CHAPTER 6

REVISITING SHIFTING MODALITIES OF ANTI-DISPOSSESSION RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS

6.1. Introduction

There exists a wide-ranging consensus among scholars (Levien, 2013; Nilsen, 2010) that the present resistance movements against land acquisition are fuelled by people’s belief that acquisition takes place to assist ‘capitalism-facilitating accumulation’\(^85\). Recently, we have also witnessed major additions to the repertoire of such movements. For example, movement leaders contesting state-conducted elections; making pragmatic alliances with political entities and so on and so forth. It is against this backdrop that the present chapter aims to understand the shifting modalities of anti-dispossession resistance movements. On the basis of arguments put forth in the previous chapters regarding the ‘cosmetic’ view of tribal society as well as the politics of dispossession, we will explain how ‘adivasi’ identity in West Singhbhum is constructed in deviation from its generic notion. In addition to this, we will also identify and analyse the local factors acting as barriers to collective action. Finally, it will be argued that the resistance movements are not always an ‘all-out’ war against land acquisitions despite the vocabulary\(^86\) they use and, the former rather design their strategy both in accordance with some pre-conceived notions as well as the local conditions.

Dispossession in its wider connotation proliferates to the imagination or belief of an individual or community of being separated or prevented from accessing resources, material or ideational, over which they enjoy either legal or normative rights. However, this sort of definition is not accepted by the ‘modern’ state which rather has the tendency to convert every normatively held notion into an objective category. This “scientific temperament” of the state is mainly due to its tendency to control all the resources just because of its self-regard as a sovereign political entity in imitation of the western nation-states, themselves not older than the Westphalian

\(^85\) This phrase is used by Adnan (2013) to explain land acquisition by transnational or domestic firms through direct and indirect processes and institutions in deltaic Bangladesh.

\(^86\) The protestors have been found to be raising slogans like ‘Jaan denge par jameen nahi denge’ (We will lay our lives but won’t give up land).
Treaty of 1648 (Nandy, 2003). Indian modern nation-state also made headway in this direction since the mid-19th century, apparently pursuing the aim more vociferously after independence (Nandy, 2003). Nevertheless, there exists a difference in the trajectory of ‘modernity’ in the western nations when compared with that of the Indian state, in particular, and Third World, in general. Whereas the former made an advent on the path of modernity through scientific endeavour, the latter pursued it in the name of ‘development’ (Nandy, 2003).

Development was aimed to be achieved through mega projects like dams, industries etc. Critics have, by now, engaged with almost every dimension of development ideology exhorted by the Westerners and picked up by the bourgeoisie nationalists of developing countries. However, the development ideology has gained legitimacy by locating ‘poverty’ at the centre of every state intervention. But the state has disowned poverty from being the master frame, at least since the early 1990s, and the centre stage is now occupied by private sector led growth (Ray & Katzenstein, 2005). Based on this shift in the state ideology categorisation of social movements has been done into three phases (1947 till 1966, 1967- 1988 and 1989- the present\(^\text{87}\)) and it is agreed that social movement politics still acts as ‘a domain in which the language of anti-poverty remains extant’. Apparently, land grab serves as the most popular plank for organising resistance movements as they simultaneously raise the issues of identity, livelihood, environment, and so on.

However, discussion of land as a commodity and territory (having cultural connotation) for articulating a resistance presents a serious theoretical and practical challenge. Sauer (2012:96) differentiates between the land struggle and territorial resistance by attributing demands for access to a means of production to the former while regarding the latter as a means to assert land as a habitat. Subscribing to cultural views gives an edge to the movements when demands are made to a ‘liberal’

\(^{87}\) Raka Ray and Mary Fainsod Katzenstein (2005:6) argue that during the first two phases the master frame remained the same, i.e. of poverty alleviation. However, during the third phase the master frame has shifted from the secular and social democracy to religious nationalism coupled with liberalisation. The authors also argue that, during the first phase despite the state being more committed to reduction of inequality the social movements based on ‘redistributive agenda were able to do so largely by opposing the state rather than by seeking state ownership or alliance’. The second phase was marked with more populist measures for poverty reduction and deinstitutionalisation giving rise to discontent which proliferated and asserted through more diverse political reactions ranging from Gandhian mode of protest to organised left extremism. During the third phase the social movements have become quite variegated in nature with some enjoying global linkages while others are entirely local in scope and nature.
democratic state. Faced with such a situation the state takes upon itself the task to protect its procedural commitment to liberal values. In context of West Singhbhum, it can be argued that while the protestors still have a sense of belonging to their land the notion of commodity is not entirely absent. Such dilemma among the adivasis leads to the formation of an “aggrieved” identity (see Pg. 66 for description) providing the required elbow room to the adversaries to counter any resistance. Even though the critics have trained their guns on ‘aggrieved identity’, in a situation where multiple layers of identity and class dimensions leaves very little scope for consolidation this notion serves as a common platform.

Resistance movements, particularly against resource grab, are characterised in the common parlance by their global linkages, metropolitan activism, local nature and non-political agenda. Gudavarthy (2013) argues that the last feature is what makes a movement ‘social’ and ensures that the movement does not breach the civility expected of it. Recently, however, a major shift occurred with civil society activists making their foray into politics. Apart from this, the anti-dispossession resistance movements have also acquired the potential to avoid being stereotyped as anti-modern or archaic, mainly due to its demand for further devolution of power. Hence, if absence of pursuing political power is the hallmark of social movements then can we call the recent attempt by movement leaders like Medha Patkar, Dayamani Barla, and others to contest election as a ‘politics of post-civil society’? Has the social movement converted itself into a political movement by pursuing state power? Which of the popular notions (above mentioned) has been disowned by the movement under study, and why?

These are a few questions which we will try to answer in this chapter by analysing the movement in West Singhbhum and the politics revolving around them. The present chapter is divided into six sections including the introduction. The second section engages critically with different theoretical contours on anti-dispossession resistance movements, in order to arrive at a suitable framework to analyse the

---

88 Ajay Gudavarthy (2013) has expressed his displeasure at the way civil society organisations have escaped the site of conflicts when the basic premises upon which the oppressors are rested has to be challenged. He argues that the politics of civil society is marked by a civility which is imposed upon it for the reason that any breach of this sphere will result into the withdrawal of support by the forces which are at the root cause of the problematic. Hence, Gudavarthy claims, the civil society organisations are entangled in a “circularity” wherein they are up against an adversary who also happens to be their masters.
resistance in West Singhbhum. In the third section, we will elaborate upon the major attributes of the anti-globalisation resistance struggles in India and their shifting outlook. The fourth and fifth section analyses the nature of ongoing anti-land dispossession resistance movement by highlighting their major tropes accruing strength and the factors acting as constraints, respectively. Finally, the chapter will conclude by summarising the major findings. Because of the close association that movements under study enjoy with political parties and their leaders strive to capture political power, we will refer to them as ‘political movements’.

