CHAPTER II
RESEARCH DESIGN AND INTRODUCING THE REGION -
UTTARA KANNADA
The present chapter has two sections with Section I comprising the Research Design and Section II comprising of the Region which is the field area of the study.

I. RESEARCH DESIGN

The nascent field of ecological/environmental movements has generated academic attention across the world. In India too, the ecological and environmental movements have been the subject of academic and general attention from different disciplines and diverse perspectives. The sociological studies of the ecological/environmental movements are very meagre and the access to published studies is severely limited. The present study is located in the larger sociological framework of movement studies and more specifically New Social Movements and aims to sociologically explain and understand the increasing ecological movements which are continually located in the development process, with specific historical settings. The diversity of the numerous ecological movements was proposed to be understood by studying multiple ecological movements which after initial fieldwork was narrowed down to three. Crucial to the ecological movements was the perceptions of environment and development of the different actors - the ecological movement, counter mobilisation and the government and the consequent
interaction between the three major actors which shaped the nature and direction of the ecological movement. The scope of the study was restricted to examining the existing and emerging trends in ecological movements with reference to environment development and the alternatives to development in the three ecological movements. The study is descriptive and analytical in nature.

The present study examines:

1. (a) the nature of the ecological movements, (b) the notions of environment and development, (c) ideology, (d) goals (e) leadership (f) membership composition (g) strategy (h) movement dynamics (i) the success or failure of the movement and the associated reasons;

2. (a) the perceptions regarding environment and development of the local people where the development project is located and the government which is the initiator of the development process (b) the alternatives to the development process as articulated by the movements;

3. (a) the nature and sources of environment awareness of the movement members were due to (i) the project impact on the environment and their property (ii) newspapers, activists, word of mouth, government’s awareness campaign etc. (b) the factors resulting in environment awareness - earlier exposure to
environmental activism, the nature of occupation - land related or non-land related, the returns from the land/occupation, the length of stay in the area etc. (c) the existing environmental ethos;
4. The nature of activism - passive and active;
5. The perception of the counter-mobilisation if any of the movement, environment and development;
6. Whether the identity of the movement was given by the issue or the membership composition which was in terms of primordial/ascriptive or occupation/class categories or a combination of both;
7. The varying project impact on the surrounding areas might result in varying perceptions of the development project with varying nature of participation and non-participation.

Data was collected through Participant Observation and Interviews.

Respondents were chosen from the movement and counter mobilisation, participants and non-participants, supporters and opposers of the movement and the project, the neutral category. The leaders, the local politicians, government officials were interviewed, so that, a holistic understanding could be arrived at of the movement by incorporating the different perspectives. The compositeness of the movement was aimed to be captured by including the different caste,
occupational categories, political party members etc. Different interview guides were used for the following categories: (a) movement participants and leaders had different interview guides (b) the counter-mobilisation category had a different interview guide (c) the government officials had a different interview guide. The interviews ranged from 15 minutes to three hours and many were taped.

Information was collected from the primary and the secondary sources. Primary sources - interviews with movement supporters, participants, counter mobilization members, local leaders, local politicians, government officials; movement literature, government documents. Secondary sources were newspaper reports, articles, journal papers, government publications and reports.

The three ecological movements chosen for study were (a) movement against the Bedthi Hydro Electric Power Project (b) People’s response to Kaiga Nuclear Power Plan (c) People’s Response to Sharavathi Hydro Electric Power Project all of which were located in the Uttara Kannada district in Karnataka. This region was selected for study due to the following reasons: (a) the region had a history of environmental activism dating back to the 19th century (b) Since 1979 onwards, multitude of ecological movements with respect to almost every aspect of nature and opposing a variety of
development projects had emerged for example, in the mid 1970s, the fishermen of the coastal talukas had opposed industrial pollution and mechanised trawling which disturbed the marine ecosystem, as well as, their fish catch, which in the late 1970s. This was followed by the movement against the Bedthi dam in the Upghat taluka of Mellapur on the grounds that it would negatively affect the environment and the survival of the people. This in turn in the early 1980s, was followed by the Appiko movement which protested against the illegal and indiscriminate tree felling for industrial purposes and brought in the practice of scientific tree-felling and protection of tree cover in addition to evolving a new environmental resource use practices. This movement which was almost immediately followed by the movement against the Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant on environmental grounds which was followed by the movement against the Sharavathi Tail Race Project on the grounds that the dam would submerge one of the last vestiges of the tropical rainforest in the Western Ghats. In addition, the regions adjacent to Uttara Kannada were active in environmental activism. Thus, the region offered a wide variety of environmental movements responding to different aspects of the development process with specific historicity, styles and strategies of protest. (b) Moreover, no other region in the country was the
focus of such diverse ecological movements and hence, the region offered a rich area for sociological studies. (c) The region also had varied developmental projects ranging from social forestry to mechanised trawling, from dams and to nuclear power plants and thus offered the scope for the study of the perception of the local people's and the government's perception of development and the environmental impact of the development projects. (d) The region was a pioneer in environmental activism during the pre-Independence period and post-independence era and was a trend setter in environmental activism in terms of politicisation of the environment issue through elections, approaching the courts for justice on environmental grounds. The first sustained movement against nuclear power plant was located in this area; the first success of environmental movement against dams was in this area; the first favourable decision by the High Court for the environmental movement and against the government and the development project-dam was again located in the area. (e) The region also offered the crucial political party and movement interlinkage in its different dimensions (f) Hence, the region was a microcosm of prevailing environmental activism and developmental alternatives at the national level. (g) The researcher's familiarity of
the area since 1986 and knowledge of the local language Kannada also made communication easier.

The three movements selected for study were for the following reasons:

1. Movement against the Bedthi Hydro Electric Project was chosen for study due to following reasons: (a) it was the first people’s ecological movement to succeed against a development project on environmental grounds. (b) it was also the trendsetter in mobilising political, people and power and alternative scientific power to that of government’s contentions in achieving its goal. At the time of the framing of the study the movement (which had begun in 1979 and had ended in 1981), was meant to be a case study. The published literature either in terms of movement or general literature was almost non-existent. The limited published accounts by one of the active participants was not an account of the entire movement, but only a part of it which was discovered on the initial field visit in May-June 1990 to Uttara Kannada. The movement was proposed to be reconstructed through oral history. The movement leaders and participants were contacted and the movement’s pamphlets, memoranda and the minute book of one of the organisations was acquired. Most of the leaders were still alive and were interviewed. The
movement participants were mainly taken from the Magod and Manchikere areas where the movement was very strong.

The socio-economic profile of the participants, event, structure, reconstruction, the motivation and nature of participation and the perception of the success of the movement have been constructed in order to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the movement composition, activities and dynamics. The study covered Yellapur, Sirsi and Siddapur taluqs with the last only in a representational form. In the Yellapur taluq leaders and the movement participants were interviewed, 25 in number, and came from the directly affected area; in Sirsi which was an indirectly affected area, the movement leaders and participants 10 in number were interviewed as well as the major actors of the seminar group. Thus, until 1991 when the major fieldwork was conducted, the movement against the BHEP was primarily aimed to be reconstructed through oral history.

In 1992, during the second phase of the fieldwork, the government of Karnataka had decided to revive the BHEP and the dormant movement revived and by August first week, was mobilising the resources and had laid out the strategy of the movement. The new organisation which had emerged only in 1992, was organising the mobilisational activities which were still at a very
nascent stage. Hence, the researcher had first hand information on the strategy of the organisation and had interviewed 10 leaders of the 2nd phase. Until then, no other activities had taken place. In the latter half of August 1992, the government of Karnataka suddenly announced the decision to implement the project which precipitated protest actions by the organisation. The researcher could not rush to the field because (a) as the activity was sudden and largely dependent on government actions and hence unpredictable and (b) the researcher was in New Delhi and the national press did not report the events until the major events were over. Later on, the events were reconstructed mainly through newspaper clippings and by interviewing some participants. Newspapers were a major source of information concerning the different perceptions, events of the movement etc. and unlike the first phase of the movement in 1979-81 which had meagre coverage of the movement activities in the state level newspapers, the second phase in 1992 had very good press coverage. The researcher was able to observe the movement in its dormant stage and its revival. The Government of Karnataka, its officials and its autonomous bodies were not forthcoming with the information as (a) the Chief Minister S. Bangarappa had given oral instructions to withhold information even from the MLAs and MLC's until
his approval, (b) the issue was politically sensitive. Hence, the government’s perception was not available to the researcher on first hand basis. The people’s response to Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant was selected for study for the following reasons: (i) The first anti-nuclear power movement in India was being opposed on environmental grounds, (ii) For the first time the movement had fielded a candidate for the Lok Sabha General Elections in 1989 on a purely anti-nuclear issue, (iii) this had generated government and the Department of Atomic Energy’s response and a debate on the issue of nuclear power in India for the first time (iv) the participants had filed a public interest writ petition in the Supreme Court for the first time in the country. The movement was a trend setter on all the above counts. Data was collected to reconstruct the movements event structure, the membership composition, the different perspectives, the movement dynamics in terms of rural-urban, insider-outsider; affected-non-affected, pro and anti project, government and movement interactions. The entire issue had been extensively covered both by the local and state level newspapers, which were a major source of information as far as the date of events and event structure. The contents of the reports were cross checked (a) by comparing different newspapers and (b) with the participants in the events.
A major drawback of the three movements undertaken for study was that written records of the meetings or events were not kept. Though concerned movement participants recounted events and narrated what happened, they were unable to give specific dates, which was overcome to a large extent by the newspaper reports. It must be mentioned that even the local press in the district did not keep copies of the newspapers and at the state level, it was an arduous task to sift through the different newspapers.

The field areas covered were Karwar, Yellapur, Sirsi and Honnavar taluqs in Uttara Kannada and Bangalore. The leaders and spokesperson in all these regions, besides the opposers and supporters of the project, the neutral category, the local politicians, scientists, government officials, lawyers were interviewed. The researcher attended meetings, conferences of different groups and had partial access to government documents and reports. The government of Karnataka had taken the position that the issue is sub-judice and (b) the Nuclear Power Corporation would handle the issue. The movement was active from 1985 onwards and its activities petered off in 1990 with sporadic actions. The researcher was able to observe the movement in its dormant stage and the court battle. The pro-Kaiga project respondents were mainly drawn from
the Kaiga village (18 in number), Karwar (one person) and Sirsi (two people). The anti-Kaiga respondents were drawn from Karwar, Sirsi, Yellapur, Bangalore and Honnaver and numbered 81. Respondents were taken from the different social categories of caste occupation, gender, etc.

The people’s response to the Sharavathi Tail Race Project was taken up for the following reasons: (a) it was the first movement against a dam to get a favourable verdict in the courts. (b) it had generated a pro-project group too and hence the movement dynamics were an interactive process between the pro and anti project responses, the government’s, response and the Court procedure and verdicts. The field areas were primarily Honnavar taluq, Bangalore and Sirsi taluq and the researcher interviewed the leaders and participants of the anti-project movement in Honnavar (32), in Sirsi (3) and in Bangalore (4). The pro project respondents in Honnavar taluq and specifically at Gerusoppa were 11. One neutral person and the local politician was also interviewed. In addition, the lawyers fighting the Court cases in the local Munsiff and High Court as well as Supreme Court were interviewed. The sources of information were interviews of the different actors, government reports and documents; limited anti-project movement literature and newspaper reports of the events.
The state government refused to respond by stating that the matter was subjudice. The membership composition of the movement was aimed to be comprehended by including respondents belonging to different castes, occupations, educational qualifications etc. In order to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the movement as many different social categories of people as well as perceptions were included. The span of the movement began from 1987 and was largely responsive to the actions of the government and the legal processes. As the public interest writ petition was filed in 1988, the movement activities ceased and resumed only when the project authorities violated the stay orders of the Court. The researcher was in the field during the dormant period of the movement from 1990-1992 and since the actions were spontaneous, it was not possible to rush to the field. The movement at present is in the dormant stage. The region in which these movements are set is introduced in the next section.

SECTION II: UTTARA KANNADA - THE BACKDROP

Uttara Kannada district, situated at 74° 9' to 75° 10' east longitude and 13° 55 to 15° 31' north latitude has the highest forest cover of 80.92 percent in Karnataka (KFD 1987) which is higher than the national average of thirty-three and one-third percent. It is divided into three geographical regions - coastal,
upghat and the plains or maidan, each characterised by unique topography and economy. The coastal talukas of Karwar, Ankola, Kumta, Honnavar and Bhatkal are well developed areas having greater population density and high degree of economic development. The coastal talukas are traditionally known for their international sea-ports which were the spice gateway of India. The traditional economy of the area is dependent on trade and fisheries as the coastal areas have insignificant forest cover. In course of time, the importance of the sea ports declined due to (a) the establishment of new trading points on the West Coast by the Portuguese and British who were the main buyers of the spices and other forest produce, (b) the opening of the interior areas by road network by the British resulting in the transfer of trade to the land from the sea and (c) opening and developing of new trading points of Marmagao and Bombay in preference to the traditional ports by the Portuguese and British respectively. The resulting collapse of the mainstay trade economy of the region saw the large-scale migration of coastal population to newer trade and economic centres in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies. The long neglect of the coastal area resulted in the feeling of neglect and deprivation among the local population, who constantly clamoured for the development of Karwar as a major port, establishment of industries.
in the coastal areas and constructing railway line linking Karwar with the interior Karnataka. The post-independence scenario did not significantly improve and consequently the people continued to migrate to other economic centres as there was little to hold them to their native place. The pre-Independence demands of laying of railway line linking the coast with the rest of the state, establishment of industries and the development of Karwar as a major port in order to regain the lost glory, continued to be raised by the population of coastal taluqs in Independent India. Hence, any industry or development project, irrespective of its environment consequences is welcomed and supported by the local population. This background explains and determines the response of the coastal population to the environmental issues.

The Sahyadrian Region or the Upghats

This region is the most heavily forested area of the district and consequently has flourishing trade centres in spices and other forest produce. Yellapur, Sirsi and Siddapur talukas were well known for the forest wealth, spices, timber and sandalwood since antiquity. Towns like Haliyal, Yellapur and Sirsi grew at the natural gap passes which were the halting places for caravans going from the upghats to the coastal
areas. Haliyal was famous for timber trade, Sirsi for areca and cardamom; and Yellapur and Siddapur for timber, teak and spices. These forest products which were exported to Europe were coveted by the merchants and kings. Pepper, the most prized commodity in Europe, grew wildly and naturally in the evergreen forests and was very often left unharvested by the local people.

