: government as the overlord and as a large employer [Saberwal, Satish, op.cit: 243-250]. It was through the combination of bureaucratic despotism and free market economics, British Raj was able to hold firm grip over its colonial state-India [Washbrook, David: 36].

Paul Brass echoed the similar views of continuity of colonial legacy even after independence. He traces the considerable degree of continuity between the Government of India act 1935 and Indian constitution. Though state has federal system of government with strong unitary features, such as upper hand of center over states/provinces in situations such as emergency three legislative lists. [Brass R. Paul, 2008:2]

4.3 State and Civil Society: Introspection and Retrospection

Civil Society as a concept is greatly employed and as a notion practiced throughout the world as a domain in between repressive state and life world shaped and influenced by family, kinship and other primordial identities. The concept of civil society had origin in European context. N. Jayaram viewed civil society as a rebound or recovery concept since it was a powerful idea in mobilizing citizens against repressive state and in reclaiming the people’s private sphere in social life from the pervading influence of state [Jayaram N 2005:15 italics are added]. But the varied contexts in which this idea is employed camouflage the conceptual clarity. Even ideologies which are antagonistic to each other are found using this concept such as socialists, global society theorists disenchanted with nation-states, critics of developmental state, protagonists of free market economy etc., [Ibid: 15]

Civil society conceptualized as a social space between oppressive state and primordial identities in capitalist society is not much different from state as it is characterized by private property, trade and mutual plundering leading to unsocial character of civil society and impotence is the hallmark of state. Civil society is foundation of slavery upon which antiquity of state is based. Marx formulated proposition
"the more powerful the state, and therefore the more political a country is, the less likely it is to seek the basis of the social evils and to grasp the general explanation of them in the principle of the state itself, that is in the structure of society, of which the state is the active, conscious, and official expression" [Marx, Karl, op.cit:223, italics are in original].

There is an analogy between modern state and state in antiquity: recognition of the rights of modern man is similar to recognition of slavery by state in ancient time. Civil society is characterized by a general conflict between man and man, individual and individual and the entire society is in conflict. Mere individuality has become a sole criterion of distinguishing individuals. Though in bourgeoisie civil society rights experienced by individuals in the form of property, industry and religion are manifestations of liberty which is nothing but his enslavement and loss of human nature [Marx, Karl op.cit:224-225]

Idea of civil society is obscured in several major conceptual problems. Civil society is conceptualized as a domain of institutions between family and state arising from modern association life which has origin in western societies. Civil society institutions which are based on equality, autonomy, freedom of entry and exit, contract in western context lead to different implications in Indian context. It includes only small sections of citizens and thereby excluding large masses and their institutions not based on above principles. But Partha Chatterjee does not find any fault in classical definition of civil society. Instead it will help to capture the conflicting aims of modernity in Indian context [Chatterjee, Partha 2003:134-137].

There is another way of looking at the Indian context. India has done well in relation to civil society and democratic politics. But it is fortuitous when we appraise the performance [Saberwal, Satish 2005:110]. Hence our efforts should be focused on making accident of circumstances as a stable achievement. Delineating the essentials of civil society, Saberwal has set four essential qualities which can act as measuring rods for evaluating the relationship between state and society and rising expression of people protest against state by social movements: [a] Social space, decisions and choices have to be made on the basis of reason and knowledge being grounded in 'realities' and not in prejudices, fantasies and
the like. [b] Members of society have to relate to each other open-endedly without exclusion on grounds of primordial and parochial identities. [c] Civil society space has to be free from coercive pressures [Ibid: 111, italics are added].

P.K.B. Nayar has argued that socio-cultural values existing in India are beneath the many qualities in promoting the robust growth of democracy and an effective civil society. The relationship between democracy and civil society is indeed a brisk one. Particularistic values have been a source of conflict and confrontation in post-colonial India. Though the right to equality before the law is enshrined in constitution, it is violated in several instances stemming from state's inability. State has failed in enacting uniform laws for all citizens, especially women and other weaker sections of the society. There is an alarming rising in the cases of human rights violation which is implying different sections of the people are differently protected by the state [Nayar P.K.B. 2005 133-134, italics are added]

But Vikas N. Pandey objects to uncritical employment of state and civil society as concepts are framed where civil society and state are increasingly conceptualized as mutually antagonistic. But reality is not the case. He argued that such dualism between state and civil society will result in retrogressive romanticization of tradition/culture and civil society. State and society are intertwined and not socially frozen identities. In the name of celebrating civil society, which is uncritical, romanticization of tradition and several ills associated with it [Pandey, V.N. 2005:91-106]

Neera Chandhoke puts the relationship between state and society into critical litmus test. The idea of civil society has got a great espousal in Eastern Europe against the state hegemony particularly in Soviet Russia. Celebration of concept of civil society has acquired a consensual character in social sciences and any concept, according to her, becoming consensual is a problematic and flattened one [Chandhoke, Neera 2003:27-28, Italics are added].