6.2. Theorising ‘anti-land dispossession resistance’

Most of the Marxist scholars including Marx himself did not consider resistance or struggle as a constitutive element of primitive accumulation; though it existed as a possibility. Rather, they were more inclined towards the historical progress of capital and maturing of the workers as the agent of revolution. But the present forms of dispossession have resistance as an inherent recipe and, hence, an interpretation of primitive accumulation is required which attributes resistance to it. Amidst the changing contours of capitalism, dispossession still serves as the end point which provokes resistance and not necessarily a greater design to topple the state. A better understanding of this process is provided by De Angelis (2001) when he differentiates between ‘accumulation’ and ‘primitive accumulation’. Accumulation is based upon the representation of the individual subject as a reified object who approves capitalist mode of production as natural due to his tradition, education and habit (Angelis, 2001: 15). However, non-acceptance of this process as “ordinary run of things” attracts the use of extra-economic measures thus converting accumulation into primitive accumulation with force as its inherent component. Thus, resistance against dispossession qualifies the present capitalist system as one indulging in primitive accumulation, albeit under changed circumstances.

In the de-colonised states, “post-capitalist regimes” are established with the aims of a “popular national construction in which the three tendencies of socialism, capitalism and statism combine and conflict” (Amin, 1993). Realisation of such objectives depends upon two crucial elements, i.e. the demystification of the ‘actual nature of capitalism’ and ‘delinking’. Whereas the former is visible in the unequal distribution of wealth among and within the states, the latter is achieved when the
bourgeois nationalist democracies cast away or subordinate the capitalist logic of ‘centre’ in the favour of internal development. However, even in the peripheral societies the bourgeois is comparatively better organised than the other segments and successfully establish capitalism. Consequently, movements in countries with evolving capitalist system are regarded by Amin (1993) as struggles in the ‘peripheral zones of capitalism’ and characterised by the projection of single-issue and rooted in a sense of injustice. However, as Amin observes, these movements,

…fall short of making the demand for the double revolution by which modernization and popular enfranchisement must come together; as a result, their fundamental dimension, feeding on the backward-looking myth, continues to express itself in a language in which the metaphysical concern remains exclusive in the whole social vision.(Amin, 1993: 95)

These backward looking features of the contemporary movements bring us back to the apprehension expressed by Marx regarding the resistance staged against primitive accumulation. While not being appreciative of primitive accumulation, Marx had also no enthusiasm for retaining the social forms which it destroyed. In fact, if we are to accept the historicism associated with Marx’s description of the ‘mode of production’ then primitive accumulation was inevitable as a stage in the evolution of society towards communism.

Drawing a commonality between the earlier struggles and contemporary ones, Harvey (2003) points out to the theme of “reclaiming the commons”. However, there exists a remarkable difference in the initial conditions which formed the basis of primitive accumulation and what Harvey calls ABD. The former was a result of the explicit state violence through the “general act of Parliament for the enclosure of commons” (Marx, 1976: 886) and served as the pre-condition for establishing capitalist system. But the ABD is characterised by its presence in a society experiencing intermediate capitalist stage where both the global and national bourgeois are responsible for establishing “crony capitalism”. ABD has un-folded more dramatically in the post-colonial countries because of the inroads made by the developed capitalist countries under the guise of “development”.

Even though several anti-globalisation movements have explicitly targeted the dominant development ideology, Harvey (2003) is skeptical about their capabilities
because of their “diverse and seemingly inchoate” nature. Further dwelling into the nature of movements against ABD which he termed as “anti- and alternative globalisation movements”, Harvey sums up by saying that,

What this movement lost in focus it gained in terms of relevance and embeddedness in the politics of daily life. It drew its strengths from that embeddedness, but in so doing often found it hard to extract itself from the local and the particular to understand the macro-politics of what accumulation by dispossession was and is all about. (Harvey, 2003: 168-169)

The contemporary anti-dispossession movements in India widely share the characteristics highlighted by Harvey and Amin and the concerns raised by them are quite relevant. However, one issue which requires clarification here is the subject matter of the study. We have seen that, the obscurity of the new law on land acquisition absolves the state of being accused of openly favouring the capitalists. The state, however, cannot be acquitted of this charge if we approach the issue of dispossession while being guided by the notion that it also takes place in variegated and mystified ways. This method of enquiry relies upon the locally-existing factors and eschews the use of neo-liberalism as a meta-narrative which cannot uncover every intricacies of dispossession. This approach also helps us to reveal some of the relevant contours in the discourse of contemporary movements against land dispossession.

Ever since independence, ‘development’ has served as the noble aim behind land dispossession. But the dominant ideology of development which warrants dispossession by the state has rarely been challenged successfully. ‘Jury politics’ which has remained central to the movement against dispossession has rarely invited any positive response from the judiciary. Even now the big development projects like dams and power plants receive judicial sympathy. But one can observe dynamism in the role of judiciary ever since the private players have emerged as the main agents of development. In contemporary India, the anti-dispossession movements share many traits which traverse particular movements. For example, these movements are locally embedded and draw civil society participation with mainstream political parties either being absent or playing just a peripheral role. Devoid of any concrete ideological apparatus, such movements are based upon the ‘politics of local issues’ where the umbrella organisations like National Alliance of People’s Movement (NAPM),
People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and People’s Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) prescribe more humane alternatives to the present development paradigm. Though the absence of any common concern like class has limited the scope of such movements to bring any systemic change what is considered more challenging for them is to maintain their bargaining position in the wake of heterogeneity of interests. Taking recourse to the issue of leadership for such movements, Amin (1993) observes a limited scope for “organic intellectual” and entrusts this role to,

The intelligentsia defined irrespective of the class origin of its members. It is defined by: (1) its anti-capitalism; (2) its openness to the universal dimension of the culture of our time and, by this means, its capacity to situate itself in this world, analyse its contradictions, understand its weak links, etc.; and (3) its simultaneous capacity to remain in living and close communion with the popular classes, to share their history and cultural expression. (Amin, 1993: 98; Author’s emphasis)

With a few exceptions, these attributes have remained integral to the movements in Singur, Nandigram, Bhatta Parsaul, Niyamgiri and other places. While there is no denial of the role played by civil society organisations (CSOs), political parties as a factor influencing the outcome of these movements cannot be ignored either. In fact, the shrinking social space of the political parties earlier provided an opportunity to the CSOs to fill this void. Occasionally, the CSOs and the political parties join hands to take up the issue of land dispossession. However, contestation over the legitimacy to represent the movements also takes place between them. Therefore, writing off the political parties from anti-dispossession movements will not help in properly analysing their role. Their presence, or even absence, is indeed a case to be analysed in the light of the explicit or implicit role they play in strengthening or weakening the movement.

In a society marked with ethnic heterogeneity, class differences and ambiguous cultural notions the chances of emergence of “organic intellectual” has reduced, for they were to emerge from a homogeneous society that is organised on class basis. In fact, the changed social circumstances ask for Amin’s notion of intelligentsia who share tremendous similarity with the civil society activists. But the veiled emergence of elites as “organic intellectual” is the more real situation and their contest with Amin’s intellectual over legitimacy of leadership has rather left space for
maneuvering by corporate forces. In fact, these elites – in posing as “organic intellectuals” – usually succeed in capturing the people’s imagination and emerge as the custodians of anti-dispossession movements through appeals based on cultural affinity.