The region with dense forest cover was thinly populated and human habitats existed right into the interior. A unique composite system of horticulture was developed by a particular sect of Brahmins - Havyak who specialised in mixed spice gardening in the valleys of the ghats. This region also had witnessed several 'Jungle satyagraha' and forest struggles.

The Plains or the Maidans

This region has a greater percentage of plain land, than the forest land.

The Uttara Kannada [henceforth UK] district is richly endowed with mineral deposits, forest and fishery wealth. Its mineral wealth has been exploited considerably, resulting in the diversion of 15,033.01 ha. of forest land (UK Gazetteer 1985). The few industries in UK exploit either the forest wealth or mineral or fish wealth. Manganese, bauxite, limestone and iron ore reserves are extensively exploited. The
total forest area lost to mining is 26,713 ha. The ravaging of forests by the human settlements near the mines as well as the extensive water pollution by the mining companies have lead to widespread environmental deterioration.

The coastline (144 km) of UK is known as the Mackerel district and constitutes 4.5 percent of the total income of the district. The fishermen constituting 5.1 percent of the total district population suffer the consequences of the interference in the water resources and are highly responsive to issues which threaten their survival. Fishermen have mobilised and protested against the mechanised fishing in the coastal waters of Bhatkal which upset the catch of the non-mechanised fishing boats by overfishing in 1975. In 1975, the Karwar fishermen protested against the 'Fish Kills' caused by the release of effluent by the only factory on the sea-coast - The Caustic Soda Factory of the Ballarpur Industries Limited. They have also resisted the Sea Bird Naval Base and participated in the anti-Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant movement.

**Forests**

The Western Ghats, repositories of the vast remaining tropical evergreen forests with their rich, varied endemic flora and fauna, have greatly shrunk today due to human intervention. The last remaining
tropical evergreen forests of the Western Ghats are in Karnataka and Kerala, and are facing the onslaught of the development intervention of the humans in addition to the natural changes. The original ecosystem has been greatly altered in varying degrees and very few undisturbed areas have remained intact. Evergreen and deciduous forests predominate the region. The coastal forests which are semi-evergreen begin a few kilometres from the sea coast due to the heavy rainfall. Along the coast, the vegetation is scrub, and growth of secondary species of trees. The coastal forests have been heavily exploited over centuries and have lost their original nature.

The upghat forests are in contrast, lofty, dense and evergreen. The heavy rainfall 3000 mm promotes the dense and often impenetrable green vegetation, supporting a bewildering variety of animal life besides human beings. They continue to be wellknown for their spices and other forest produce and harbour many wild relatives and ancestors of the numerous domesticated plants of the region.

The rich biological diversity and forest wealth has been tapped since ancient times, probably beginning on a smaller scale and increasing with greater population, state, trade and industrial pressures. The extent and nature of the forests has greatly changed due to human
interventions in the natural environment. The competing and often conflicting interests of different interest groups on the forest resources have existed since times immemorial. Francis Buchanan records in his officially commissioned travels by the East India company in AD 1807 that:

Most of the cultivated lands in Kaiga are private property; but the hills and forests belong to the government. Every man pays a certain Shistu, Caicagada or land-tax, for the whole of his property in cumulo and cultivates it in whatever manner he pleases (1988:139).

Buchanan records the ownership of different rights over forest of UK. During pre-British time, the state had already exercised its ownership right over the hills and forests. The Havyaka Brahmins considered that "all the forests spontaneously producing pepper with the gardens and rice fields inter-mixed are their private property" (Buchanan 1988: 208). The state had restricted the local use of certain forest produce like sandalwood, teak etc. which it had deemed important. A different taxation system was devised to raise revenue from the garden lands.

Buchanan also mentions the presence of protected forests -

The forests are the property of the gods of the village in which they are situated and trees ought not to be cut without having obtained leave from the Gouda or headman of the village, whose office is hereditary and who here also is priest (Pujari) to the
temple of the village god. The idol receives nothing for granting this permission; but the neglect of the ceremony of asking his leave brings his vengeance or the guilty person. This seems, therefore, merely a contrivance to prevent the government from claiming the property (1988: 187-9).

He reported that the mountains were covered with the most stately forests, that this region had the finest trees he had seen in his travels. The forests were endowed with rich, diverse and numerous wildlife.

From Buchanan’s account one can tentatively infer that (a) the region was endowed with forests relatively undisturbed by human activities (b) there was a relatively well defined system or rights of use and access to these forests, as well as the ownership of them (c) a special category of forests belonging to the village gods outside the government’s mighty claim to ownership, with limited access to them. (d) those served as a sanctuary for diverse species of flora and fauna (e) the existence of an ecological ethic of conservation and resource prudent practices.

The British deemed UK to be a ‘forest district’ as in terms of exploitable wealth. It was second only to the Himalayas (which was extensively exploited by the British) and sought to tap its extensive forest resources through their stringent forest regulations and laws which (a) enabled the British government to own the forests (b) the traditional local ownership and access
to the forest was denied and severely curtailed. Extensive networks of road and railways, right into the interior were laid by the British to extract the forest wealth. The Western Ghats were exploited for spices and timber used for ships and railway sleepers. The interior forests were exploited for the required trees and in the cleared space, teak plantations were developed.

Hence, the forest laws enacted by the British, which gave them full control over and ownership of the forests, while usurping the traditional rights of the forest communities, generated protests throughout India, with UK being no exception.

Forest Privileges and Protest Tradition

From an unrestricted access to forests, the local population had its access severely curtailed by the successive British laws. The local population dependent on forest produce for fuel, food and timber requirements, in addition to the vital leaf manure for the spice gardens, was suddenly alienated from its resource base. The spice gardens mimicking the forest ecosystem and located in forest areas, required leaf manure on a large scale from the forests, without which the laboriously cultivated spice garden would die out thereby affecting the Thotogar (i.e., gardener) and consequently the entire trade economy of the Upghats.
In 1868, the order defining the boundaries of state-owned forests in UK was passed followed by the Forest Act of 1878, with the result that the local population which earlier could legitimately get fodder, leaves and firewood, now was deprived of them. The British forest officials harassed the local people considerably, sparing none. The prevalent Cumri (shifting) cultivation in the coastal areas was severely restricted in 1848 and later totally prohibited in 1860 (Nadkarni 1989:40). In 1867, the British granted limited privileges to the gardeners allowing them restricted access to forests, for lopping for fodder, fuel and leaf manure from the soppin bettas¹ for the spice gardens.

The gradual increase of the state control of ownership of forests and the declaration of vast forest areas as reserved, protected and village forests, decreased the people’s access to the forests to the minimum. The consequent threat to their survival and their forced alienation from nature resulted in the articulation of their grievances and the mobilisation of the people. In 1886, at Sirsi town, the Kanara Forest

¹ Soppin bettas are forests which are allowed to be tapped by the totagars to meet the garden requirements. The state owns the forests and the totagars are allowed only restricted use for their garden requirements.
Grievances Meeting was held with the principal focus of articulation of forest grievances. At the next meeting at Sirsi in 1887, a decision was taken to send a representative to the Indian National Congress’s annual session of 1887 to be held in Madras to communicate the situation in UK and to seek support. Thus, we find that mobilisation, articulation of interests, petitioning and exploring the political channels in British India for help in redressing the forest grievances were utilised by the then leadership. The protests and struggles, though distinct in character, were subsumed by the larger struggle - the movement for India’s independence.

The UK Gazetteer (1985) records that though all sections of the population were affected by the Forest Acts, different sections were affected varyingly, in proportion to the degree and nature of dependence of different communities on the forest. But the elite, which consisted of landlords, gardeners and peasants who had "extracted the lion's share of benefits from the forests mainly for profit" (Nadkarni 1989:57), was the most vocal segment and led the protest movements. The caste elite consisted of the Havyak Brahmins who were gardeners, the Gauda Saraswat Brahmans (staying mainly in the coastal areas) who were merchants and the Vaishyas who dwelt in towns and were traders.
Vernacular newspapers played a crucial role (a) in generating awareness among the literate section of the population regarding the national movement (b) functioning as the channel of articulation of grievances of people regarding forests and other issues (c) conveying any information concerning UK. Some of the newspapers were - Havyaka Subodha (1895) (a caste newspaper of Havyaks) published from Bombay, Kaanada Suvarte (1882) published from Bombay, Kaanada Vritta (Canarese News) (1916) published from Kumta and Kaanada Dhureena (1918), published from Kumta to convey the people's grievances regarding the forest grievances. Newspapers (caste or otherwise) have traditionally played an important role in generating awareness and mobilising people as well as operating as channels for communicating the grievances of the people.

Though there was a long history of sporadic protests regarding forest usage dating back from A.D.1800 (Nadkarni, 1989); increase in taxes by the rulers (Tippoo of Mysore) resulting in the refusal of garden cultivation by the tothagars throughout the dominion (Buchanan, 1988), it was the British intervention in appropriating forests and curtailing the local's customary rights over forest produce that resulted in a sustained forest rights agitation which was intertwined with the freedom struggle.

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UK was actively involved in the freedom struggle whose contribution was praised by Sardar Patel and Gandhi. The Congress Party was very active and the good circulation of the newspapers resulted in the awakening of the consciousness of the people and located their local struggles in the wider struggle for freedom. The area was considered as a launch pad in Karnataka for a Bardoli type of agitation at the Allahabad meeting of the All-India Congress Working Committee in 1921 and the then KPCC President Gangadhar made out a case for Uttara Kannada by giving the following reasons:

....(1) the people of the district were peace loving by nature and highly preservent in the work they would undertake (2) the Brahmana - Non Brahmana controversy was not so very strong in the district unlike elsewhere in Karnataka (3) The common people had deep faith in Mahatma Gandhi (4) The people were highly emotional and were ready for making sacrifice (5) Students from the district who had given up their studies (in response to the call of Non-cooperation in 1920-21) had worked in the villages and created awakening in the people (UK Gazetteer 1985:166).

Local Protest Traditions

In addition to the freedom struggle’s national protest traditions of civil disobedience and its various forms like spinning and weaving of cotton yarn, salt-making, picketing of liquor shops etc. the purely local protest forms were also prevalent. During the rainy season, when other civil disobedience activities could not take place, the forest based satyagraha was launched
and the youth guided the people when the main leaders were arrested. The movement was well organised and diversified and was prevalent in many areas. The Hullubanni satyagraha was the refusal to pay tax (two annas) for grazing cattle in the state forests. The resulting collection was almost negligible. The forest satyagraha was the "symbolic cutting of a twig from the reserved forest or cutting a fully grown sandalwood tree in contravention of the forest regulations" (UK Gazetteer 1985: 172). The forest satyagraha was well organised in Sirsi and Siddapur talukas with the additional supportive participation from Ankola and Kumta talukas. The satyagraha was sought to be quelled by force by the government and the satyagrahis who had assembled in hundreds were mercilessly beaten by the police. Despite being armed with sickles and axes, the satyagrahis did not use them and ensured that the satyagraha would throughout remain peaceful and non-violent. In protest against police excesses, many and sometimes all Patels (revenue collectors) resigned in many Talukas.

The launching of the No-Tax campaign in 1930-31 took a purely economical dimension in Sirsi and Siddapur talukas and a political dimension in Ankola taluka. In 1930, the areca crop failed and its price fell to one-third of the previous price. The petition by the garden
owners requesting land-tax concessions was rejected by the government, sparking off the no-tax campaign in Sirsi and Siddapur talukas, protesting against the government's refusal to waive the taxes. The no-tax campaign was called off by the Gandhi-Irwin pact. With the resumption of the civil disobedience movement in 1932, the Forest Satyagraha was relaunched in addition to other forms of Civil Disobedience. This time, the no-tax campaign acquired a political dimension with Sirsi, Siddapur, Ankola and Yellapur being very active centres.

**Role of Women in the Freedom Struggle**

The British government jailed the agitators and confiscated the properties of the no-tax payers. Since the movement was very widespread, almost all the men were in the jail. Then the women took over and actively participated in the civil disobedience movement by courting arrest and being jailed. They broke open the doors of the sealed houses. At the auction of the confiscated property of the Satyagrahis, there were no buyers, hence the British forced the few loyal Indians to buy the confiscated property at very low rates. The women picketed their houses until the bought property was returned to the rightful owners. The hunger-strike and picketing sometimes went on for days and many women were also beaten up and jailed in far-off places like
Pune in Maharashtra. Many orthodox and conservative women, young and old actively participated and 120 women were convicted (UK Gazetteer 1985).

To sum up, the unique environment of Uttara Kannada with extensive biological diversity made possible for the cultivation of crops like pepper, areca, cardamom etc. which were highly priced and prized in addition to other forest produce like teak and sandalwood. A strong merchant class and caste dependent on the specialist gardener class and caste evolved over course of time, whose activities complemented and enriched each other. The Havyaks (gardeners), the Gauda Saraswat Brahmins (merchants) and the trading caste Vaishyas were the dominant castes of the district. Other castes and communities were involved in subsistence activities, whereas the dominant castes were dealing with commercial activities and interests. This moneyed category was able to wield considerable influence over the rest of the people in the district. The Havyaks were a united community with strong solidarity with their own newspaper 'Havyaka Subodha' published from Bombay. Each community and caste had its assigned place in the economy of the area. Though other communities were involved in the freedom struggle, it was the dominant castes which provided the leadership base and guidance to rest of the masses. However, it must be noted that
the dominant castes were not that very well off due to variations in crop production, wide fluctuation of the areca price and the widespread prevalence of malaria which took a very heavy toll of the population. Moreover, there was little investment in the district in the form of industries, normal communication facilities, railway, development of posts, especially Karwar, etc. which resulted in the feeling of deprivation among the general populace who considered the district to be backward. With little resource inflow into and greater resource outflow from the district, there was a general feeling of resentment and being left out among the people. There was little land available for agriculture as most of the land was either hilly or forested. Thus, the strong freedom struggle base, the feeling of being backward, undeveloped, deprived and the commitment to non-violence conjointly lay the ground for future movements.