Idea and practice of civil society as a check to untrammelled power of the state, attempts to carve out a domain functioning independently of state regulation has forgotten an emancipation of ‘life world’ from the instrumental rationality of the market, though critical normative edge that is emancipation of ‘life world’ from
Civil society today largely conceptualized as an independent third sphere between state and market has to be examined afresh. Civil society itself is a fragmented, divided and hierarchically structured realm. Civil society depends upon state for institutionalizing principles considered heart of civil society, state sets the limits and as well as initiatives of civil society, for which it has to respect the state's frontiers of political action [Ibid: 30, 45-47 italics are added].

T.K. Oommen examines the concept of civil society in Indian context in relation to good governance. There is a difference between government and governance. Though both are goal oriented activities, government suggests activities that are backed by formal authority and force, whereas governance encapsulates both government and non-government activities in meeting citizens' needs and aspirations. Therefore civil society and state both share common burden of welfare of citizens. He uses four benchmarks in assessing whether any society possesses good governance. They are: a] informing the process of recruiting the elites with legitimacy b] proportionate representation for all segments of population in governance c] respect for dominated by the dominant and finally d] mechanism of reward-punishment [Oommen T.K. 2003:125-129]. Governance in Indian society at present context is an aberration from above benchmarks point of view. In Legislature, executive [bureaucracy] and judiciary there is a disproportionate representation of various social groups who are in disadvantageous position in social hierarchy in terms of caste, gender and religion. How can we say that this will ensure good governance [Ibid: 131-133].

Dipankar Gupta echoes the view that disenchantment with the state is one of the chief reasons for contemporary interest in civil society. During the span of five decades state has not been able to deliver, albeit, promises were repeatedly made. Elites in India control the state and influence its functioning and have monopolized over technological advancement. State in the name of democracy is busy in aggrandizing itself and its functionaries. State is adopting the orientation of divisive by marginalizing communities and alienating them from their bond [Gupta, Dipankar 2009:211-212, italics are added].

The idea and practice of nation-state is perceived as an alien construct by theorists. State in post colonial India has not been sensitive to the myriad
diversities of society and with its all pervasive homogenizing and standardizing project has left Indian society at a tumultuous state [Kothari, Rajani 1988]

On tracing the tortuous relationship between state and society in India Pranab Bardhan argued that India never had a civil society in European sense and till seventeenth century the nature of state was characterized by ceremonial eminence and weak bureaucracy. Hence it was not able to interfere in the internal organizations of various groups and structural units such as caste system, temple sects, and assemblies of landlords enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy. But the process of dismantling the autonomy of vibrant community institutions and depriving them from political and economic functions started from seventeenth century and culminated under colonial administration. [Bardhan, Pranab, 2008:184-185, italics are added]

Relationship between state power and society was central to and embedded in liberal conception of democracy. Modern national state has come to be conceived as a social institution and its institutional framework was legitimized through the set of legal and political norms and conventions and rules of the game in relation to their applications and hence power could be checked. Expansion of the base of political participation hitherto performed by diverse estates, economic responsibilities and to act as mediator or an arbiter in matters of conflict arising out of class, ethnic and other factors [Kothari, Rajni 2001:101-102, italics are added]]. State while discharging the new functions entrusted led to metamorphosis of homogenization and Standardization and as corollary managerial, bureaucratic as well as mercantilist and welfare orientations. Centralization, of nationalization and straitjacketing of social differentiations into mass society has retrogressive consequences on citizenry [Ibid: 103, Italics are added].

D.N. Dhanagare cautions us that the emergence of the concept of civil society has roots in the political upheaval new nation-states experienced in the last quarter of twentieth century. Second half of the twentieth century is significant as many several post-colonial states emerged in their successful triumph against imperialism and faced with a challenge of socio-economic transformations of their societies. (Dhanagare D.N. 2005)
4.4 State and society in the light of environmental changes or depletion.