Taking a dig at the reasons for resurgence of cultural dimension in the contemporary movements, Amin (1993) holds responsible the denial of its space by the national bourgeois as well as the traditional left. However, instead of having any bigger agenda at its hand movements based on cultural assertions are more inclined towards the resurgence of its past glory. Under such leadership and ambiguously defined ‘self-interest’, the participants loose steam against the capitalist forces in the longer run and become more susceptible to the latter’s advances. Many a times the diverse interests of the local elites in addition to the judicial interventions serve as a last resort for these movements to halt the existing corporate onslaught. Moreover, one important feature of locally based protest is their capacity to react readily to the attempts of dispossession. While definitely not coming out successful all the time in countering the corporate forces, such methods are more important in keeping the people up against their exploiters. Scholars may find the method of daily protest to be “a recipe of defeat rather than success” (Levien, 2013) but such movements have something more to offer than merely the aesthetic descriptions attributed to subaltern ways.

Another important matter is the consideration of land as a ‘territory’ – instead of a commodity – under the anti-dispossession movements organised on the plank of culture and identity. Any such claim should be tested within the social milieu in which it is based. But there hardly exist a society which remains isolated in such a way that it transcends the allurement of the mainstream society. While land can be projected as a cultural entity in organising anti-dispossession movements, the reasons for this can presumably rest elsewhere. The best way to examine the existing claim is through capturing the power politics and understanding the embedded beliefs and values of the people through its social anatomy. In a tribal-dominated heterogeneous society like West Singhbhum which has a fair history of interaction with the societies organised on market logic, the cultural beliefs have been diluted and people’s aspirations – by and large – coincide with their mainstream counterparts. The political
elites are mainly interested in carving out legitimacy to play the role of cultural custodian even though the protest movements have more ceremonial value than having a concrete ideology and strategy. Marked with these limitations the discourse of anti-dispossession movements is up against a strategy of dispossession which is subtle, seemingly legal and based upon persuasion rather than open violence.

Although the anti-dispossession movements have exposed the hegemonic form of ‘development’ biased towards the rich, they lack the coherence to fight against its powerful enemy. An analysis from the perspective of accumulation by Levien (2013) hardly leaves any doubt about land dispossession in its present form being highly objectionable. Moreover, the process of dispossession has thrived in context of local realities wherein the role of elites, middle-man, goons and corrupt officials along with the poor bargaining position of the dispossessed comes handy. Despite some progressive demands raised by the dispossessed, e.g. continuation as a share-holder after the change in land use, sovereign decision of the local bodies upon changed land use, etc. there still exists loopholes which tilt the balance in favour of the capitalists. Before engaging with the empirical analysis of resistance movement in West Singhbhum, it will be fruitful to understand the origin and evolution of anti-globalisation movements in India. Apart from identifying the popular attributes this will help to understand the recent shift in modalities as well as comparing them with more local movement in West Singhbhum. In the next section we will make an attempt in this direction.

6.3. Understanding contemporary resistance against ‘land grabs’

The struggle against land dispossession has a long history in India, dating back to the colonial era. In post-independence India, however, land dispossession largely took place due to developmental projects. Initially, a major part of these development projects were carried out by the Indian state with limited scope and role for private capital. Even though the development process provoked protest from the dispossessed communities, such protests are not considered as the defining moment in the discourse of social movements. In fact, movements were largely organised under the rubric of left-oriented political parties raising labour and related issues through different unions. Moreover, discontent against the existing agrarian socio-economic structure erupted in the form of armed movement during the late 1960s. But social
movements as characterised by the presence of certain structure, organisation, leadership, demands, strategy and, most importantly, its intent for change – sometimes reformist while at other times systemic – made their mark since the 1970s and continues till date.

On the basis of the nature of issues taken up by them as well as their period of occurrence social movements can be categorised broadly into three groups. First types of social movements were organised around the issues of political rights during the 1970s after an assault on the democratic institutions by Indira Gandhi led government. The second series of social movements emerged during the 1980s and were identified by their antagonism to state’s development ideology. Finally, the ongoing social movements have emerged after the liberalisation and globalisation of economy since the early 1990s. These movements are grass-root in nature -though enjoying linkages with national and international organisations- and take up the issue of environment, gender, human rights and identity against the onslaught of global capital. Sheth (2004:49) argues that these movements ‘seek to change the power relations on which the conventional model of development is premised’ and disown the ‘old post-colonial critique of development which invoked pre-modern nostalgia’.

The grass-root movements try to ensure participatory democracy by demanding the rights for the communities to govern themselves. Thus, in finding their long-term stake in democracy the marginal section has re-politicised neo-liberal development challenging the state whose power is denuded and undermined by global capital as well as metropolitan elites (Sheth, 2004). Likewise, “land wars” all over the southern hemisphere is a result of similar denudation of state capacities vis-à-vis global capital. However, not only global capital but also domestic capital has equally threatened the land rights in India. Special economic zones (SEZs) remain to be a contentious issue in this regard as they evoke state’s assault upon traditional resource base. The phenomenon of entrusting the “fictitious commodities” like ‘land, labour and money’ to the self-regulating markets, according to Karl Polanyi (2001; first published 1944) gives rise to their commodification. This commodification, Polanyi argues,

….. creates tremendous social dislocations, leading to a widespread societal demand to “re-embed” the market within social and political controls. (Karl Polanyi, 2001)
Polanyi called this ‘reciprocal dis-embedding and re-embedding’ of the market the “double movement” (Levien, 2007:120). The phenomenon called “double movement”, according to Polanyi (2001), has two “organising principles”. Whereas, the economic liberalism will rely upon the trading classes in establishing a self-regulating market the working and landed classes (not exclusively) will rely upon the support of the victims of market to protect themselves through “protective legislations, restrictive associations, and other instruments of intervention as its methods” (Polanyi, 2001:139). Nevertheless, the counter-movement which Polanyi regarded as necessary for re-embedding the ownership on ‘land, labour and money’ in society needs an agency to organise, lead and define its objective. Unlike Gramsci (1971) who identifies the “organic intellectual” as the leader of counter-revolution, Polanyi fails to identify this agency (Burawoy, 2003). In order to investigate the shortcomings in Polanyi’s theory more objectively, Levien (2007) analyses the National Alliance of People’s Movement (henceforth NAPM). An umbrella organisation to guide and lead the ‘anti-globalisation movements in India, NAPM’s formation in 1992 is not coincidental but a response to state’s move to adopt ‘liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG)’. NAPM despite its attempts to synthesise the variegated response to the implications of LPG has failed, at least, to bring farmers’ and dalits’ resistance within its ambit due to several inherent contradictions. Regarding the single-issue movements, it is lamented by the NAPM that people join the NAPM not because they are aware of its ideological position but to give a greater credence to their own struggle for survival (Levien, 2007:141).