Forests and Development

Forests have been perceived either as a block to the development of the district or as an exploitable source by the people and the government at different levels. The British government perceived the forests to be an exploitable resource and to achieve their control over the forests, stringent laws and regulations were passed limiting locals access to the forests. The same
policy continued in the post-independent India and the locals continued to remain alienated from their resource base (Guha 1983). The locals thus perceived the forest to be an obstacle in their survival and development in UK. The agrarian movement which was begun by Dinkar Desai in the 1940s with its goal 'land to the tiller' aimed at the protection of the tenants and their rights, adequate wage fixation and the release of the cultivable forest lands for the purpose of agriculture.

The peasant’s organisation, the ‘Raitha Koota’, was very active in the district. In the late 1960s, one lakh acres of forest land was released for agricultural purposes. The popular perception in the district was that forests are in the way of development which was based on the high incidence of malaria, unsuitable location for the establishment of industries, absence of employment opportunities etc. and the neglect of the government (British and Indian) in locating major ports and industries in the district. Being a forest district with most of the forests in the reserved category (7727.84 sq.kms. out of the total district area of 10,327 sq. kms.), there was little scope for either agriculture or industrial development.

In addition to this, the government (British and Indian had extended its control over all the forest land and after much struggle and hardships the forest
dependent population wrested some concessions from the government. The local people who had almost unrestricted access to the forests were alienated from their survival base. The GOK did not industrially develop the district nor did it create enough employment opportunities for the unemployed population. The entire industrial enterprise is based on forests, fisheries and mining. The major forests based industries are M/s Indian Plywood Manufacturing Company Limited, Dandeli, Karnataka State Forest Industries Corporation Limited (Sawmill), Dandeli; West Coast Paper Mills, Dandeli; and Karnataka State Veneers Limited, Kavanchur, Siddapur. Their employment potential is very limited, but their resource requirements are quite large. Majority of the forest denudation has taken place to meet the commitment given by the GOK to the above industries (Gadgil 1983). The West Coast Paper Mills, Dandeli exhausted the Bamboo stocks of UK and in by mid 1980s was importing bamboo from the North-East (CSE 1985). The local population and its representatives - the MLA's, constantly

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2 The Britishers passed forest laws and regulated the traditional common property rights and discriminated against different sections of population (coastal and uphghat) regarding forest use. The forest privileges were regularised in 1924 under the Kanara Forest Privileges Rules by the British; which were adopted by the GOK and which heavily subsidised the industrial use of forest produce while changing the prevailing market rate for forest communities.
clamoured for the location of industries in the area, thereby developing the backward district of UK.

Ecological Ethics and Resource Use Practices

There was a very strong tradition of reverence for nature in UK, right from the pre-British times. Buchanan also mentions that before cutting a tree in the forest, permission was required from the deity of the village to whom the forests belonged. The entire area was dotted with numerous sacred groves from which even a dead branch could not be removed. One can approximately reconstruct to a certain extent the prevailing resource use practices and the ecological ethic from the rather patchy historical accounts. Buchanan at the turn of the 19th century does not record any instance of wasteful use of forests. He mentions stretches of land where tree cover is absent, but does not assign any reason for it. He records the existence of the most ‘stately forests’ which are almost undisturbed. His detailed account of the local population’s forest use practices and the forest dependent areca garden cultivation does not record any instance of resource wasteful practices of the thotegars.

Shivarama Karanth (1985), remembers the prevalence of dense forest cover in his youth at the turn of the century. The local chieftains had planted avenues of
trees which provided shade to the travellers, fruit and fodder and a resting home to many birds and monkeys. These avenue trees which had stood for centuries were cut down by the state Public Works Department, which deemed them to be an eyesore. He also mentions the numerous Naga-Banas (snake forests) which were protected and the prevalence of not felling trees recklessly. People respected trees and many patches of protected trees existed which were a few centuries old. He also records the diverse and numerous wildlife that existed at the turn of the century and the greatly diminished wildlife diversity of today.

Hence, there was a very strong grassroots tradition of conservation and resource-prudent practices which gradually waned and resource-profligate practices by the local people gradually developed due to external intervention of state and commercial interests and the internal dissolution of the earlier ethics. Forests began to be exploited by the people. Nadkarni (1989), records forest encroachment, and illegal extension of the spice gardens and Mani (1984) records the degradation of betta lands, which indicates the general erosion of the ecological ethic.

The two different and opposing world views of rights over forests and preservation of environment of the local population and the state has given rise to a
lot of conflicting situations right from the British times.³ The Indian government’s perception is that the forest degradation is caused by the local population. The local population perceives that the government aided and sponsored experimental commercial forestry, forest-based industries, and development projects like dams are responsible for much of the forest denudation and degradation. The local population’s dependence on forests for fuel, fodder, manure and other requirements is quite high, which cannot be met by the 7.28 ha of soppin bettas allotted for one hectare of areca garden. In addition to this, soil is mixed from the bettas resulting in soil erosion. The government holds the view that the local population does not undertake any regeneration work in the bettas, which has been substantiated by Mani (1984) who also mentions that regeneration work is neglected because it coincides with the peak garden season, which leaves little time for regeneration work.

In contrast, the government figures reveal the vast forest areas released for non-forest purposes by the state government resulting in considerable reduction in the forest cover.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Extent lost (in hectares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area gone under submersion</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area released for rehabilitation</td>
<td>4,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area gone under power lines</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area given for cultivation</td>
<td>50,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area gone under mining</td>
<td>26,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area given for townships</td>
<td>1,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area given for non-agricultural purposes</td>
<td>7,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area lost under the Kalinadi project</td>
<td>14,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area lost under Bedti project</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area lost for colony and roads</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,52,232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UK Gazetteer 1905, p. 44.

Hence, the drastic change in the extent and composition of the forest cover of UK due to increased population pressure as well as the state's diversion of forest for non-forest purposes and development activities, had already created the background conditions for mobilisation of people for protection of their survival and environment.

Since the 1970s, there has been a resurgence of environmental awareness and the conscious relocating of themselves in the overall forest ecosystem. The initiating role was the popular mobilisation against the
survey work of the Aghanashini Hydro Electric project in the Siddapur taluka sometime in the early 1970s. Large areas of garden and cultivated lands in addition to forest areas would be affected by the proposed dam upstream of Unchalli falls. The people’s mobilisation was quick and the protests were widespread resulting in the dropping of the project by GOK. Such was the opposition that the initial survey work has not been completed and the details of the project were not worked out. The neighbouring Sirsi taluka gave its support to the agitation against the proposed Aghanashini Hydro Electric Project.

In the late 1970s the popular movement against the Bedthi Hydro Electric Project in Yellapur, Sirsi and Siddapur talukas, brought into focus the ecologically fragile nature of the area and the National Seminar held in January 1981 reinforced the importance of environment. Well-known environmentalists like Sunderlal Bahuguna, Chandi Prasad Bhat and Shivarama Karanth exhorted people to maintain the environmental equilibrium and Bahuguna and Bhat shared the Chipko experience with the farmers. In September 1983, ‘Appiko’ (hug the tree to save it) movement (the southern counterpart of the Chipko movement of the North) was launched which was inspired by Bahuguna’s visit earlier in the year. Appiko’s initial activities
earlier were confined to prevent tree felling which was in contravention to the rules, later diversified into (1) the regeneration of the earlier ecological ethic and combining it with the new scientific knowledge, (2) motivating people to give up environmentally harmful and resource exhausting practices, for example, stopping the lopping of trees during monsoon to allow regeneration of the *soppina bettas* (3) afforestation activities at the village level by planting locally needed multipurpose trees, (4) adopting and disseminating energy conservation practices like fuel-efficient stoves (chulhas). Appiko has played an important role in generating environment awareness and in changing the resource destructive practices in many areas.

The Centre of Ecological Sciences of Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore was very active in Sirsi taluka in generating environmental awareness and in evolving less resource intensive practices like stall-feeding of cattle etc. and has evolved a plan for the eco-development of Western Ghats. It was actively involved in the people's movement against the Bedthi Hydro Electric Project during 1980-81 and did an ecological and cost-benefit analysis of the dam; and was active in the National Seminar organised by the Totagar's Sale Cooperative Society, Sirsi. Since then, it has been working in the area in co-ordination with
the Hulgol Group Villages Co-operative Society, Bhairumbhe.

This was the ecological backdrop of the district by the mid eighties, wherein the people were re-forging their strong link with nature by combining the traditional and modern resource conservation practices. There was heightened awareness of the importance of the environment and the threat posed by human interventions in destroying the environmental equilibrium. This awareness was quite high in the upghat talukas of Yellapur, Sirsi and Siddapur with the maximum forest cover, though the rest of the district was aware of the events in these areas. A new ecological ethic was being reforged with the combination of the traditional and the scientific perceptions. The people were linking the impact of human actions micro (cutting trees for household needs) to macro (submersion and diversion of vast tracts of forest for hydel energy generation) on the environment. One such human intervention, which was glaringly visible was the forest land consumed by the hydro-electric projects and the condition of the displaced and affected people which was worse than earlier. The Supa dam on the Kalinadi and the resulting condition of the displaced and affected population and the submergence of large forest area, sensitised the people of the district about the negative effects of
dams and responsive to the proposed energy generating power projects in the district which were deemed to be environmentally, socially and economically harmful. At this juncture, it is relevant to discuss the GOK's perception of the power situation in Karnataka and its plans to tap the energy generating potential of UK, which set the context for the ecological movements since the 1970s.

The Power Situation in Karnataka

Karnataka was a pioneer in hydro-electricity generation in the country. In 1902, at Sivasamudram, the first large hydro-electric station in the country was commissioned. Gradually, the number of hydro-electricity generating stations was increased by tapping the hydel-electricity potential of the Sharavathi river from 1946. Other rivers like Bhadra, Tungabhadra, Kalinadi, Krishna and Cauvery were also tapped for hydel energy. By 1950, Karnataka was a power rich state. It experienced power famine from 1953-1963 due to increase in demand for power and the failure to start new projects (Bhat and Rao 1979:2). This situation eased with the commissioning of the first unit of the Mahatma Gandhi Hydro Electric Station on Sharavathi river in 1964. From a power-exporting state in the 1960s, Karnataka was importing power from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu by paying money by the 1980s.
The increasing industrial, commercial and household demands of electricity put pressure on the state's power corporation to harness new sources of energy.

According to the Karnataka Power Corporation (earlier it was the Mysore Power Corporation), hydel energy is the basic source of electricity with the thermal option as the backup and nuclear energy as an additional source of power. The hydel power generation is concentrated in the Western Ghats because the west-flowing rivers have their catchment area in the Western Ghats which receive heavy rainfall and offer large storage areas which have an added attraction of submerging "... areas of developed land or villages etc." (Bhat and Rao 1979:5). The west-flowing rivers have many "attractive sites for harnessing the hydro power potential" (Bhat and Rao 1979:5). The east-flowing rivers have limited hydro power potential and have more irrigation potential. Moreover, these rivers are embroiled in the upper riparian and lower riparian rights with other states. Extensive plans were drawn to tap the hydro power potential of the west flowing rivers by the mid 70s itself and many project proposals were pending before the Central Electricity Authority for approval. By this time, the state was also exploring other sources of energy and had prospected sites for thermal and nuclear power plants and had also staked
claims for thermal power plants and an atomic power plant either at the Tungabhadra Reservoir or at the Talakalale Reservoir which is part of the Sharavathi Power System (Subrahmanyam 1979). Nuclear energy was perceived to be the source of energy in the 21st century as by that time the entire hydel and thermal potential of the state would be exhausted.

The energy demand projection made in the late 70s by the then Mysore Power Corporation was that by 1999-2000 AD energy requirement would be 45000 Mkwhs and there would be a deficit of 7978 Mkwhs (including the existing, ongoing and new schemes as well as share from central projects). An energy growth rate was forecast at 9.1 percent from 1993-1996 (Bhat and Rao 1979:4). The energy scenario painted by the Mysore Power Corporation was very bleak and it advocated tapping of all the energy sources as intensively and as quickly as possible. It also recommended an increase in the power outlay. Based on the Mysore Power Corporation’s and the Central Electricity Authority’s energy projections, the Government of Karnataka increased the power outlay and pursued newer energy sources, and newer projects. Many hydro-power project reports were prepared and sent for approval to the Central Electricity Authority in the mid-70s.
The mid 1980s saw a spurt of new power stations - thermal, hydel and nuclear - all over the state. The announcement that the state was getting an atomic power plant on 9 March 1985, sparked off a fierce debate among the public, scientists and engineers on the power projections. The public (especially those opposing the setting up of the nuclear power plant) and some scientists questioned the necessity of a nuclear power plant, the government's power projections (Cane, 1988; A.K.N.Reddy 1987). Their main contentions are as follows: (a) the existing power plants are not operating at the full installed capacity (b) the transmission losses are among the highest in the country - 22 percent (c) no energy conservation measures are followed. If the existing problems of low utilisation of the installed capacity of power plants and transmission losses are solved, then there is no need for an atomic power plants and lesser need for starting new power plants.

On 13 August 1985, the Government of Karnataka passed an order (Government Order No. PWD 91 PPC 85 Bangalore) constituting a committee to form a long range plan of power projects, their sources of finance, minimising the transmission and distribution losses etc. The committee was headed by S.G.Ramachandra, a Chartered Engineer and was composed of the Chairman, Karnataka
Electricity Board, Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University who was a former Commissioner for Planning and Secretary to Government, Planning Department; K.S.Subrahmanyam, Ex-Chairman, CEA; The Director-General of Central Power Research Institute, Bangalore, A.K.N.Reddy, Chairman, Industrial Management Department, Indian Institute of Science; and the Managing Director, Karnataka Power Corporation Limited, Bangalore. The composition of the expert committee which was supposed to objectively evaluate the power situation and suggest a long-range plan, was mainly of engineers and government officials who were earlier involved in the power planning of the state. Except for Reddy, the others were involved either fully or partially in the framing of the existing power policy of the state. Given this situation, there was little scope for an objective evaluation and a radical plan which would solve the existing problems, and it was not different from the projections and plans made by the Karanataka Power Corporation and Karanataka Electricity Board. The Committee report was not signed by Reddy, who presented his alternative energy projection plan.