The debate on the relationship between state and society gathered further momentum with the role and impact of state on environment in the context of development discourse and development induced changes. State claims over development paradigm and knowledge have become official discourses, though, the alternative and viable paths were available. Conflicts arising from ecological degradation and environmental issues added a third dimension of conflict with the state along with two other conventional conflicts articulated- conflicts in agrarian issues and industrial sector represent first two generic forms of conflict. According to Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha environmental movements have provided a new dimension to Indian democracy and society. They challenged the dominant notions of the meaning, content and patterns of development. Just like agrarian and industrial conflict, an environmental movement does not raise merely the issues of distributive justice and economic efficiency, but also environmental sustainability. [Gadgil, Madhav and Guha, Ramachandra, 2007:385-388, italics are added]

Relationship between state and its subject became strained for the first time in British Raj. Colonial government’s policy and law on forest gave birth to people resistance to state. Forest conflict, indeed, marks the beginning of environmental movements in Independent India Chipko movement brought forefront the issues of forest conflict and state role as a source of conflict (Ibid).

Conspicuous fact that draws our attention is the state-abetted destruction of natural resources. This is a marked aberrational tendency on the part of state from its avowed objectives and charter enshrined in constitution. What we witnessed in six decades of post independence period is continuation of colonial legacy (Washbrook, David 2008). This is also manifested in the areas of management of natural resources.

As Ganeshdatta Poddar observed:

“Our mixed economy” model of development, in an effort to catch up with industrial and agricultural growth paid scant attention to the aspect of
environmental revival in the aftermath of colonialism: the *Gandhian alternative with its focus on small-scale industry and village as the primary unit of economic development got short shrift*” (Poddar, Ganeshdatta 2009:8, italics are added).

Post colonial Indian state is still in colonial hangover which is manifested in the ‘*contradictions between its policy pronouncements and its actual retrogressive action*’. Indian merchant class which was thwarted from growing into *industrial bourgeoisie* during colonial time has not given up its desire for economic development at any cost which have severe ramifications on environment (Savur, Manorama 1995: 155, italics are added). Manorama Savur gives an evidence for this:

‘There is no better evidence of the dilemma of the post-colonial Indian state than when under the tremendous pressure of Indian environmentalists, the government setup a well-funded Department of Environment in 1980 and in 1987 was compelled to pull its teeth out in response to counter pressures. It did so, for instance, by clubbing this department under a single Ministry of Environment and forests in 1987’ (Savur, Manorama, op.cit 55-156).

If department of environment was meant to check the destruction of forests by the wood based industries, clubbing this department under a single ministry was ‘under the pressure of powerful paper industry which was nurtured and pampered by the government as a part of its policy of capitalist development after the transfer of power’ (Ibid).

Post colonial state inheriting colonial legacy gets further corroborated in the area of forest management. Colonial regime assigned forest department the role of revenue generation. Exploiting forest for revenue began in nineteenth century. Independent India continued the tradition in the form of a policy of replacing the natural, mixed forests and post independent forest policy is dominated by *industrial, urban/commercial interests* (Munshi, Indra 1994: 103-104, italics are added). Close nexus between politicians, bureaucrats and the business interests led to plundering of forest resources (Ibid).
What state thinks about its development projects as just and desirable for people in the names of big dams and industries permanently robs people from their source of livelihood and lands them at incalculable miseries. States monopoly over development paradigm and knowledge has created ripples among social groups. Construction of large dams in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh has severely affected the yield of apple trees. Construction of tunnel of 17-km long for *Karcham Wangtoo dam* on Sutlej river raised dusts, dried streams and reduced moisture in the soil. Total apple production in the district has declined from 50,864 tonnes to 36,726 tonnes between 2008 and 2009 (Kandhari, Ruhi, 2009:35).

Bhopal Gas Tragedy marks the worst environmental disaster caused by human negligence in the history of India and has been an inability of state to protect its citizens from risk and to provide justice (Narain, Sunitha 2007:3). In the words of Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha it is *perhaps the most tragic episode of the poisoning of the environment in human history* (Gadgil, Madhav and Guha, Ramachandra 1995:81, italics are added). It showed how state tried to insulate the transnational companies (Union Carbide Corporation) and capitalists (Anderson) from investigations and punishment for having pushed ten thousands people to the death. The Bhopal question brings to the forefront the failure of state in ensuring justice to victims even after twenty five years of incidence (Kaur, Ravleen.et.al, 2010:26). Upendra Baxi, an expert on Law and Human Rights expressed: ‘from the beginning, people of Bhopal have been talking of the negligence by the entire management; and the Anderson is symbolic of that negligence’ (Ibid). Baxi, who also argued in 1991 for reopening the criminal liability case, observed sharply about the way state responded:

“The concern expressed by the government, even if it is sincere, has come after 25 years, which is too late. All this time, victims were neglected and even now when they are talking of increasing the compensation, the government is saying it will deduct the amount given to them in the past, which was a measly Rs 25,000 to each victim. This is weird. It should be paying them with compound interest for the suffering” (Kaur, Ravleen.et.al, op.cit:27)
State robbing its citizens from their bases of livelihood finds full expression in the case of large dams. In the wake of dysfunctions of Large Dams evident in Post colonial India, critics charged the path of development adopted via large dams and heavy energy oriented industrialization. Evidences available proved that the method adopted in post colonial India to remedy our plaguing problems like augmenting the production of food grains and controlling flood created havoc for people.

Jawaharlal Nehru called large dams as ‘Temples of the New Age’. Nehruvian government, in fact hoped to find political legitimacy through developmental projects like dams. Legitimacy conferred by large dams was confined only among professional, urban middle class which was instrumental in the formation of nation and Indian society at large remained unaware. Therefore dams instead of granting legitimacy to state, state had to involve in legitimizing dams (Klingensmith, David 2007:254-255).

According to World Bank Review of 192 projects, from 1986 to 1993, 4 million people had been displaced annually by 300 dams on average that entered into construction every year (Bartolome et.al 2000:1). India’s experience on development and environment unfolds particularly more with development and displacement of tradition. When a community is displaced from its sacred geography, repercussion it will have on people of community is fathomless. K.D. Gangarade said, “Human beings are like trees with strong roots. They cannot be uprooted from their hearth and home and transplanted elsewhere. Displacing a man from his land is nothing less than killing him alive” (Gangarade, K.D.1998).

Dams bring misery to people in the forms of displacement and rehabilitation. Studies reveal the horrible experiences, most of the reservoir projects failing to meet the prescribed norms in displacement and rehabilitation. In Sardar Sarovar Project people have been displaced massively. Even according to government estimate, which is alleged to be underestimated calculation, total 41,500 families from 245 villages from three states Maharashtra[33 villages 5000 families], Gujarat[19 villages, 45000 villages] and Madhya Pradesh[193 villages and 33000 people] (Sangavi, Sanjay 2007:437).
Summing Up

We have analysed the relationship between state and society with reference to theoretical and conceptual aspects; development, civil society and environment spread over four sections respectively. All the sections are concerned with role and impact of state on social structure. State, can only be found in organized social life, immensely affects the rest of society besides nature of state is itself affected by nature of social structure. First, our consistent argument is that state in post colonial India has largely moved away from avowed goals and with dawn of neo-liberalism, the nature of state has changed to mere facilitator or contracting agencies to corporate sector-both foreign and native-to clear the hurdles and expedite the process of launching them where in state is itself violating the rules and depriving people from their rights. Second, state is chiefly responsible for the contradictions in Indian society in post colonial situation by actively promoting capitalist-industrial accumulation in favour of rich and has deprived people from their source of livelihood in the form of displacement, environment depletion. Third, whenever people raised their voice against the state for transgressing the rules of social order has invited wrath from state and ruthless suppression. Still there are no signs of state stopping itself from promoting capitalist accumulation for corporate sector, who are chiefly global level players. As such conflicts arising from contradictory stand of state are likely to increase where state on the one hand speaks about strengthening agriculture and empowerment of peasants, tribals, dalits and women, but on the contrary state displaces every year thousands of peasants from their source of livelihood for large dams, power projects and for corporate interests under the sway of neoliberalism. The case of POSCO and Vedantam industries in iron and steel sector in Orissa amply illustrate this. POSCO needs 8000 acres of land for its project and still it needs more land. In an era of liberalization and privatization, role of state in economic realm is being reduced. But this does not mean that tortuous impact of state has dwindled, instead its tentacles have acquired new dimension by actively promoting neoliberalism. Episodes of Special economic zones are an eloquent testimony to insensitivity and blindness of state. Our question remains is again consistent in different tone which has significance from social movements’ point of view: why state does not take into account dissent and protest of people?
Even after experts and activists show the enormous amount of dysfunctions, trauma associated with development policies, why does state not reflect on itself? It will make us to aver that state in India has never been a domain of self consciousness and power of reason for its citizens, to refute the Hegelian dictum on state.

Having tried to understand the theoretical views on four premises development, environment, state and society, we shall now enter into empirical problem we selected. In next chapter we shall try to understand the peasants who are distressed; their life and plight.
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