Thus, even though the NAPM can be regarded as the Polanyian ‘counter-movement’ intending to re-embed the control of ‘land, labour and money’ in society, we can hardly call the single-issue based movements a “double-movement”. These movements are organised only to negotiate the more localised implications of commodification and leave aside the bigger ideological questions. Modalities of such

---

89 An attempt to re-embed the ownership of resources in the society was made through the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) PESA, Act, 1996. However, confining this ‘re-embedding’ only up to consultation rather than consent of gram sabha made the entire process redundant.

90 Several scholars (Omvedt, 2005; Levien, 2007) have asserted that, farmers’ movement in India is largely organized by the middle-class farmers of green revolution belt who are more concerned with bargaining for Minimum support price (MSP) and other subsides from government. These farmers’ lobby has also been detrimental to the issue of fair wages to the marginalised and land-less farmers. Moreover, the Shetkari Sangathan led by Sharad Joshi has even adopted a position on genetically modified (GM) crops which is in contrast to the position of NAPM. Thus, the major farmers’ movement are right now not only outside the NAPM but also takes a position which goes against it.
movements depend upon the nature of society from which they emanate. Nevertheless, the localised protest movements use several strategies imparted to them through an association with professionally trained activists. ‘Jury politics’, i.e. appealing to the judiciary contesting legality of action by the state or other opponents, remains an important method of protest. But a homogenous response to more variegated processes of dispossession is not a viable option and, therefore, the response need to be grounded in the local realities. Moreover, a centralised leadership committed to ideological issues can also rob the movements of an opportunity to negotiate for a possibly better deal. This point stands better clarified if one looks at the discourses of environmental movements in the developed vis-à-vis developing countries.

The radicalism of “green” ideology of western environmental movements can be discerned from the account provided by Hirsch(2010: 354). Citing the example of Kokoda Track\(^{91}\) in Australia she argues that the locals’ consent for mining to ensure livelihood options was overruled by the outsiders’ concern over the retaining of the space as a war-time memorial. However, environmental movements in India have not written off their class dimension as poverty and rights upon resources have guided such mobilisations. Even though regarded as an “environmental movement” the Chipko Andolan, argues Guha (1989), has an integral component of livelihood issue and its emphasis on “green” derives largely from the Gandhian socialism rather than West’s post-modern lifestyle component (Baviskar, 2005:163). However, differing with Guha, Baviskar (2005) finds an interconnection between the “environmentalism of the poor” and the “environmentalism of the rich” in the ambiguity of the former and argues that,

> A social movement is powerful precisely because its meanings are ambiguous and shifting……. Rather than a reductive search for what an “environmental movement” is “really” about – whether class, race or gender – we need to appreciate its ideological hybridity and the ways in which the tensions and contradictions between different, unequal groups are negotiated. (Amita Baviskar, 2005:174).

\(^{91}\) Hirsch (2010) says that, ‘It was the place of an important battle during World War II between Australians, Papua New Guineans, and the Japanese, which is said in Australian folk traditions to have “turned the fortunes of the Japanese in the Pacific”.'
Through this assertion Baviskar stand for essential linkages between the different single-issue movements forged on the basis of similarity of concerns. Nevertheless, in a discourse where the subalterns are divided among themselves, a disregard for real content just for the sake of “strategic essentialism” can have serious political implications.

One major shift, however, which has been noticed in the position of NAPM is their attitude towards participating in politics. During the general elections of 2014 some of its illustrious leaders like Medha Patkar contested from the newly launched Aam Adami Party (AAP). It seems that the slogan of ‘swaraj’ given by the AAP had attracted the leaders given their own ideology of “alternative development” which embarks upon ‘hamare gaon me hamara raaj’ (Our rule in our village). Ideological leanings and other matters apart, the NAPM has shown its interest in foraging into the electoral domain. Contestations around resource grab, therefore, need to be analysed in a situation where the movements - just for the sake of its own identity as anti-globalisation entity – do not deny interacting with political parties. Nevertheless, the anti-globalisation movements have kept distance from political entities following class-based ideology. Explaining the fall-out between the political parties grounded in class-based ideology and the anti-or alternative globalisation movements, David Harvey (2003:165-166) argues that the communist and socialist politics is more about attacking the class relations rather than protecting the “ancient order”.

The democratic-socialist regime in West Bengal led by the communist parties for well over three decades had to face a stiff resistance when they attempted to deviate from its class ideals and acquired farmers’ land for corporate interests. In fact, such situations have emerged as an opportunity for ideologically diverse spectrum of political parties to pursue a “politics of convenience”. For instance, the Trinamool Congress increased its popularity by piggy-backing the protests held in Singur and Nandigram protests. Moreover, the Congress also grabbed its chance in Odisha and Uttar Pradesh when Rahul Gandhi sided with the protestors in Niyamgiri and Bhatta Parsaul, respectively. In the ongoing agitation against the land ordinance proposed by the BJP-led NDA government one can see a wide spectrum of political entities rallying against the bill. Organisations affiliated to the RSS, Congress, Janata and Communist parties are all united against the land (amendment) bill. However, it will
be too early to conclude the ongoing agitation in favour of an ideology as skeptics also see this as a ploy of the opposition parties to revive their redundant political space. Nevertheless, we have observed that even anti-or alternative globalisation movements did not shy away from garnering the support extended by political parties. Hence, it will be interesting to analyse the nature of association between the movements and political entities.

With identity-based political parties remaining salient in the political discourse of Jharkhand, resistance movements face a stiff challenge to use the same identity to articulate a separate space for itself. In this situation, the leaders of resistance movements bear the responsibility to carve out a strategy to work with the political entities. Looking at Jharkhand it will be pre-mature to argue that any such strategy has already taken shape; though some clue can be gathered which indicates toward this development. In West Singhbhum, the political parties are found to be associated with the movements in their articulation of goals and objectives as well as the struggle to achieve them. In the next section of this chapter we will explore the nature of party-movement association. Nevertheless, the question about who is the real custodian of people’s movement, either the political parties or the movement leaders, raises the issue of viability to act. Can we really assert in a democracy that the protesters are the legitimate carrier of conscience of the people? Or, should this role be conveniently attributed to the political parties? While this question is important, the actual problem is how this legitimacy is constructed, articulated and asserted as a tool against the adversaries.

In the preceding chapter, we observed that the cases of industrialisation under consideration are not typical of the neo-liberal growth model. These industries rather thrive through political patronage and state’s rent-seeking behaviour. Hence, the nature of capital is such that its success rests upon the ability to take advantage of the local conditions. The capitalists never miss a chance to negotiate with the protestors and even apply methods of killing to have their way. Thus, the challenges facing a collective action in West Singhbhum are enormous as they are up against an adversary who is equally informed. Nevertheless, a better response to dislocations caused by neo-liberalism can be articulated through a detailed study of domestic social structures and political histories. It is against the backdrop of this assertion that
in the following section we will attempt to analyse the resistance movements in West Singbhum.