The Committee assumed the growth rate of demand at 9 percent per annum, which was in turn based on the government projections of different sectorial demands from 1986-2000 AD and which was no different from the
1979 projection of 9.1 percent. It also calculated the transmission losses at 22.5 percent (one of the highest in the country) and aimed at bringing it down to 18.5 percent at the end of 1999. It advocated the upgrading of the existing electricity linkages and establishing new load centres close to the generating stations to minimise transmission losses. An extensive electricity distribution network throughout Karnataka was envisaged. It must be noted that the energy projections were based on the industrial policy and rural development policy of the government and the sectorial demand of High Tension industries.

Uttara Kannada was to be linked with rest of the state's electricity network. Transmission lines would be criss-crossing the district, along the coast, from the coast to the upghats and from the upghats to the plains and rest of Karnataka. The committee felt it was necessary to have:

(A) Strong 400 K.V.linkages between (i) Kaiga and Hubli and (ii) Hubli-Davangere-Bangalore. This system would be supported by a 220 KV system between Kaiga and Mangalore along the West Coast which could be converted later on to a 400 KV line.

(B) A network of 220 KVDC lines to meet 3000 MWS demand was envisaged as follows:
i) Kadra-Kodsalli via Kaiga with an approximate length of 62 Ckt km.

ii) Kadra-Karwar with an approximate length of 120 ckt. km.

iii) Sharavathi Tail Race - Sharavathi with an approximate length of 36 ckt km.

iv) Kodosalli-Nagjhari with an approximate length of 80 ckt km.

This extensive network would result in extensive felling of trees in forests and fields and the environmental damage has not been taken into cognizance by the Committee despite the relatively high awareness of environment in the mid 1980s. Further, the committee advocated the setting up of the following 400 KVDC lines to meet 6000 MWs demand:

(a) Kaiga-Sirsi with an approximate length of 100 ckt km.

(b) Sirsi-Davangere with an approximate length of 350 ckt km.

The deforestation cost and the environmental damage of the extensive distribution network of transmission lines was ignored by the Committee. Most of the electricity generated in Uttara Kannada was meant for urban and industrial centres like Bangalore which had 30 percent of the load connected in the entire state.
The whole exercise of the Committee was finally to vindicate the Karnataka Power Corporation's position and plans vis-a-vis the power situation in Karnataka. It justified the heavy capital intensive electricity generating plans of the Karnataka Power Corporation and totally ignored the environmental costs and the rehabilitation and compensation packages to the public which would escalate the costs of the project.

The dissenting member of the Committee Dr. Reddy came out with his own alternative energy projections and scenario for Karnataka (1987). According to him the demand was over-projected; not much attention was paid to solving the transmission and distribution losses; and energy saving and conserving schemes were not drawn up for which technology was available. The Committee's recommendations were biased towards industrial needs which would be catered to by mega-centralised projects. It totally left out the decentralised small electricity generating centres which would cater to the local needs which would (a) reduce transmission and distribution losses (b) satisfy the social needs of the people and (c) cause little environment destruction. Dr. Reddy also questioned the basis for the 9 percent growth rate and the 100 percent utilisation assumption as incorrect. He accused the committee of adopting the conventional approach of every generation and advocates the adoption
of energy conservation approach by which there would be lesser need for starting new electricity generating plants which are expensive.

The Government of Karnataka and the Karnataka Power Corporation have totally neglected to solve the existing problems and the environmental damage and costs of the projects. The environment factor is seen as a stumbling block for the project clearance and implementation. The entire environmental clearance procedure is viewed as a hindrance in the project clearance. There is a singular lack of environment protection concept in the Karnataka Power Corporation. For example, out of the total 700 ha. land submerged in the Sharavathi Tail Race Project, only 500 ha. of forest is submerged according to Karnataka Power Corporation, notwithstanding the fact that it is evergreen tropical forest of which 100 ha belongs to the Sharavathi wildlife sanctuary.

Majority of the power projects were formulated in the early 1970s when the environment awareness and safeguards had not yet been established. When the environment clearance procedure was initiated in the mid 70s, its significance was lost on the Karnataka Power Corporation which saw it as an impediment to the speedy implementation of the project for a power starved state. This attitude continued even through the eighties and nineties despite, the increased environmental awareness
of the project impact on the environment and the institutionalisation of the environmental safeguards. The present project plans have not incorporated the environment variable into them. The piecemeal 'environment protection' is very often the compensatory afforestation of commercial monoculture plantations under strict directives from the donor organizations like World Bank etc. Therefore the environmental movements are seen as anti-development and blocks to progress and development.
PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT AGAINST BEDTHI
HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT
I THE RIVER

The Bedthi river is formed by the confluence of two streams originating in Dharwad at the Someshwara temple and known as Shalmala and in Hubli taluq as Bedthi, at Kolghatsi in Dharwad district flows for 161 km. through Dharwad district (32 kms) and Uttara Kannada district (129 kms) before joining the sea in Ankola taluq, where it is known as Gangawati. It is primarily a monsoon fed river without any major feeding tributary and in summer its water level is quite low. Its other tributaries are the Sonda and Pattanadahalla streams.

II THE PROJECT

The Bedthi river’s hydel power potential was first appraised systematically in the "Triennial Report of Hydro-Electric Survey of India" which was published by P.L.Bowers and J.W. Mears (Paranjape 1981:1). In 1969, the first serious thought was given to the project report preparation and in 1972, Government of Karnataka forwarded the first proposal to Government of India. In 1973, a supplementary report was sent incorporating the Central Electricity Authority’s suggestions and comments. In 1977, the final detailed Project Report was sent. From the 1st report of 1971 to the final report of 1977, the estimated project cost had almost trebled from Rs.4,200 lakhs to Rs.13,463 lakhs (Paranjpe 1981:1-2).
The entire Bedthi river power potential was proposed to be harnessed in two stages. The Bedthi Hydroelectric Project [henceforth BHEP] stage I was proposed to be located at Suremane near Magodu in Magodu in Yellapur taluq with a latitude of 14° 51' 47" north and longitude 74° 45' 28" east (KPC 1981: 57). The second stage of Sonda Pattanadahalla project, which is still under investigation, envisages the utilisation of the tributaries downstream of Magodu i.e., Sonda, Pattanadahalla and Bilihalla in Sirsi taluq. It is proposed to construct dams at Honnallimath on Sonda river and at Hoggade on Pattanadahalla river. It is expected to submerge 60 villages and extremely productive spice gardens (Sharma 1981: 6-8). More implying addition to this is the submerging of the Swarnahalli Math at Sonda the seat of the dominant caste - Havyak Brahmins, and other castes. The details of the second stage have not been worked out.

The AEP Stage I was proposed to be located at Suremane in Magodu in Yellapur taluka. The height of the dam was 111.2 m or 364.82 ft. with a Full Reservoir Level (FRL) of 1570 ft. a maximum water level of 1573.28 ft., and water spread at Full Reservoir Level was 38.41 sq.miles. It was expected to cost Rs.134 crores. The land submerged would be 26,606 acres with 91 acres of garden land, 1137 acres of wet land and 24759 acres of
forest land. It would affect population of 3706 and 529 families. 22 villages and 550 houses will be affected. It was estimated that one KW energy generated would cost 17 paise (KPC 1981:1-9). The powerhouse was to be located near Arebail, underground a cliff where power would be generated after the water from the reservoir had been carried there through tunnel. Two generations of 105 MW each would generate 210 MW of power, which would be transmitted to Hubli to be distributed through the central pool.

The Planning Commission had cleared the project vide letter No.I-26(6) 4177-P&E dated 2.4.1979 and the project was also eventually cleared from the environmental angle on 20.2.1979 by the Department of Science and Technology vide letter No.14/14(7)/77 Env (KPC 1981:3). The conditional environmental clearance was deemed necessary and had consisted of two parts: (a) conducting studies and surveys to collect additional necessary information regarding (i) a detailed flora and fauna survey of the Bedthi submergence area, identification of endangered species and their rehabilitation; (ii) study on examining the impact of loss of nutrients due to impounded water on the sea coasts, capability of sustaining fish and their breeding and spawning activities. (b) Effective implementation of the following safeguards: (1) setting up of free fuel
depots to the labourers by the Forest Department charged to the Project cost; (2) strict enforcement of anti-poaching measures at project cost; (3) wildlife survey of the region to identify and protect wildlife resources; (4) A detailed plan for people's rehabilitation to minimise forest cover destruction in consultation with the monitoring group; (5) Without submitting an environmental impact statement to NCEPC no new infrastructures for Gangavali Stage II may be created. (6) Setting aside of at least 100 ha or more of an evergreen forest as Nature Preserve by the Forest Department. (7) Examine the feasibility of the development of the Magod Falls as bird sanctuary; (8) Provision made to undertake the study to examining the effect of impoundment with the resultant loss of nutrients on the sea coast's capability to sustain fish life and the changes in their breeding pattern; (9) Formation of a Monitoring Group by the State Government in consultation with NCEPC for the effective implementation of safeguards and to take follow up action as and when necessary. (10) In consultation with the NCEPC and the Monitoring Group additional future safeguards based on the suggested studies and surveys may be incorporated.

Meanwhile, work on the first stage of the Gangawati (Bedthi) HEP had begun few years prior to the official
sanction from the Planning Commission in 1979. Therefore, the area had been considerably disturbed and transformed due to extensive road network from the nearest town Yellapur to the project sites; construction of colonies - the official colony of KPC at Magod and the labourers colony (Reddy colony) of the underground tunnel; the underground power house near Arebail, construction of the foundation pillars of the dam and the forest clearance in all these areas, had already commenced and were almost completed at the time of the official sanction.

The underground power house was being built by R.N.Shetty and Co. and the underground tunnel was being built by contractor Reddy who was dumping the earth dug on rich fields and gardens, without seeking prior permission nor paying any compensation and cutting trees in the nearby forest.

III GENESIS OF PEOPLE'S PROTEST
A. Initial Phase: Individual Protest

Some time in 1978, Prafullah Madhukar a Divisional Engineer from Mysore Power Corporation [henceforth MPC] camped in Magod for few months and surveyed the entire area. He met the 8 families residing on the right bank of the river near the project site and gave them the assurance that the government will give them twice the land presently owned and compensation if they agree to
leave the land. Omkar Bhat asked for just compensation, which was agreed to by the Division Engineer. Therefore, Omkar Bhat signed the appeal letter asking for just compensation and stating his willingness to leave his lands. According to Omkar Bhat, a lot of politicking was indulged in by the Divisional Engineer, who cultivated the local influential leaders to influence the 8-10 families to willingly leave their land. Later, some time in February 1979, early in the morning at 8 a.m., about 25 workmen began digging in the fields of Omkar Bhat who protested, but to no avail. Outraged by this daurjanya (atrocity), Omkar Bhat promptly sent a notice to the engineer and summoned him to the police station which was not heeded to. Two police constables were sent with instructions to bring the engineer Reddy, who came and admitting his mistake asked for forgiveness and promised that it would never be repeated. According to Omkar Bhat, since then no one from MPC has set foot on his land. The significance of this episode lies in the fact that Omkar Bhat's house and fields are the first of the 8 houses on the right bank of Bedthi river near the project site which would be first submerged. The process of land acquisition etc. began here with Omkar Bhat's house. The MPC faced stiff opposition and failure right in the beginning itself in the process of land acquisition. On that day,
the first meeting of all the 8 houses which would be first affected took place in Omkar Bhat’s house, who called the meeting.

Soon after he sent the notice, the work stopped, but the government issued the Panchanama and acquired the land outright with arbitrarily fixed compensation. In the absence of Omkar Bhat who was away at Yellapur, the Tehsildar, Circle Inspector, Manchikeri and the Shanbag came and got the signatures of his old parents on the Panchanama. Omkar Bhat on his return, discovering what had transpired rushed to Manchikeri and asked the Circle Inspector about the Panchanama. He found that he was entitled to only Rs. 80,000 as compensation for 13 acres of land, spice garden, trees, houses.

Few days later, he attended a house warming function at Bedehkkal in Manchikeri, where about one thousand Havyak Brahmins had assembled. Omkar Bhat wanted to convey his experience to everyone else to get support for his cause. At the function the President of Yellapur Taluka Development Board [henceforth TDB] R.N. Hegde Gorsagadde was also present besides the circle Inspector who was summoned. After narrating his experience to the assembled guests, Omkar Bhat asked the Circle Inspector, “On what basis have you framed the Panchanama you should have first given a notice. On
what basis did you fix the compensation? Who gave you the authority to enter my lands? Who gave you the authority to do all this? What are the rules? In my absence you have come and fixed the compensation and taken my old parents signatures and gone. This is cheating. Why is this manadanda (punishment) being given to me? You people want my land and you have written the Panchanama. You can write what you want in the Panchanama - three paisa to whatever amount. But I will write my Panchanama and I will write Rs.3 lakhs. I am not happy giving my land because I do not want to give up my lands and go. It is greater pain than a child dying... Whatever I write, you should accept that."

According to Omkar Bhat, by that time the Circle Inspector was shaking and he was told by R.N. Hegde Gorsgadde to rewrite the Panchanama with the increased amount the very next day morning. Addressing the assembled guests, Omkar Bhat told them, "Right now I am affected and I have got the Panchanama and may be ten others, but in the next few years all of your would be affected. I can’t fight alone but if all of you join, then it is a different matter." This had considerable impact on the assembled guests and people became aware of the project and the highhanded manner of the government officials.

B. The Collective Phase: Initial Organisation
The Panchanama was written about four five days later and then began the movement. He wrote a letter stating that no one is bothered or cared about his plight. Omkar Bhat told the Taluka Board President R.N. Hegde that he is responsible for the welfare of the people and that he should help and guide him and the affected people. R.N. Hegde agreed to support the struggle through the Taluka Development Board.

On March 10, 1979, a meeting was held in the house of Omkar Bhat where about 100 people of the nearby affected 8 villages, Nagesh Shanbag, Janata Party leader in Yellapur and Kanni Vakil (these two were befriended by the Divisional Engineer, Prafulla Madhukar and their presence was viewed with suspicion) also came. In the meeting, the present developments and future course of action were discussed. In the meeting Kanni Vakil said, "What we can do is give appeal to tehsildar, the District Commissioner but we are not fighting against the government and we cannot also". Nagesh Shanbag said, "If we agree to oppose them work will continue, then we cannot escape submersion and won't get any compensation, so if we oppose then it will be a foolish and useless work." There was different of opinion and the meeting ended, with the submission of a memorandum. Later, a decision was taken to form a Committee with ten or fifteen people to collect money and have regular
meetings. This committee was composed of the people who would be immediately affected by the submersion and functioned under the aegis of the Taluka Development Board.

Prior to the organisation of people in Yellapur, The Uttara Kannada District Finance, Industry and Agriculture Association in Sirsi under the Presidency of Hegde Ajjibal had formed the "Bedthi and Aghanashini Hydro Electric Project Opposition Samiti" in Sirsi, when the project was announced and had passed resolution against the project. It had collected money from the Sirsi and Siddapur taluks under the Bedthi and Aghanashini Hydro-Electric Project Submergence Protest and Struggle Fund.

After the mobilisation in Yellapur taluka, funds also came from Yellapur. Omkar Bhat also contributed to the fund in March 1979. In the mean time, under the guidance of R.N.Hegde, President, TDB, meetings were being held in Magod and Yellapur and people were being mobilised for protest activities. Omkar Bhat on behalf of citizens against the Bedthi Project was calling meetings, submitting memoranda, mobilising and organising people. Communication was mainly through word of mouth, pamphlets and, later on, newspapers. People were appealed to participate in the peaceful struggle against the injustice done by the Bedthi
project. On June 23, 1979, at 10 a.m. memoranda were submitted to the Tehsildar and the President, Taluka Development Board at the Devi Temple in Yeallpur by the citizens against the Bedthi Project. On the same day (23.6.1979) an appeal letter signed by 55 people was sent to the Chief Minister Devarag Urs by Omkar Bhat on behalf of the submergence affected people of Bedthi Project which was as follows:

"The Bedthi project will destroy by submergence, the rare and valuable environment resource of the Sahyadri region and the spice gardens which have been developed over generations where, areca, coconut, pepper, cardamom are grown. Magazines have written that the people's opposition to the Bedthi project demanding that it should be dropped, is justified. Now, we are putting this to the government."

"We are again bringing to your notice the following appeal. Please take necessary action to drop the Bedthi project to prevent the destruction of our region.

(1) Please stop the local official harassment faced by the farmers of Magod and Chandaguli villages.

(2) For the Bedthi Project 'approach channel', the land of some farmers in Magod and Chandguli villages is being acquired by the local authorities who have arbitrarily fixed compensation and are forcing the farmers to
accept. The officials are not evaluating the land properly which gives yield in lakhs.

(3) **Public meeting** - Please call a public meeting at Yellapur as early as possible to discuss the just compensation and rehabilitation, whether to go ahead with the project or else to drop and other matters, by zilla officials, chairman, and the local people.

The open meeting can be held in end of July wherein after exchange of views and discussions, the right decision can be taken.

If the government goes ahead with the project without allowing for open discussion, then, after waiting for suitable time, our opposition will take an aggressive turn.

This appeal has been decided in public meeting and has also been given in a public protest meeting at Yellapur to the Tehsildar, Yellapur and R.N.Hegde Gorsgadde, President, Taluka Development Board, Yeallpur, U.K.

We are praying that you will put this appeal given by the public, before the concerned officials, chairman."

23.6.1979

On behalf of the Bedthi Project Submergence Affected People

The response to this letter got from the government was an acknowledgement slip dated 29.8.1979 from the Private
Secretary to the leader of the opposition in Karnataka Legislative Assembly stating that the memorandum had been forwarded to the Secretary, PWD, for necessary action.

Memoranda were also submitted to the District Commissioner when he visited Yellapur and the Assistant Commissioner. According to Omkar Bhat, no real action oriented work was being done besides giving various memoranda etc. despite the support of the Taluka Development Board. Soon, elections date was announced and Omkar Bhat declared that "whoever comes and asks for votes should get stones thrown at them". This declaration jolted the local politicians and Nagesh Shanbag said that "If this is the people's perception, then we can't go to houses and ask for votes and this is having negative impact on the people".

A public meeting was called on 25.10.1979 at 2 p.m. at the Devi maidan, Yellapur by Nagesh Shanbag Chairman, Bedthi and Aghanashini Hydro Electric Project Opposition Sub Committees, Yellapur. This was the historic meeting and turning point for the entire agitation, when the local MLA, Anasuya Gajanan Sharma (Janata Party) made her entry on the invitation of Nagesh Shanbag of Janata Party on purely political grounds and with an eye on the future vote bank. According to Omkar Bhat, the taluka level movement was interpreted by Nagesh Shanbag
to Anasuya as there are two groups - one is objecting to the project and the other is asking for better compensation and is not opposing the project. "You decide which group is right in the public meeting" and sat down.

Anasuya recounts that in late June people approached her and expressed their concern that rains had not begun which could be due to the extensive tree felling in the Bedthi project area. Since it was monsoon time, she asked them to convene a public meeting some time in October. At the meeting, where about four hundred people had come, Nagesh Shanbag in his welcome speech said that, "though the movement has been going in for some time, there is one group which says that there can be submergence but compensation should be given and another group says that there is no need for the project, submergence and compensation. There are two groups in the opposition to the project, so the MLA Sharma should decide who has greater substance". Thus he concluded his speech. Anasuya Sharma said that, "You have done protest movement and it can be done in the future too. You people should give me your word that you will follow what I say and stand by me. Only then I will lead you and I will take up your cause with all seriousness and commitment". Omkar Bhat, sceptical of politicians and keeping in mind the sleeping protest
committee in Sirsi said, "I won't give the word before commitment beforehand. First of all, you tell what programmes you are going to do. We don't want leadership, tomorrow elections will come and for votes we don't need this kind of leadership. First, tell the programmes and fix them now with dates." Immediately, Anasuya Sharma fixed three programmes - to give a memorandum to the District Commissioner, Karwar; one day dharana satyagraha at Magod at the project area, and a trip to Bangalore to meet the Chief Minister. The date for the Karwar programme was fixed for November 3, 1979 after consulting the Panchanga.

On 26th October, the people of Uttara Kannada Zilla were informed by the Bedthi and Aghanashini Submergence Opposition Samiti that it has been decided to hold a symbolic dharma and satyagraha in front of the District Commissioner's office in Karwar on 3.11.1979 to oppose the Bedthi and Aghanashini projects in order to make the district administration drop the projects.

Hectic preparations were made and everyone contributed their mite. People paid their own fare and carried their food. Those who had their personal motor vehicles ferried people. Basha Saheb of Manchikeri ferried people in his lorry. People in the yellapur taluq, Sirsi and Siddapur were informed and mobilised.
The preparation of the memorandum and its signatories ran into rough weather, with Anasuya Sharma who belong to the Janata Party getting some of her partymen to write the memorandum and Omkar Bhat objecting to the association of a political party with the movement. He said that, "There should be no memorandum from one political party. Everyone will be affected and representatives from all parties should be included in the memorandum." His intervention resulted in the inclusion of leaders of other parties - R.N.Hegde from Congress (President of TDB, Yellapur) and Kadebodi from BJP (President of TDB, Sirsi). His reasoning was that, "If one political party is associated with the movement, then it would be difficult to delink the issue from the political party. No single party can do the required work and it requires the help and support of others. No movement work is possible as no other party would join." The basic reason was the credibility of politicians who would use anything for their own ends.

On 3.11.1979, early in the morning around 10 O'clock, the memorandum was submitted to the District Commissioner Renuka Vishwanathan who said she would pass on the memorandum to the higher authorities. The one-day peaceful Dharana satyagraha in front of the District Commissioner's office began in the morning with about 400 people from the Yellapur region and by afternoon
swelled more than 1,000 people with the participation of the Sirsi and Siddapur people.

The Karwar episode was an important landmark in many ways (a) for the first time there was combined force of strength of three important upghat rich talukas - Yellapur, Siddapur and Sirsi. (b) from a taluka level agitation mainly due to Anasuya who roped in influential people from Sirsi Kadekodi and Thattirai Ram Bhat, Siddapur. (c) It was an all-party affair (d) The base of future programmes was laid here - strategy, coordination, communication, resource mobilisation, political, people and finance. (e) The movement had a larger strategy goal and resource base.

With the roping in of other influential people - Kadekodi Thatti Rai and others by Anasuya, the vast and extensive contacts were used considerably for the movement’s benefit. Everyone used their contacts and resources to make the event successful. The combined strength of all the political parties gave the movement enormous strength. Moreover, the Uttara Kannada Finance, Industry and Agriculture Association at Sirsi was also helpful.

The success of the Karwar event made the people confident. The appeal letter to the District Commissioner was as follows:
Bedthi and Aghasnashini and Sonda Submergence Opposition Samiti, Yellapur.

"UK Zilla is a forest resource district. In it grows gardens, areca, cardamom, chillies. It’s naturally beautiful.

It has 80% forest which has been protected for a very long time. About Rs.20 crore worth areca, cardamom, pepper, coconut, timber are grown here.

This district is rich in forest, mineral, spice gardens and people which no other place in the country has."

"For the progress of the nation, electricity generation is essential, the government is planning many HEPs in our district. Kali HEP has already consumed one-third of district forests and agricultural lands. Before kali is finished other regions Kudasalli and Baraballi will be submerged. With the destruction of gardens, agricultural lands, and forests, the environmental balance will be affected. In addition to the Kali project, Bedthi and Aghanashini HEPs are planned. Below Kali is BHEP and below it is Aghanashini, below it Linganmathi HEP on Sharavathi river and each HEP is at a distance of 20-30 miles from the other. As Soupa, Yellapur, Sirsi and Siddapur taluka’s environmental balance will be disturbed, the people are frightened that such a close proximity of
reservoirs may trigger severe earth quakes as it happened in Koyna dam earthquake. We are bringing to your notice that in the question answer session in the Lok Sabha, the government had declared that this region comes under the earthquake zone."

"Suitable lands for areca cultivation are found only here and not anywhere else. In the Aghanashini project 400 acres of areca gardens, 2000 acres coconut orchards, 50,000 acres of forests, 50,000 acres of wet lands would be submerged. In the Bedthi project, 40,000 acres garden, 6000 acres wet lands and 20,000 acres forest would be submerged. Every year the revenue that the government gets from the Rs.50 to 1000 crores will be lost. Forest destruction will have a negative impact on the rainfall and this region may be turned into a desert. Shortage of water will affect the extensive agriculture in the area."

"In this district alone, such extensive damage to the people, money, property and forest should not be allowed. To avoid such disturbances, our scientists have many other means to generate electricity in a very short time like Thermal, Solar energy without destroying valuable land."

"It has come to our notice that low or backward class landowners and farmers will be greatly affected. The forest and areca gardens cannot be reproduced
elsewhere due to the unique environment here. Therefore, this struggle is appealing to the government to drop Bedthi and Aganashini projects and save nation's and people's property. Save the historic environment and invite people from abroad and India to appreciate this land. We are informing the government that, if any one of the projects is taken up then the people's struggle will intensify."

"The opposition is formed and composed of all areas of the district. This appeal letter is being handed over to you under the leadership of Mrs. Anasuya Sharma. We appeal for a just compensation."

Karwar
Date
Sd/-
Anasuya

An important fallout of the Karwar programme was the increased involvement of Sirsi. Many meetings were held in Sirsi by traders, farmers, youth and women mandals. Anasuya also mobilised popular support by conducting meetings and holding programmes at key areas in Sirsi. The local financial institutions, traders, organisations etc. galvanised into action. The local press consisting of one newspaper Munnade also gave enormous coverage to every event and development which contributed to generate awareness among the public.

(3) Final Organisational Stage

Another important and historic event took place when on 15.11.1979, the Uttara Kannada Jala Vidyutha
Virodhi Samiti [henceforth UKJVVS] was formed and had its first meeting. Anasuya Sharma was the unanimously elected as President and the Vice Presidents were the Presidents of the Taluka Development Boards of Siddapur, Sirsi and Yellapur talukas. The Karyadarshis/Secretaries were R.N. Hegde (Hulgol) and sub-Karyadarshis were R.G. Hegde Bidehakkal and G.I. Hegde Targar. It was decided to hold one day satyagraha at Magod i.e., the project site on 22.11.1979 and all the taluka leaders of Sirsi, Siddapur, Yellapur and Ankola were asked to mobilise as many people as possible and the requisite authority was given to the Karyadarshis.

The earlier organisation Bedthi and Aghanashini and Sonda Hydro Electric Project opposition committee was allowed to exist and its President G.N. Hegde Ajjibal continued to play a key role in the UKJVVS' activities. On 15.11.1979 itself a pamphlet was issued by its working committee informing people about the satyagraha at Magod at 8 a.m. on 22.11.1979 to protest against Bedthi and Aghanashini and Sonda HEPs and exhorted people to participate in large numbers.

Extensive preparations were made for the Satyagraha by everyone to mobilise people. The local leaders generated awareness about the programmes through meetings, pamphlets and word of mouth and mobilised
people - every family should send at least one person. In fact, many families kept one person at home and the rest went to the Satyagraha.

The Sirsi, Siddapur and Yellapur Taluka Development Board Presidents who were the Vice-Presidents of UKJVVS also used their clout in getting information, establishing contacts and communicating with the government, as well as with their respective political parties. The President used her extensive contacts with the government and political party and took care of the government angle.

Thus by the time of Magod satyagraha very clear organisational structure had come into existence. At the apex of the organisation was Ansuya who being the local MLA was elected for that reason, as she would be able to handle the movement at the government, district and political levels. The next level at the taluka level were the Taluka Development Boards which locally were the most influential government bodies and which carry out the developmental works of the government and were the intermediaries between common people and the government hence the TDB’s wielded enormous clout and influence at the local as well as the state level. At the taluka level were the local leaders and other organisations for example, areca trading organisations,
financial institutions, banks etc. At the village level were the village leaders.

Many government organisations co-operated too, for example, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) increased the frequency of buses to Magod from other key areas, thus enabling many people to reach the satyagraha site. The local administration too helped.

Numerous public meetings addressed by the leaders were held prior to the satyagraha. On 21.11.1979 a public meeting was held at Yellapur which was addressed by Nagesh Shanbag.

On 22.11.1979, the satyagraha began at 8 a.m. MPC fearing crowd violence had asked for full police protection. About 400 police recruited from all over the district came armed. The tehsildar was also present in the MPC building and the engineers refused to come out. They were assured by Ansuya that the satyagraha would be peaceful and that they do not have to be afraid. According to her, the tehsildar tried to do some politicking and spoke against the satyagrahis to the MPC and provoked them.