6.4. Analysing People’s movement: Strengths

From the theoretical discussions in the preceding sections, it is clear that the “organic intellectuals” are not the only ones treading the path of movement politics in Jharkhand. It is equally acquired by the political as well as social elites. The prevailing situation is analysed in the second chapter and has its bearing on the movement politics in West Singbhum as well. However, incidents of land acquisition and resulting conflict have not been very uncommon in the district of West Singbhum. It dates back to the colonial period and continued in post-independence India in the form of *Jungle Aandolan* of 1978, *Icha-Kharkai Dam movement* and so on. The former was led by Devendra Manjhi of the *Singhbhum Jungle Mazdoor Union* who was murdered later and the movement subsequently cooled off by 1984. The *Icha-Kharkai Dam movement* was organised in 1978 by Icha-Kharkai Bandh Virodhi Samiti against the construction of dam on Kharkai River. Despite the murder of its leader Gangaram Kalundia in 1982 the movement still persists. It can be said that the movements always had their basis in people’s assertion of rights over “forest, water and land”. Even though the situation has not changed much, definitely the agencies against whom these movements are organised have changed. With corporates being the drivers of economic growth and development these movements are now mainly targeted against them, unlike state in the past. A contrary view on the target of movements is provided by Bedi and Tillin (2015). But it should not be forgotten that the state has emerged not only as the agency for land dispossession but also plays the role of an arbitrator. Moreover, the challenge posed by the movements to the legitimacy of land acquisition due to changing ideological position of the state must also be remembered. The studied cases also had the presence of similar such movement in which the protesting organisation targeted the company acquiring land.

6.4.1. Popular notions of Protest

In early 2010, the Land Revenue department of the State government without any prior notice to the gram sabha or the village *munda* undertook a land survey for limestone mining in Jaintia village. However, when the measurement started the
villagers approached the officials and complained that no prior notice was served to them and hence, wouldn’t allow them to continue. Neglect of this opposition and attempt to go ahead with the measurement led to an attack on the officials by the villagers. When the police reached the village they lodged an FIR against the village munda and dakua. This incident provoked the villagers and the leaders of the area to constitute an organisation for protecting land from acquisition. A public meeting was organised on the initiative of the Ex-MLA of Jagannathpur, Mr. Mangal Singh Bobonga, and Jameen Bachao Samanway Samiti (JBSS) was constituted in June 2010. Subsequently, the JBSS gained popularity due to agitation against Sri Sai Shraddha Metallic Pvt. Ltd. (SSSMPL) which has acquired land in Kotgarh to establish industry. The President of JBSS, Mr. Devra Tubid went on to file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Ranchi High Court in March 2011 questioning the legality of land acquisition in Schedule V area.

JBSS is a local organisation and operates mainly in the Jagannathpur subdivision. Its members are confined to the local villages giving it the colour of people’s movement; and, it registers protest by organising public meetings, submitting petitions, picketing and holding protest marches. Its meetings are largely attended by the tribals. The non-tribals, apart from remaining away from such meetings also accuse the leaders to be engaged in petty politics to gain popularity and serve their political ambitions. While there are protests against land alienation in other parts of West Singhbhum, these organisations are also local in nature. Although a coordination with other organisations is on the agenda of JBSS, till now it is carrying on the protest on its own. Nevertheless, it has a district-wide linkage with organisations like Jharkhandi Organisation for Human Rights (JOHAR) which works on human rights issues; Kolhan Raksha Sangh taking up the issues of autonomy of Kolhan and Porahat region as British government estate, Adivasi Ho Mahasabha and so on.

Ethnic identity serves as a basis for collective action in anti-globalisation movements. But the generic notion of ‘adivasi’ is not as appealing to the adivasis of West Singhbhum as their belongingness to a particular adivasi group. Such a construction of identity has the potential to incorporate the changes pervading the society, and, ‘culture’ is reformulated both in order to constitute as well as resist

---

92 The messenger of munda who performs the task of intimating the villagers about the village affairs, e.g. gram sabha meetings, etc.
‘power’ (Damodaran, 2006:179). Thus, the Ho identity in the present times is framed in a manner which is not only informed by the social changes pervading their societies but also the rudimentary cultural practices which they have retained even now. Equally important is the public memory of long history of struggles against predatory forces that did not simply target their land but the ‘landscape’\(^93\). Therefore, in a departure with the homogeneity of adivasi identity the Hos identify themselves on the basis of their particular repertoire of history, culture and landscape. At one point of time, the identity of being a Ho was so prominent that it resulted into a demand for secession of Kolhan\(^94\). This dynamic construction of identity also results into formulating different modalities of protest\(^95\). In the present circumstances the JBSS largely rely upon ‘jury politics’, i.e. legal contestation by appealing to judiciary as a tool apart from more political options. Moreover, the act of serving petitions to the State Governor specifies the protestors’ awareness of law and constitutionality of protests. Article 244 of the constitution endow upon the Governors, powers to supercede any provisions made by State government in its application to scheduled areas. The Governor is considered the guardian of state’s tribal population and is responsible for protecting their land, socio-cultural ethos and also from money-lenders.

Another issue is that of the association of “metro radicals\(^96\)” with the movement. They are basically regarded as those urban middle class activists who take an ideological position informed by anti-global liberal ideals. They have formed national and international organisations serving as umbrella to forge unity among the grass-root movements by appealing to more universal ideals like human rights, gender rights, etc. In this process they face the risk of overlooking certain mundane factors and issues which may counteract the local movements from achieving their goals.

\(^{93}\) Quoting D Cosgrove (1988) Vinita Damodaran (2006) defines landscape as a ‘socio-historical construct’, a way of seeing projected onto the land which has its own techniques and which articulates a particular way of experiencing a relationship with nature’.

\(^{94}\) The President of Kolhan Raksha Sangh, Mr. K C Hembrom who was earlier associated with Congress Party later flouted the organization during the 1980s. He demanded the secession of Kolhan from the Indian Union on the basis of the former being an autonomous British government estate which was never lawfully acceded to India.

\(^{95}\) In his forthcoming essay ‘Changing Modalities of Ho Social Protest in Colonial Singhbhum’ in N K Das (ed.) Adivasi Unrest and Rights of Tribes in Contemporary India Asoka K Sen argues that the social response among the Hos which varied from being ‘silent to militant and finally legalism’ during the entire span of colonial rule ‘was historically conditioned by shifting consciousness of collective self that forced them to surrender bow-arrow-battle axe and tread the path of peaceful protest’.

\(^{96}\) The term emerged during an interview with the prominent social activist Xavier Dias.
Even though Baviskar (2005) pointed towards this risk, she finds a merit in the ambiguity of the movements as it helps to overcome some inherent differences among the participants. But such an attempt also has the potential to take away the opportunity for the local movements to strategically enter into a negotiation with the adversaries guided by their local concerns. The situation becomes more complicated when these metro radicals attempt to write off the political parties or political aspirations of the leaders of the movements. It is due to this reason that Xavier Dias, a prominent non-adivasi activist in Jharkhand, asserts that ‘the local movements in Jharkhand have found it fruitful to keep a distance from the metropolitan activists’.