Ansuya and Kadekodi addressed the gathering and asked the people to be peaceful and said that this struggle is not against the government. The KPC had put up banners stating that "We want Bedthi", and some MPC workers shouted that they wanted Bedthi. This provoked
the people who were calmed down by the leaders by stating that neither the government nor MPC is their enemy. MPC personnel have to do their job, so it is best to ignore them. We want to convey our message to the government only and not to oppose it."

About 5000 to 6000 people from all over the district had gathered. The nearby villages like Magod, Chandulli and Nandulli had on their own made food arrangements for everyone. Food was cooked in the nearby school and was served to people who sat on the road and ate their food. Contributions in cash and kind - like rice etc. were collected from every house. Many had contributed 'Anna Dana', and cash collection in comparison was less. After a successful satyagraha, the next programme to Bangalore was planned. The Satyagraha event had also laid down the fundamental ideology of the movement soon after the 25 October 1979 meeting at Yellapur, at a public meeting, Ansuya and Kadekod and other leaders had laid down the basic rules of the movement. Ansuya said, "We are not fighting against the government. It is our government and we should convey what we think. Our agitation would be non-violent and peaceful as first of all we are not fighting against foreigners (the Britishers). These are our people."
Anasuya recounted later that there were practical reasons too for a non-violent agitation - "(a) the people are peaceful by nature and they can't take recourse to violent actions (b) once violent methods are used, then we give enough chance/scope for the government to crush our agitation (c) these violent activities would lead to the destruction of local public property which is again harmful to the people who use them daily (d) the government in retaliation can do lathi-charge, burst tear-gas shells, jail people and may fire too on the people. Once people are affected, then there will be no support to any agitational activity."

The next programme was the trip to the state's capital Bangalore. For this, preparations began in earnest. An important event happened on 15.11.1979. Anasuya Sharma formed a new district association "Uttara Kannada Jala Vidyutha Virodhi Samiti" (UK Anti-Hydel Project Committee). She placed the whole struggle in the wider context of the district. A struggle confined to two talukas became a district struggle. In the committee people from all the three talukas - Yellapur, Sirsi and Siddapur were taken. Therefore, the combined force of the three talukas gave the necessary boost to the movement.

On 31st November about 200 people left for Bangalore to meet the Chief Minister Devaraj Urs. It
was during election time and he was extremely busy in deciding tickets. Nevertheless he gave them half an hour time on December 1, 1979 and heard them and told them that as he was busy then due to elections, he would consider their appeal after elections and asked them to come then. The people, 125 of them, led by Ansuya also met the Governor Govind Narain and requested his immediate intervention in preventing the fauna and vast forest area destruction in the district. Later, Ansuya spoke to the press and questioned the very prudence of undertaking hydel power projects by upsetting the ecological balance in modern times when it was possible to generate power from thermal, solar and nuclear sources.

She also highlighted the destruction of over one lakh acres of forests, precious areca, cardamom and pepper gardens and the resultant total denudation of the evergreen Sahyadrian range and the occurrence of frequent landslides and droughts in the area. She also pointed out the possibility of occurrence of the Koyna disaster in Uttar Kannada, as according to Geological Survey of India, it comes in the earthquake zone. She also linked the reduction in the rainfall to the Kali HEP 1st stage. She also said that besides river pollution, fish wealth would be affected by the projects coming up in a 30 miles radius.
"Mr. R. S. Bhagat, MLC and other leaders from the district who were present at the Press Conference said that the people would resort to dharna and agitational methods to ensure that the government would not go ahead with the project" (DH 1979:1).

Despite the Chief Minister's assurance that he will look into the project after elections, Anasuya and the people stayed back, even though many left in the chartered special bus for home. Early in the morning, on 2 December, all the remaining people went to the Chief Minister's house, fearing that after elections, it would be difficult to get in touch with the Chief Minister [henceforth CM]. Anasuya approached the CM, Devaraj Urs, who was very busy but very surprised to see her and asked her why she had not left. Anasuya said that, "Sir, my people are not satisfied with your answer, so that have stayed back to meet you and get either a stay on the projects or to drop the projects. They have said that they will not leave until they get one or the other." According to Anasuya, the CM was surprised and asked her whether all her people are still there! On getting the affirmative answer, he told her to come again after elections and that he was very busy. Anasuya again reiterated the demands and pointed out the environmental imbalance that would be caused by the projects. The T. A. Pai who was the Union Minister for
Railways, who was present supported Ansuya and said that "Yes, she is right, I agree with her. Forests should be protected and the fears of the North Kanara farmers over the projects are genuine". Then the CM asked the State Chief Secretary to immediately stop work on the Bedthi Project and gave stay on the Kadasalli and Bedthi projects except the ongoing Kali project. The jubilant delegation returned home victorious on 2nd December 1979. This success acted as a major boost and formed the base for future protest activities. People became confident of themselves and became aware of their power. This victory also made possible for the divergent groups to function harmoniously. Since it was under the leadership of Anasuya Sharma that such a victory could occur, her position as a leader became absolute and the UKJVVS and organisation gained credibility and became a winning team. This also helped in the sinking of differences and working for the cause in a united manner.

By 3rd December 1979, the first and important phase of the movement was over. Later phases were based on the 1st phase. This phase achieved
- (a) awareness generation and mobilisation of the people in Yellapur, Sirsi and Siddapur taluqs, and to some extent, in Ankola and other taluqs.
- consolidation of the people's strength and utilising it in result oriented activities.
- non-political movement by including all the parties who played an equally important role and with unanimity and consensus.
- (b) effective utilisation of the political and people's power.
- (c) built a mass-based organisation which got cooperation from all.

The CM Devaraj Urs accompanied by the Finance Minister S.M.Yahya on his election tour to Uttara Kannada visited Yellapur, Siddapur, Sirsi, Dandeli, Supa and Karwar. At the public meeting in Sirsi on 11th December, he is reported to have said that "he had ordered the stopping of work on Bedti and Aghanashini HEP temporarily and final decision would be taken on the projects after a detailed study of their problems" (DH, 1979:3).

Ansuya had also met the Swamiji of the Sanda Math which would be submerged in the Bedti 2nd stage HEP and had appraised him of the situation and had been blessed by the Swamiji in her struggle.

On 13.12.1979, a meeting of UKSWJ was held at the Sonda Math, wherein various subcommittees were formed to facilitate the continuance of the movement. The members
here mainly drawn from Sirsi taluq with some members from Yellapur and Siddapur taluqs.

A Finance Committee was formed to collect money for the movement which had as members:
1. Nagesh Shanbag from Yellapur
2. R.N. Hegde Gorsgadde from Yellapur
3. Bhasha Saheb Manehikeri from Yellapur
4. G.S. Hegde Kadkodi from Sirsi
5. R.A. Bhat Tattikai from Sirsi
6. G.S. Hegde Ajjibal from Sirsi

An Ecological Committee was formed to collect scientific information regarding the environment and the event impact of the projects with the following members:
1. R.A. Bhat Tattikai, Sirsi
2. K.M. Hegde Bhairumbhe, Sirsi
3. Gajanan Sharma Kallal, Sirsi
4. V.P. Bhat Kanni, Sirsi
5. L.T. Sharma Principal, Sirsi

A Publicity Committee was formed to give and get greater press coverage for the movement whose members were:
1. G.S. Hegde Ajjibal Sirsi (who was also a freelance journalist and was Hindu’s correspondent in UK).
2. B.D. Hegde Dodmani, Sirsi
3. Vishweshwar Sharma, Sirsi
4. T.K. Mahamood, Siddapur

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A Statistical Committee which would collect information on the rehabilitation and compensation of the affected people, as well as the effect on trade etc. had the following members:

1. N.V. Hegde Muttige, Siddapur
2. R.K. Hegde Bedehakkal, Yellapur
3. G.M. Hegde Nerlu Hadda, Sirsi
4. Omkar Bhat Magod, Yellapur
5. S.N. Gaonkar Bellipal, Yellapur
6. M.G. Hegde Hulimane, Sirsi

There was greater organisation from all angles which strengthened the Committee in the pursuance of its goal. Efforts were made in an organised fashion to mobilise, and organise people, get financial security, collect information regarding environment and the affected people and to get people’s support through greater publicity.

People in all the relevant fields were contacted for help and alternatives to Hydel energy were explored and scientific information and support to the cause was gathered.

Until December 1979, the movement had undergone the following stage from an individual to a district struggle which was fully institutionalised. The individual phase involved Omkar Bhat and the eight
families would be the first to be submerged, which evolved into the p-institutional phase with the involvement of Omkar Bhat, R.N. Hegde Gorgadde and the Taluka Development Board, Yellapur, which evolved into a semi-institutional and mobilisation phase with the involvement of Omkar Bhat, Taluka Development Board, Anasuya (the local MLA) and the Bidhi Aghanashini and Sonda Submergence Protest Committee, which developed into a completely institutionalised movement involving Omkar Bhat, Anasuya, Taluka Development Boards of Yellapur, Sirsi and Siddapur and the UKJVVS.

**SEMINAR PHASE**

The second phase of the movement begins in January 1980 with the defeat of Devraj Urs and the Congress (I) coming to power, and most importantly, the Outsider factor in the form of the scientific intervention in the movement. The 1980 elections saw the defeat of Devraj Urs (Congress-U) and the coming of power of Congress I with R. Gundu Rao as the Chief Minister, which meant that renewed and fresh efforts had to be made to the politicians, especially the CM.

The second most significant happening was the external scientific intervention which had unforeseen consequences and gave an entirely new dimension to the movement. The internal and external or insider-outsider interaction profoundly changed and influenced the
‘Movement Dynamics’. In January 1980, the total solar eclipse occurred and M.Gadgil, Sulochana Gadgil of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and Kailash Malhotra of Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, came to Yellapur to study the effect of solar eclipse on the flora and fauna of the region. R.N.Hegde Gorsgadde happened to meet them and spoke of the movement’s activities. Later, Anasuya (whom M.A.Parthasarathy of World Wildlife Fund had also directed to Gadgil) met Gadgil and asked him if he could help the movement. According to Ansuya, Gadgil and Kailash Malhotra toured the entire area - Magod. Pattanadahalla and Aghanashini in Siddapur for 5 days some time in February/March. Ram Bhat Thattikai, K.M.Hegde and Ansuya were with them throughout. In the end they gave an interim report and requested that their night staying arrangements could be made in a village. They said that they wanted to stay in a village instead of a hotel in the town. These staying arrangements were made at K.M.Hegde Bhairumebhe’s house. She says that, "I don’t know what happened there, but the idea of seminar was hatched there behind my back. I did not even know of it much later. They collected money from the people on UKJUVS name without telling us or including us. Gadgil gave all the support to them."
She asked Gadgil as to why he did this and he is reported to have replied that he does not like the word "anti" in the committee's name. According to Anasuya, he had earlier worked with them, had toured and studied the area and even gave an interim report under the aegis of the Committee, to whose title he had objections. She also said that she will do the seminar, but Gadgil did not respond positively.

The seminar was conducted in January 1981 and K.M.Hegde Bhairumbhe and L.T.Sarma, who were earlier members of the Ecological Sub-committee of UKJVVS, were the key actors supported by Gadgil and Malhotra. This caused a rift in the organisation and led to the emergence of parallel leadership at the local level. Both the groups could not be reconciled, with Anasuya insisting that the seminar be done under the banner of UKJVVS and the seminar group disagreeing. Gadgil was also contacted by Anusuya to resolve the matter, because the entire seminar was based on his support. Ultimately, no actual reconciliation could take place and both the groups with their antagonistic leaders continued their separate programmes.

Of the two key actors of the seminar group L.T.Sharma who had passed away in 1988 and K.M.Hegde Bhairumbhe, the latter, recounted what had happened. K.M.Hegde, an Agriculturist by training he had done
M.Sc. in Agriculture from Karnataka University Dharwar; was strongly interested in the scientific studies of environment. Shiv Rama Karanth on one of his visits to Sirsi some time in 1979 had exhorted K.M.Hegde Bhairumbhe and L.T.Sharma, principal of the local degree college to do in-depth scientific study of the environment of the Aghanashini and Bedthi region. K.M. Hegde and L.T. Sharma expressed their inability to do such studies giving the reason that these indepth studies need guidance and will take some time. Shivarama Karanth reportedly told them to go ahead and that would be with them as long as required. But the intention of L.T.Sharma and K.M.Hegde to do scientific studies of Bedthi and Aghanashini valleys did not materialise. Then the VKJVVS came up and he was associated with its ecological committee. As the night staying arrangements were made at his house and Gadgil proposed the idea of a seminar and asked L.T.Sharma and K.M.Hegde to conduct it. According to K.M.Hegde (this account was corroborated by other’s accounts to who were present) he refused to do so but was forced to accept by L.T.Sharma and Gadgil. The whole thing was thrust on him. L.T.Sharma undertook to take the responsibility of the Seminar and asked K.M.Hegde to help him.

Gadgil and Malhotra have given their version of their involvement in published papers (Gadgil and
Malhotra 1983:25-30; Prasad, Hegde, Gadgil, and Hegde 1985:76-77). For them, Bedthi was an experiment in people's participation in an effective and sustainable department process. This experiment was deemed to be successful given the "favourable circumstances" (Gadgil and Malhotra 1983:26) "of a relatively well-organised and literate segment of the population" (Gadgil and Malhotra 1983:26) and the accompanying conditions that the development project should not have been blindly opposed per se but, only the associated distortions. Both were familiar with the area since 1975 which was area of their ecological anthropological studies. Most importantly, Gadgil was the member of the Environmental Impact Assessment Committee of DST, GOI which considered the BHEPs environmental impact. According to Gadgil, the Committee cleared the project without any careful thought in just one days deliberations (Prasad, Hegde, Gadgil, Hegde 1983:76). According to K.M.Hegde and others Gadgil recounted the visit to the project site which lasted for an hour and the decision to clear Bedthi HEP was based on a leech which sucked the blood of one of the Environment Appraisal Committee members who shocked, reportedly declared that a region which supports such blood-sucking creatures should definitely not be allowed to exist. Therefore Gadgil was dissatisfied with the whole process of environmental
clearance, and raised these issues on the following grounds. In the Project Report, which was accessible to Gadgil, the Project Cost-Benefit ratio did not include the project affected forest, horticulture and agricultural resources appropriate value. Some critical environmental parameters like siltation rate were unexamined and the displaced population had no proper rehabilitation plan. His suggestion that the Committee conduct open public hearings wherein the local people put forth their perception of the environmental impact, met with hostility and opposition from the KPC officials and was not allowed. Gadgil was dissatisfied with the hasty completion (in 36 hours) of the environmental clearance process and the opposition local people’s involvement in decisions and made him support the local villagers questioning of the project. Thus, the initial dissatisfaction with the EIA’s process was the background against which Gadgil and Kailash Malhotra consented for intervention in the anti-BHEP movement.