It is also worth highlighting that mining activities by Steel giants like Tata and SAIL also takes place in West Singhbhum. On the occasion of lease renewal for these companies the JBSS, guided in its action by the local realities, negotiated for more remunerative compensation for those who loosed their land. Thus, rather than exclusively challenging the dominant ideology of development the JBSS enters into a negotiation with the companies for bargaining free medical facilities, schools, roads, etc. While not explicitly challenging the more basic and structural reasons for dispossession the local movement, by subscribing to ‘jury politics’, raises questions which though local in approach has a wider reach. We must remember the case of Niyamgiri where the Supreme court verdict to conduct gram sabha meeting and seek permission for mining by Vedanta was articulated under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. Hence, even subscribing to constitutional means of protest has not always resulted into the defeat of resistance movements.

6.4.2. Popular measures of Protest

Despite the amendment in Section 49 of the CNTA which included a provision on land acquisition for industrial purposes, the protestors subscribe to the constitutional guarantees provided under Schedule V as well as the Samatha judgment based on it. The protesting organisation claimed that in spite of a written undertaking, the company has acquired fertile adivasi land in Kotgarh. Even though a PIL was filed by JBSS leader Devra Tubid as early as 2011, it was only in 2014 that the Ranchi High Court admitted the case on the basis of legality of adivasi land acquisition in a schedule V area. Nevertheless, the Court has not even applied a temporary

---

97 The question of land acquisition in a scheduled area has a reach which cuts across the State boundaries. State’s attitude towards its cultural minorities is exposed in the process.
moratorium on land acquisition thus paving the way for the companies to proceed further with acquiring land. The continuing attempt by the company to acquire land compels the JBSS to carve out some popular strategies of protest. Hence, apart from the constitutional and legal remedies the JBSS also apply pressure through popular politics in articulating its demands and this is how it engages with the company on day-to-day basis. As mentioned in the previous section, a few of the popular measures applied by the protestors are dharnas, marches, picketing, etc.

As noticed earlier, the activities of the JBSS in not confined to the Kotgarh case and it engages with other issues like land acquisition in Kutingta for aerodrome, extension of mining lease areas for the Tatas, and so on. In a dharna organised early in 2013 against the extension of mining lease areas for the Tata, the JBSS raised the issue of employment and poor compensation along with lack of medical, educational and other social benefits. These demands were made to the company administration through mediation by the state officials. In this context, it is important to revisit the assertion made by Bedi and Tillin (2015:199) that “most of the current resistance to land acquisition and land transfers remains oriented towards the state – rather than private companies – as both the source of the problem and the forum for change”. In fact, the JBSS applies a dual strategy of engaging with the different companies. While they engage directly with the Tatas to bargain certain benefits, with other companies they mainly engage through the judicial arm of the state. However, this strategy can also be understood as a response which is wisely designed as per the local requirements. For example, the JBSS is aware that the Tatas are operating in the area since pre-independence era and it may not be feasible to demand its closure now. Whereas, the upcoming or already operating Sponge Iron Units are small and, hence, a more aggressive posturing through the demand of wrapping them up sounds feasible.

Another noteworthy feature is the method of protest by the adivasi community in most of the cases. Symbolic presence of traditional weapons like bow and arrows, battle axe, etc. during the protests is common. Even though not mandated by the constitutional means of protest which sanctions only unarmed gathering, the adivasis consider this method to be a token of adivasi way of life and, hence, not be seen in
contravention of the constitution. Mr. Mukesh Birua, Vice-President of the Akhil Bhartiya Adivasi Mahasabha, stated that

The carrying of traditional arms derives largely from the adivasis’ historical tendency to rebel against their exploiters. However, under the modern state this action has the token importance for their unique cultural practices. On the other hand, it also reminds the state of the disregard which has been meted out to them for being on the fringe of the greater Indian society. (Interview conducted on 4th January 2012 during pilot survey)

Thus, notwithstanding its presumed illegality, the adivasis’ engagement with the state is an attempt to test the state’s sensibility to a section whose way of life transcends a few norms of modern citizenry. The adivasi way of protest should be, hence, understood not as a threat to state’s legitimacy but as a challenge which reinforces the need for the latter to revisit its commitment towards the former.

In addition to the protest marches, the JBSS also organised public meetings which apart from acting as a forum to reaffirm their conviction to protecting adivasi land also prepared the adivasis to engage with the state. Deliberations during the meetings revolved around the issue of reforming the community from inside through means like education, prohibition of drinking, etc. However, in preparing themselves to engage with the state the adivasis expect reciprocity from the latter. But the way companies have recklessly looted the resources makes the state more susceptible in the eyes of the governed thus weaning away its legitimacy. In this context, we should remember that West Singhbhum is recognised as one of the several hundred districts in central India which is inflicted with left extremism. Protests like the one registered by the JBSS is mostly viewed by the Indian state to be stage-managed by the leftist ultras. This perception has influenced the state’s response in the form of violent repression in case of Nandigram, Singur, Keonjhar and other places. However, it will be wrong to assume that the state’s response is uniform under different circumstances. A relatively guarded response by the Jharkhand State in similar situation, e.g. Nagri, Bhatta Parsaul, and so on is indicative of the fact that the more political clout the communities enjoy, the more reluctant the state is in applying violence. But, as discussed in the previous chapter, there are fault lines within the community also which comes handy as the companies attempt to acquire land. While scholars like
David Harvey (2003) have identified the challenges faced by the localised movements in formulating an overwhelming response to the forces of dispossession, it will not be a mean achievement for such movements to carve out a strategy for engaging with the latter on an everyday basis. And, in adopting the above mentioned measures the JBSS has partially succeeded in challenging the companies as well as the state’s avowal to the present model of development.

Irrespective of the above analysis of the protest organised by the JBSS, we should remember that the protest movements are relatively new and date back to the year 2010. Moreover, as against the post-facto analysis of movements, ongoing movements are futuristic in nature and pose serious challenge for any predictability. Likewise, the JBSS is a growing organisation which has succeeded in bringing more and more similar cases of land dispossession under its ambit. However, the success or failure of the movement will depend upon the bigger political scenario emerging in the State as well as the capacity of the adivasi organisations to overcome differences within its own ranks. Under the present circumstances, the State government is regarded as an unbridled votary of dominant developmental discourse. This definitely is a setback for the JBSS and like-minded organisations which subscribe to the alternative-developmental discourse. However, the powerful presence of the adivasi organisations in both the civil and political sphere of Jharkhand has the potential to put brakes on any step showing complete disregard to the adivasi sensibilities. As of now, the JBSS has succeeded in halting the Kotgarh Plant and this delay cost dearly to the companies. The strategy adopted by JBSS ranges from peaceful protests to violent reactions at state’s attempt to usurp their rights. Hence, these movements carry certain attributes which qualify them as a carrier of “post-civil society politics”.

6.5. Analysing People’s movement: Weaknesses

The movement due to their local nature and a more coherent identity of being a Ho rather than simply adivasi definitely enjoys the advantage of keeping itself aloof from the romantic vision propagated by the urban-based activists. However, there are several reasons which render the movement inherently weak and reduce the chance of a collective action. To name a few the leaders are often found to be wanting in their capacity to analyse the processes of dispossession; at times the leaders are driven by want and aspiration to gain personal leverage; the non-adivasi presence in the village
has acted against the concerted action against the land acquisition; and lastly, the movements face a challenge from the oppressors who are rarely identified as against the visible state repressive measures. In the subsequent sub-sections we will analyse these restraining factors.

6.5.1. Incapacity and corruption among the rank of leaders

In the preceding chapter, we observed that the processes of dispossession are capable of evading the attention of the dispossessed due to its covert nature. Apart from this, to circumvent the legal complications, the companies mainly acquire the non-ādivasi land and avoid the cost of being dragged into litigation. This strategy applied to circumvent the legal complications is also locally designed.

Unlike the resistance against the SEZs in Singur, Nandigram and several other places there is a lack of agitated atmosphere in West Singhbhum as the scale of land acquisition hardly evoke the apprehensions associated with displacement. Moreover, the villagers fail to comprehend the subtle form of dispossession which appears in the form of decreasing ground water level, environmental pollution, loss of productivity of arable land, loss of diversity in flora and fauna and so on. This results into a lackluster attitude of the dispossessed towards the resistance movement. One disadvantage of being dissociated with the urban-based activists is the lack of awareness which the latter would have been able to bring due to their experiences and training to analyse the situation. In her study of special economic zones (SEZs) in Goa, Preeti Sampat (2013:4) draws attention to the similar situation of “speculative dispossession” which can be analysed due to the active participation by intelligentsia, urban-middle class activists as well as more aware people (in comparison to that of West Singbhum).

The classic reason of leaders becoming corrupt and wanting (Kothari, 2002) was found in few of the cases98. Hemant Das, who is also a ward member from Kotgarh village, was associated with the JBSS against the Kotgarh plant. But later on shifted his stand and started acting as an agent for the company. Although such examples may be rare these people serve as bulwark of the companies against the

98 Villagers reported that Hemant Das had been promised a job of labour contractor and transportation once the company starts operations. However, on being asked about his role, he said that even he had given his land to the company and the latter had paid a handsome compensation of Rs.5 lakh per acre.
protesting organisations apart from playing a subtle role in ensuring land acquisition. In the preceding chapter we have already explained the mechanism through which the companies play a fraction of village elite against another. As far as the matter of drawing support from different political parties arises, the JBSS leadership claimed that despite their repeated attempts at drawing the BJP and JMM leaders within its fold, they have not received any consenting response. But the Jharkhand Vikas Morcha- Prajatantrik (JVM-P) and the Congress party provide support to the movement and their leaders are often found to be attending the meetings organised by JBSS. In the present case, it can be interpreted as the absence of support from the governing parties of the State while the opposition parties are in favour.

Regional parties like JMM associate themselves with movements going on in other parts of the State despite being in the government. However, apprehension may be raised about the parties supporting the movement due to the role played by their leaders in the past. It should not be forgotten that the policies which ensures the investment by the companies in the present context, i.e. the NIP of 2001 was framed by the BJP government under Babulal Marandi. He now leads the JVM (P) and has recently opened the front against displacement. Nevertheless, the question remains that in opposing the acquisition whether the party is guided by a fundamental antagonism to the paradigm of development or confines their ‘repertoire around issues of accountability, transparency and so forth’ (Makombe, 2013:13). However, in the present situation land acquisition is still taking place, the protest is still going on and the company is doing assessment for availability of water as well as striving to get environmental clearance. It can be said that despite protests going on they have not been able to put any deciding brakes on the proceedings of the companies.

6.5.2. Non-tribals as a disorganising force

The tribals who are otherwise regarded as subalterns in major parts of India are the dominant social group in the villages of West Singhbhum. It is easy to capture the position accorded to the non-tribals by noticing the manner in which the tribals

---

99 In context of Zimbabwe, E. Kushinga Makombe (2013) argues that the local district administrator acted as a deal-maker in conniving with the company and giving the village chief Garahwa a directive to forcibly resettle his people. The Chief buckled because he assumed it to be a government directive.

100 In a similar situation in Goa, the BJP which was in opposition stood with the protestors against SEZs in the State. Likewise, the Trinamool Congress and others have also been found to be aligning with the protestors in West Bengal and other States.
addresses the former. The tribals rather than calling them non-adivasi refer to the specific group identity viz. tanti (weavers), gope (cattle-herders), kumhar (potters), etc. to which the non-adivasis belong. This way of addressing is mainly due to the group functionality attributed to the non-adivasis in the village society. Even though the non-tribals have not suffered any acute exploitation at the hands of the tribals, the former always aspire to enjoy at least an equal status in the Ho villages. In fulfilling this desire, the non-adivasis are convinced to improve their economic position by selling the little land which they have in lieu of jobs provided by the companies. The non-adivasis have also kept away from the movements against land acquisition\(^{101}\). But one can ask: does a separate identity of being a non-adivasi suffices to remain away from the resistance movements against land acquisition? The answer lies not simply in the fact of having different identity but also the reason that the non-tribals own comparatively marginal piece of land making it difficult for them to even subsist in the given condition. This dual difference is unlike the case of dhangars in Goa who, despite having a different identity enjoy a common stake in the local commons and political economy’ (Sampat, 2013: 6).

If we take a note of the five cases considered in the preceding chapter, then we will realise that wherever the companies acquired non-adivasi land they have already started operations. To state briefly, the non-tribals comprise of around 20-30 per cent of the village population and have either small or marginal land holdings. The village (mauja) is divided into many hamlets (hatu) and usually there is a separate hatu for the non-tribals. Though not a replication of caste-based societies in which outer fringes of the villages are earmarked for the ‘lower’ castes, this practice is based on functionality as the non-tribals used to engage with different non-agricultural duties. Now the question arises that, how do we analyse the non-tribals’ attitude of not joining the JBSS? Can this be categorised as the ‘weapon of the weak’?

The subalterns in this specific context are the non-adivasis and they have applied a means of protest against adivasi domination which though not as subtle and mellow as the typical forms of “everyday resistance” are, nevertheless, more crucial in challenging the domination of the adivasis (Haynes & Prakash, 1991). Thus, a situation in which the non-adivasis barely gather the courage to openly confront the

---

\(^{101}\) Preeti Sampat (2013:6) cites the example of the dhangars who do not originally belong to Goa and, hence, do not share the same Goan identity as those having ancestral roots in the area.
adivasis proposal by the companies has arrived as an opportunity to contest the power of the dominant groups. However, the non-adivasis are also disgruntled with the companies as the latter has retracted on its legal responsibilities like providing drinking water, village roads, schools and other utilities. At the macro-level political scenario the rise of Hindu right wing party has emboldened the non-adivasis, who regard themselves as ‘general’. This has implications for Jharkhandi politics, explained elsewhere (in Chapter 2), as the non-tribal Jharkhandis look forward to the non-Jharkhandi parties. However, certain issues like that of domicile \(^{102}\) provoke the non-adivasis to stand with the adivasis.