The preparations for the seminar began in earnest under the general and active guidance of Gadgil and Malhotra with the local support of L.T.Sarma and K.M.Hegde, who mobilised local support and infrastructure for the seminar. Gadgil and Malhotra tapped their extensive contacts and contacted well-known scientists, environmentalists and experts in connected
disciplines and the KPC. A comprehensive socio-economic study of the Bedthi HEP was undertaken by Vijay Paranjape, an economist of the Gokale Institute of Public Affairs, with the help of the local college students. Ullas Karanth, the ecologist conducted an ecological study of the Bedthi valley and prepared a report on the status of flora and fauna of the submersible area.

L.T.Sarma approached the Thotagars Co-operative Sale Society (TSS), Sirsi for help which, besides extending banking facilities to the Thotagars, also bought their produce and had a turnover of few crores of rupees. Its services were extended to Sirsi, Siddapur and Yellapur talukas and had considerable influence among the Thotagars. The then Chairman of TSS was S.R.Hegde Kadve who belonged to the Congress Party and in the previous Assembly elections, was routed by Anasuya Gajanana Sharma of Janata Party. Though not known for environment concern and a proponent of hydel energy, S.R.Hegde Kadve consented to hold the seminar under the aegis of the TSS with TSS providing the infrastructural facilities for the Seminar. Thus, support base of TSS, with substantial support of the Thotagars of Sirsi and Siddapur talukas, under a scientific perspective was established by L.T.Sharma and K.M.Hegde Bhairumbhe. Key members of the UKJVVS like
G.S. Hegde Kadekodi, Ram Bhat Thattikai, G.S. Hegde Ajjibal, R.G. Hegde Bedehokkal and others also actively supported the seminar group while continuing to function under the banner of UKJVVS and saw no conflict in being associated with both the groups as both activities were for the same cause which was to drop Bedthi. Similarly, at the grass-roots level of the Thotagars, the same feeling prevailed. In fact Omkar Bhat told Ansuya that, "UKJVVS does not have the resources, financial and infrastructural to conduct the seminar. Besides, with the involvement of politicians, their support commitment is not reliable, as the politicians are too busy with other things. For this kind of a programme, we can’t rely solely on politicians and if they ditch us half way through, then what will we do?" The Thotagars participated in the activities of both the organisations. R.G. Hegde Bedebakkal was actively involved in the data collection of Vijay Paranjpe. The basic perspective was that BHEP was to be stopped by any means.

K.M. Hegde, Bhairumbhe, who was earlier very actively involved in UKJVVS, continued to attend the meetings of UKJVVS right up to June 1980, while working for the seminar at the same time. Similarly, the other members of UKJVVS continued to be active in the seminar group too.
Meanwhile, in the General Elections, the Congress (U) of Devraj Urs lost and Congress (I) under the leadership of Gundu Rao came to power. In the second week of March 1980, the Chief Minister R.Gundu Rao called a meeting of the legislators, MLAs and other government officials in Bangalore to discuss the Bedthi and Aghanshini HEP’s implementation. Besides the MLCs, Anasuya Sharma MLA, the TDB presidents of Yellapur, Sirsi, Basha Saheb of Manchikeri, Ram Bhat Thattkai, Thimmappa Hegde, Voddala Gowdaru and others attended the meeting and urged the Chief Minister to drop the project. The request of Anasuya to stall the project until he personally visits the site, was agreed to by the Chief Minister and he continued the temporary stay given by the ex-Chief Minister Devaraj Urs.

As the BHEP was likely to be taken up by the new government, memoranda and petitions were submitted to the Chief Minister. Anasuya in her maiden speech in the Assembly, highlighted the Bedthi issue and mobilised support from within her Janata Party and even the most ardent votary of hydel power J.H.Patel did not oppose her position. She utilised every opportunity in the Legislative Assembly and highlighted the Bedthi issue. On 13.4.1980, the UKJVVS met the CM Gundu Rao and submitted a memorandum and pointed out that despite the stay on the project given by the ex CM Devraj Urs, work
had been resumed despite the stay order by the KPC. The CM responded that, "I will announce my decision after visiting the site and after examining it from all angles, and until then I will stop the work at the project site." Consequently, the UKJVVS, redirected its efforts in acquiring increased support from the experts.

On 13 May 1980, the CM Gundu Rao visited Sirsi and undertook an aerial survey of the submersible lands. The memorandum submitted to him by the UKJVVS highlighted the ecological fragility of the district which would be destroyed by the hydel energy projects criss-crossing the district. The numerous hydel energy projects across the major rivers of the district will result in the dismantling of the district besides posing the danger of earthquake due to the near (20 miles) proximity of each dam's reservoir! The returns from electricity generation could never cover the ecological damage, rehabilitation and the destruction of the unique cropping pattern of the district. The submergence of most of the Upghat areas will severely affect the coastal taluqs in terms of large scale unemployment besides affecting the area belt in the upghats taluqs and Sirsi, Yellapur and Siddapur towns. The UKJVVS requested the abandonment of all hydel projects in the district, except the Kali stage I, which would be completed and the damages and benefits achieved could be
studied by experts from different disciplines. Alternative sources of power could be located with Central Government’s collaboration. The memorandum ended with the appeal to the CM to immediately continue his order staying further work on Bedthi project stage I. The CM acquiesced to the appeal and further work on the BHEP was halted.

On June 22, 1980, Sunderlal Bahuguna, who was visiting Uttara Kannada on Sarvodaya work and Vijay Paranjape attended the UKJVVS meeting at the KPCC Bank in Sirsi. Sunderlal Bahuguna who was aware of the Bedthi issue through a press clipping sent by Jayanth Bandopadhyay of Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore and one of the participants of the Seminar, toured the Sirsi and Yellapur talukas and met Anasuya and other leaders, of both the seminar. Anasuya and other leaders of both the seminar group and the UKJVVS. In his report on Bedthi-Karnataka (1980) given to the Gandhi Bhavan, Bangalore, he recorded his impressions about the people’s response to BHEP and the environment situation of UK. He spoke first to the seminar group in Bangalore i.e., Gadgil, Kailash Malhotra, Vijay Paranjape and others then the movement leaders in Yellapur and Sirsi. He addressed meetings at Manchikere in Yellapur taluq, Bhairumbhe in Sirsi taluq, the Rotary Club Sirsi and the Anti-Bedthi Project Committee in
Sirsi. He records that the Bangalore groups felt that a "resistance non-violent movement to stop this disastrous project should be launched in the area, to the government may be forced to rethink over the whole strategy of hill development." (p.3). He highlighted the favourable points for a strong non-violent movement (1980: 7) as "(1) concern of intellectuals, geologists and scientists (2) All parties common front, (3) concern of spiritual leader Swamiji of Sonda." (p.7) and outlined the plan for the launching of a non-violent movement in association with the Sarvodaya workers.

Meanwhile, extensive preparations were being made for the seminar by L.T.Sharma and his group of eminent people and experts were invited to participate in the Seminar. Anasuya approached Gadgil on 29th September 1980 and conveyed her exclusion from the Seminar and insisted that without resolving this issue the seminar cannot proceed. Gadgil wrote to L.T.Sharma asking him to meet Anasuya personally and to arrive at an understanding. Thus the deadlock between Anasuya and the Seminar group continued and the constant friction spilled over to Bangalore and with one of the eminent participants terming it as "personal problems". The position of Anasuya was that the Seminar should be held under the aegis of the UKJVVS, under her leadership.
whereas, the seminar group preferred to operate independently with the backing of Gadgil and the TSS.

In the UKJVVS's meeting held on 8th October 1980, L.T. Sharma and K.M. Hegde Bhairumbhe, on behalf of the organising committee, Seminar on Hydro-Projects in Uttara Kannada attended a compromise was reached wherein two representatives from each organisation would attend each other's meetings. The representatives of UKJVVS were Anasuya and Badshah. M. Gadgil hoped that "some such compromise will in fact be possible", which in practice did not work out and Anasuya in her letter dated 22.12.1980 to the Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Seminar Group asking him to abide by the agreement reached in the meeting of 8th October 1980 and to give opportunity for participation to the representatives of the UKJVVS in the meetings and programmes. The timing of Anasuya's letter is crucial because the seminar was to be held earlier in November and which was postponed to January 1981 for which hectic preparations were going on and in addition the preparation for UKJVVS's programmes were going on, which were slated for January.

The CM Gundu Rao visited Yellapur on the request of the UKJVVS on 13th November 1980 and declared at the public meeting at Devi maidan that he was aware of the issue and that he was at Yellapur to listen to the
people. He is also reported to have met the Swamiji of the Swarnavalli Math for about half an hour. The appeal of UKJVVS pointed out that in the name of national development, UK was being destroyed and the Malnad Zilla will cease to exist with reservoirs every 20 miles. Pressure was exercised by the political leaders on the CM Gundu Rao to give up the BHEP.

The Seminar on the "Effects of Hydro projects in Uttara Kannada' slated to be held on 15th, 16th and 17th November 1980 was postponed to January 17, 1981. About 60 people from all walks of life were invited to the Seminar and 37 had communicated their acceptance of the invitation to L.T.Sharma, Principal, M.M.Arts and Science College, Sirsi. He along with K.M.Hegde Bhairumbhe built up the necessary arrangements and formally invited the participants, under the active guidance of Gadgil and K.Malhotra who used their contacts in meeting people and also created fresh contacts for the purpose of Seminar. The World Wildlife Fund was also approached for help, financial and otherwise. Newspapers at the national level were invited for covering the seminar, All India Radio was contacted to cover the seminar. State government departments and organisations like the Forest department, energy, planning, mines and geology departments, the MFC and Karnataka Electricity Board
were invited to participate in the Seminar. The Karnataka University, Dharwad, Shri Venkateshwara University, Tirupati, the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore and Dharwad, Shivaji University, Kolhapur and the Regional Engineering College, Calicut, were invited. The following research institutions and organisations were invited to participate - Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Delhi, French Institute of Ecology, Pondicherry, National Institute of Virology, Pune, Worldlife Fund, Bangalore, Indian Council for Agricultural Research, Kasargod and Forest Research Institute and College, Dehradun. Environmentalists and environment organisations were also invited - Bharat Dogra, Claude Awares, Sunderlal Bahuguna, Chandi Prasad Bhat and the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad. Other private industries invited for participation were - The Western India Plywoods Ltd., Kerala and the Indian Plywood Manufacturing Company Ltd., Dandeli. Professionals and experts of different disciplines were also invited - engineers, botanists, zoologists, journalists, bureaucrats, foresters, writers, geologists, economists, anthropologists, ecologists and others. Thus wide array of scientific experts and
environmentalists and the government departments was mobilised for a comprehensive review of hydel projects in the Seminar. A small exhibition was also held at the venue of the seminar, displaying the mineral resources of the region given by the Mysore Minerals Ltd., an undertaking of GOK. The KPC which was to give models of the BHEP and had agreed to participate in the seminar, withdrew and KPC officials attended as observers.

A press conference on the cost benefit analysis of the BHEP done by Vijay Paranjape was help on December 3, 1980 in Bangalore. The press was invited on behalf of the World Wildlife Fund, Southern Region.

The UKJVVS had also drawn up a series of programmes to generate pressure on GOK in order to force a final decision on BHEP and other HEPs from GOK. Simultaneously, efforts were made by the UKJVVS to operate jointly with the Seminar group in the Seminar, which were not successful group in the Seminar, which were not successful on 22.12.1980, Anasuya wrote to the Seminar Group asking them to abide by their agreement. Ultimately, it was not possible to establish a working relationship between both groups and each functioned independent of the other. Despite the extension of the stay order by the CM and in the absence of any decision from time, work on the construction of the roads and quarters was going on. The UKJVVS was in a fix about
the intention of the government decided to step up the agitational activities thereby pressurising the government into dropping the project. In addition, the seminar was to be held in January, which probably stimulated the UKJVVS to exert greater pressure on the government.

On 22.12.1980, the action plan of the UKJVVS was ready and the public was informed through its pamphlet dated 22.12.1980. It declared that the demonstration of the opposition to the BHEP did not have any political party, communal dimensions, but aimed at forcing the government to totally scrap the projects. Hence for this purpose, satyagraha at a higher and intensive level will be offered at the project site at Magod and will continue until the government announces its decision regarding BHEP. Everyday, 1000 people will gather at the site and offer satyagraha. Public meetings informing the people of the programme at Magod were to be held on 3.1.1981 at Sirsi, on January 5, 1981, at Yellapur and on 7th January, 1981 at Siddapur. Mobilisation activities were initiated in all the three talukas. In addition, party political power of the Janata Party was mobilised by Anasuya and on 30th December 1980, Ramakrishna Hegde hailing from Siddapur taluq of UK, the General Secretary of Janata Party at the All-India level and Member of Parliament wrote a
letter to CM Gundu Rao regarding the people's agitation over the Bedthi and Aghanashini Hydro-Electric Projects, in North Kanara. He stated that his involvement in the movement is not emotionally and politically motivated, but on the total conviction that the projects "will do infinitely more harm than good not only to the people of the district but also to our state as a whole" (p.1) and that "...North Kanara District biologically and physically cannot sustain any more big reservoirs" (p.1). He also pointed out that Gundu Rao had "spearheaded the agitation against the pet project of Sri Channabasappa, viz., Kambadakada on the ground it would submerge large areas of forests, coffee and other cultivated lands and would bring great hardship to the people of Coorg. The government had to give it up even though it was an irrigation project benefitting thousands of farmers in the scarcity areas of Mysore district" (p.2).