Nevertheless, the adivasis also have sold their land to the companies and a probable explanation can be found in the fact that the adivasi society is ‘agnostic’ rather than ‘organic’ (as argued in chapter 3) and the difference in rank, prosperity and power provoke the adivasi to acquire different attitude towards the issue of land. Furthermore, the inevitability of resistance as a response to land dispossession is an over-simplified notion. Mamonova (2013:1), in her study based in Ukraine, argues that the response of the land owners is guided by: (i) the terms of inclusion in land deals; (ii) adaptive response strategies over resistance; and (iii) personal gains than benefits for the whole community. How much are these factors responsible in shaping the response of different constituencies (tribal and non-tribals) is very difficult to establish objectively. But the similarity of a fragile resistance in West Singhbhum and near-absent resistance in Ukraine points toward certain amount of similarity. Apart from the local factors playing their role in shaping the response of the people, the under-development of West Singhbhum also plays a major role in forcing the people out of un-remunerable agriculture. As a supply side factor, this reason is again reverberated in Mamonova’s (2013:6) study who states that ‘a sharp reduction of state subsidies in agriculture and price liberalisation for agricultural products lead to bankruptcy of many collective farms and abandonment of collective farmlands’. The prevailing unemployment, lack of livelihood options, and most importantly, ‘rising

\(^{102}\) Presently, any person who has the land records of 1936 should be considered a domicile of Jharkhand. This provision keeps out a lot of people, who have migrated into Jharkhand, from enjoying the benefits under reserved categories. However, recently the BJP government under Raghuvan Das is considering the proposal to make the requirement provision as ‘residents in the state for the last ten years’. This will make a whole lot of people eligible for reservation in state jobs thus increasing the competition for the present beneficiaries.
psycho-social tension’ due to grim prospect of fruitful venture in agriculture further alienates the people from their farms.

6.5.3. State’s attitude towards dispossession

Apart from the CNTA, a plethora of laws exist which ensures the protection of tribal land and let them govern their affairs themselves. In addition to this, the Supreme Court verdict in Samata case of 1997 held the view that, in a matter of acquiring tribal land even government shall be considered as non-tribal and denied the acquisition. The PESA, 1996 also grants special powers to the Gram Sabha to take decision on land acquisition for mining and other purposes. But the exceptions are usually incorporated in the existing protective legislations from time to time. For example, the Section 49 of CNTA introduced in 1969 for acquiring land for public purpose was further amended in 1995 to enable the acquisition of land for industrial purposes. However, under the NIP of 2001, which grants power to the corporate to establish industries in the scheduled areas, the CNTA needs to be revisited as ‘public purpose’ is very conveniently being equated with private gains when private sectors are endowed with the responsibility of growth and development.

The NIP has come as a blow to the traditional rights of the tribals upon the resources. The objectives of the Act are to establish industries harnessing the available resources for the growth and development of the state. It is ironical that tribal development is not mentioned separately in the draft of a legislation which is supposed to deal with development issues at the macro level. Whereas employment figures to be a major concern of the policy, the nature of jobs available for the people can be discerned from the status of literacy in the district. Such employment often results into what is regarded by Natalia Mamonova (2013:8) as ‘illusive inclusion’, i.e. a term of inclusion in which ‘the outcome is not different from that of being excluded’. Besides the dubious employment of contract workers (see Chapter 4, section 4.2) these industries have a capacity to employ lesser number of people than it marginalise. When the government is keen on reducing subsidies on diesel and other agricultural inputs the Industrial department of Jharkhand under NIP has extended subsidy to the companies investing here (The Financial Express, 2008). Finally, the draft of NIP raises the issue of difficulty faced by the companies in acquiring land, but
nowhere does it mention the issue of compensation being paid to the people by the company.

Two areas in which the state acts in contradiction to its own commitment are the issue of environment and tribal participation. Industrial pollution and its impact on neighbouring villages can be observed at Noangaon of Jhinkpani block and Barajamda of Noamundi block. Whereas the homestead land has turned black due to deposits of dust and smoke coming out of the chimney of the factory, the agricultural land has lost its productivity. As far as, tribal participation in the management of industries is concerned it seems to be a distant dream in the light of claim made by various people that even the gram sabhas are seldom informed about land acquisition. Thus, the state has neither deviated from its aim as defined under the NIP nor has brought any provision within the existing policy to address the concerns raised by different communities. Moreover, a Hindu right-wing party with a clear agenda of neo-liberal growth will further aggravate the situation for the adivasis. The paradigm of development which is based upon resource grab is, thus, an oxymoron for Jharkhand as it impoverishes the same adivasis in whose name the State was formed.
Diagram No. 6.1a: Illustration of the strength and weakness of anti-dispossession resistance movements, in general and West Singhbhum, in particular

- Association with urban-based activists
- Organisation around “ambiguous” identity
- Has global linkages

- Mainly indigenous activists
- Association with political parties
- Enters into negotiation with the adversary

- Ideological leanings hamper negotiations
- Apathy towards political parties

- Premised on “aggrieved” identity
- No global linkages
- Absence of urban-based activists
6.6. Summary

It can be concluded on the basis of the preceding analysis that anti-dispossession resistance movements in West Singbhum adopt a course of action which is decided more in accordance with the local realities than on the basis of notions carried by national alliances. We also observed that the vocabulary of the anti-globalisation movements has broadened to include a strategic coalition with political parties to achieve objectives. Even an attempt to directly acquire state power through participating in elections is no more considered untouchable. On the basis of our analysis we can identify several areas where the national alliances need to learn from the local movements and *vice-versa*. For example, the articulation of a dynamic notion of tribal identity need to be reconsidered and a clue can be taken to forge unity among different adivasi communities by respecting their subjective notion of self. Whereas, the urban middle-class activists are required to deconstruct the subtle mechanisms of dispossession, their views on broader issues should not be imposed at the exclusion of the local imaginations. However, certain constraints like the inter-community divide between the tribals and non-adivasis can be better addressed by learning from the common experiences of dispossession.

Coming to the nature and objectives of the anti-dispossession resistance it can be said that more than challenging the basic structures of dispossession, e.g. land acquisition and mining, the movements have strived to address the issue of local employment, ensuring corporate responsibilities, etc. As the movements are targeted against a specific nature of capital which apart from employing several local measures to acquire land also apply killings of activists through hired goons, ‘jury politics’ remains to be a viable option for delaying the projects. Finally, looking at the trajectory of ‘development’ in the State, it seems more protests to big mining and industrial projects are in the offing. A clue to this speculation finds currency in the ordinance moved by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government led by the BJP to amend the infant Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement (RTFCTLARR) Act, 2013. The said ordinance intends to dilute two crucial central provisions of the Act. First, it does away with the requirement of consent by the 70 and 80 per cent of the affected people in case of PPP and private projects, respectively. Second, the ordinance relaxes the
Social Impact Assessment required to evaluate the rehabilitation and resettlement measures. While the BJP is hardly expected to deviate from pursuing its brand of development, the JMM too will never find a better opportunity to play the role of a genuine opposition carrying the mandate to represent the woes of the adivasis.