As alternatives to BHEP and AREP, he cited other sites for generation of hydel energy and thermal and atomic power plants which could be located anywhere. Thus "To concentrate all the projects in one area is unsound and disastrous in terms of not only economic, ecological and human considerations but also strategic considerations" (p.5). He informed the CM that he would be leading the satyagrahis on 12th January 1981 and
hoped for unequivocal statement from the CM before January 10th, that "further work in regard to the projects will be stopped" (p.5). The existing infrastructure has been proposed to be utilised by the Forest department which is opposing the project.

The letter of R.K. Hegde highlighted the ecological, economic and strategic and human consequences of the projects, pointed out the CM’s opposition to similar project in his native Coorg district thereby asking the CM’s justification in deferring a decision on the project and indicating the nature of decision expected of him. The letter also implied that if the government does not scrap the project before 10 January 1980, the movement will intensify. R.K. Hegde’s letter was released to the press.

On January 9, 1980, the state Cabinet met and discussed the BHEP. The CM after the Cabinet meeting told newsmen that the Government has decided to constitute a five member committee which would go into the viability of the BHEP. The Committee would be headed by C.H. Narayana Rao, the former KEB Chairman and the members are S.R. Mavinkurve, retired Chief Conservator of Forests; B.C. Angadi, former special secretary; Irrigation department; M.A. Parthasarathy, President World Wildlife Fund and K.C. Reddy, Chairman KPC who would be the member secretary. The Committee
was directed to submit its report within three months. The CM declared that until the submission of the report, work will not take place in the project area. He assured that the government only after considering the Committee’s report would take a decision and until then the people of the area need not be afraid. The government had an open mind regarding the BHEP and hence, had directed the stoppage of work and constituted a committee composed of experts from different fields. The CM said that he had asked R.K.Hegde not to take any action.

The decision of the government to stop work on the project and constituting a committee to re-examine the BHEP was a major victory for the UKJVVS. It was able to achieve its goal - the staying of the project. It was also a victory of the UKJVVS over the seminar group, which was achieved due to the combined strength of the people and the political party power. The agitation was dropped after the Government’s decision the token satyagraha continued at the project site, with large numbers of people participating. The Technical Committee played a significant role 11 years later in the revival of BHEP and thereby revived the movement. The letter of the CM Gundu Rao to R.K.Hegde was published by the UJKVVS in the newspapers of the district and in the pamphlets. Rao’s letter also stated
that the work on the Aghanashini Project was nearly of an investigative nature. R.K. Hegde in a statement released to the Press, appreciated the decision of the CM Gundu Rao to stop all project works and appointing a committee to re-examine the desirability of the BHEP.

On January 12, R.K. Hegde addressed the UKJVVS meeting and announced that Satyagraha had been suspended and hoped that the national seminar would help in planning facts before the committee. S.R. Bommai, the Janata Party MLA also addressed the UKJVVS. Later, at a public meeting called by UKJVVS, R.K. Hegde opposed the setting up of any move hydel power projects in Uttara Kannada, due to strategical, geological and environmental reasons (DH, 13.1.1981, Sirsi). R.K. Hegde did participate in the token satyagraha at Mago and even had food along with other satyagrahi's on the road.

The Seminar on the 'Implications of Hydro-Electric Projects in Uttara Kannada' began as scheduled on 17th January 1989 and concluded on 19th January 1981. B.B. Vohra gave the inaugural address on 17th January and the following technical session chaired by Zafar Futehally, an overview of the region affected was presented by Gadgil, followed by the MPC presentation of 'The Hydro-electric projects of Uttara Kannada which did not take place due to the sudden withdrawal of the MPC from the Seminar, two days before the beginning with
Shibbanna, Project Engineer of the Bedthi HEP sent an ordinary telegram on 15.1.1981 stating that the "paper presented by me should not be presented to seminar. Return all papers" who on earlier on 12.1.1981 had sent his paper to the seminar; which reflected his personal opinion and not of the KPC. The session was rounded off with the paper on the 'The Bedthi Project: A Cost-benefit Analysis' by Vijay Paranjpe.

The second technical session was chaired by A.K.N.Reddy and concentrated on the issue of energy with B.V.Krishnamurthy presenting a paper on 'Energy Policy and Rural Development' and U.K.Damodaran on 'Utilisation of Electric Power'. The third technical session chaired by S.Shamsunder dealt with the flora and fauna with C.J.Saldanha S.J. presenting a paper on 'Biological Diversity' with slides and Zafar Futehally presenting the paper "Preservation of Wild Life". The first day set the regional backdrop against which the power projects were located, and the independent cost-benefit analysis, examined the energy or power the dimensions of HEPs and the biological diversity as affected by these developmental projects.

The fourth technical session on 18th January chaired by Fr.C.J.Saldanha S.J. concentrated mainly on Forests in the context of Management, Energy Policy, Soil and Water Conservation, Rainfall and People with
papers presented by Adkoli, Syamsunder, H.N.Mathur, Meher Homji and Sunderlal Bahugana. These papers highlighted the importance of forests and the biological diversity purported by them and the increasing decimation of biological diversity and shrinking of forest areas due to human intervention and the underestimation and calculation of the forest resources.

Shamsunder, the conservator of Forests presented the monetary value of the Bedthi forests which are calculated at the minimum rates as follows:

(a) A conservative estimate of the timber of 10,200 ha. of forests in the submersible area was calculated to be worth Rs.4624.60 lakhs.
(b) "...the in situ value of timber and firewood added on per year would be Rs.3.00 crore...." (p.3) and that the organic production of the forest is not really calculable in monetary terms.

Meher Homji in his paper brought out the scientific connection between forests and rainfall and confirmed the folk and common knowledge that reduction in forest cover reduces the rainfall. Sunderlal Bahuguna shared the Chipko experience with the Thotagars.

The fifth technical session on 19th January was chaired by M.K.Prasad and dealt mainly with the agriculture, plantation crops, animal husbandry in UK and the geological implications of the projects and
concluded with the deforestation in Malnad areas ecological implications. R.K. Hegde, N.G. Perur, K.C. Malhotra, G.R.Hegde, K.V.Suryanarayan, T.Ramachandra Rao, and H.R.Bhat presented papers. This session concentrated in forest dependent agriculture, the geological and ecological impact of development initiatives in the region.

The sixth technical session chaired by Gadgil was concerned with the human impact of the HEPs. L.T.Sharma presented the paper on ‘Problems of Rehabilitation’ and T.S.Ramachandra presented paper on compensation and land acquisition. The scenario outlined was not very positive and highlighted the neglected human dimension of the power projects.

The seventh technical session, chaired by B.V.Krishnamurthy dealt with the regional overview with papers presented by L.S.Bhat on ‘A Regional Plan for UK’ and S.G.Bhat on ‘Development of UK’.

The Open Discussion session chaired by B.B.Vohra involved the submission of the technical groups opinions.

In the valedictory session, the concluding address was given by Sunderlal Bahuguna and K.Shivarama Karanth. Karanth spoke of the local people’s role in forest cover destruction and the need to change the resource destructive practices.
The proceedings of the Seminar were published in a book by the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi. A report was prepared based on the Seminar which was presented to the Technical Committee of Narayana Rao. The Seminar was successful in generating (a) scientific and non-political pressure on the state government; (b) awareness regarding the environment, its overall importance and the local contribution in the decimation of flora and fauna (c) confirmed the folk knowledge regarding the forests. By locating the BHEP in the wider regional level, the seminar was able to present a holistic perspective of the whole scenario of the development projects, the environment, the project affected people and the beneficiaries. Crucial to the seminar was the paper by Vijay Paranjape who described the claims of the MPC officials that BHEP has a viable cost-benefit ratio and proved that in violation of the standard accepted ratio of 1:1.50, i.e., for every rupee spent, the return should be one rupee and fifty paise, the BHEP’s cost-benefit ratio was 1: .57 i.e., for every rupee spent, the return was only 57 paise.

The seminar was considered to be a success and many Thotagars of the Sirsi and Siddapur areas participated with some participation from Yellapur taluq too. It was the first seminar, wherein the human social, biological and environmental, geological, technical and economic
dimensions of hydel power projects were discussed by the experts. The group claimed that the considered it to be their success, whereas, the stay order was given on 13th January, four days prior to the beginning of the seminar. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that the seminar did exert considerable scientific pressure on the government in re-examining the project.

The Technical Committees

With the stopping of work on BHEP, the movement activities considerably lessened. The UKJVVS, pointed out the biased composition of the Narayan Rao (the wherein, out of 5 members only two belonged to the Environment dimension. Therefore, in order to set the imbalance which was in favour of the engineers, they asked the inclusion of one more person from the Environment angle, which meant that then there would be 3 engineers and 3 environmentalists. The GOK acquiesced to the demand, but included one person from the power division, which meant that the earlier position continued. Fr.C.J.Saldanha S.J. was proposed by the UKJVVS.

On February 13, 1981, the Public Notification office of the Bedthi Committee gave a public notice dated 30.12.1981 calling all the interested parties in respect of the stated terms of reference of the Bedthi Committee, to present their views in writing on or
before 12th March 1981 at the KPC office on Race Course Road, Bangalore. The people who wished to make personal representation should send their requests separately to the Member-Secretary and they would be intimated in advance the time, date and venue of their presentation.

The GOK constituted the Five Man Committee vide GO No. PWD PPC 81 dated 13.1.1981 which set out the following terms of reference of the Committee:

"(a) To assess the findings of the detailed studies and investigations already done into the feasibility and implications of having a hydro-electric project at River Bedthi.

(b) Based on such assessment to give its considered views about the desirability of this project.

(c) To make recommendations on such other matters like the impact of the project on the ecological balance of the area as are relevant in the context of the study contemplated and measures to minimise any adverse ecological implications." (DH 1981).

Preparations were made for the written presentation of the views and seeking personal representation to the Bedthi Committee by UKJVS, the Seminar group missed submitting its position to the Bedthi committee. Omkar Bhat wrote to R.K.Hegde some in May voicing concern about the Committee’s actions and the visit to UK.

R.K.Hegde replied on June 7, 1981 reassuring him that
the Committee would visit the district after the monsoon, and that, every one would be given an opportunity to have their say. Pressure was constantly exerted on the government to speed up the working the Committee.

On 18th September 1981, the technical committee visited Magod and held the public hearing. The UKJVVS communicated through pamphlets to other people of the hearing exhorted one and all to come and present their views. On September 18, 1981, about 5000 people from all over the district had gathered at Magod. Not all the members of the Committee could visit the site, Narayana Rao, Fr.Saldanha, K.C.Reddy Angadi and other officials of KPC visited Maghod. The UKJVVS submitted its memorandum asking for the abandonment of all hydel projects in UK and requested the Committee to convey this message to GOK and to subscribe to it. The importance of the forests in the ecosystem and the human dependence on them was highlighted. The UKJVVS’s forced opposition to the hydel projects and specifically to the BHEP was not based on the destruction of the property of few people or on emotional attachment to the area nor, due to political reasons, but based on scientific reasons and considering the entire population’s interests, without discrimination.
In addition to the memorandum submitted by UKJVVS, numerous memoranda were submitted by individual and youth and women organisations opposing BHEP. The Secretary of the areca traders Association, Nagesh Shanbag submitted a memorandum, highlighting the negative impact of the BHEP on the areca and spice gardens. He pointed out that the areca gardens were solely dependent on forests for rainfall and the conducive environment and any change in the forest ecosystem would severely affect the sensitive areca gardens which grow valuable cash crops and earn considerable foreign exchange. The BHEP, by displacing people who have lived in Malnad area, would destroy their culture. Adequate and suitable compensation and rehabilitation is not possible for the displaced people as seen in the Kalinadi project. Moreover, the BHEP falls right in the Centre of the Hubli-Karwar railway line which would have to be given up. The project is not economical and requested the dropping of BHEP.

Thus, multiplicity of perspectives of HEPs and varied interests were keen to preserve the environment and hence commonly opposed the BHEP. At the public hearing, fiery speeches were made by the UKJVVS members. Anasuya stated that if necessary they would even live without electricity as vegetable oil culled from a tree growing in the forest was used for centuries, but also
advocated the modern day alternatives like solar, wind for electricity generation. A garland made of the roots of medicinal plants in the forest was presented by D.V. Hegde a homeopath to the Committee chairman, Narayana Rao. Few bottles of pickles made of forest fruits was presented to the Committee. G.S. Hegde, Kadekodi, President of TDB, Sirsi read out a memorandum and V.N. Hegde, President of TDB, Yellapur proposed vote of thanks.

Sri Sarvaganendra Swamiji of Swarnavalli Math, Sonda is reported (DH, Sirsi, 22.9.1981) to have told the Committee that the new proposed HEPs in the district have caused great discontentment among the people and appealed to the Committee to save people from eviction.

D.V. Hegde, a homeopath in a memorandum to the Committee said that with the implementation of the BHEP, a large number of medicinal plants grown in the forest would be destroyed. The seminar group presented a memorandum to the Committee.

After the public hearing, the Technical Committee held numerous sittings, examined the large number of memoranda; the 26 papers by eminent authors pertaining to the ecology, environment and forest aspects of the BHEP, Commissioned a detailed survey of flora in the Bedthi submersion area by the Centre of Taxonomic studies headed by Fr. C.J. Saldanha who was also the
member of the Committee, studied the KPC commissioned study of the social cost benefit analysis done by the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad the Committee had prepared its report sometime in 1982 according to KPC officials. The Committee was told not to submit the report for 4 years and it was only in 1986, that the government with Ramakrishna Hegde as the Chief Minister asked for the report to be submitted to the cabinet. The report was not made public nor did the government take any action on it.

Meanwhile, the KPC had reported that "Although the project was sanctioned in 4/79, much progress could not achieved on account of (a) suspension of the work by the government pending a reappraisal of the ecological effects and (b) shortage of funds. The position remains the same today and both these constraints are likely to delay even the commencement of works.... A decision on the project implementation will be taken after obtaining the assurance of funds to meet the commitments on all components fully and after obtaining government's clearance for the proposed proposal" (KPC 1981:1). The KPC officials were unsure about the restarting of the BHEP as the stay order was a political decision and the government would have to take a political decision regarding BHEP.
The Bedthi Committee commissioned studies on the flora of the Bedthi submersible area by Fr.C.J.Saldanha S.J. of the Centre of Taxonomic Studies, Bangalore in 1981, through the Managing Director, KPC who (vide letter No.A1 G1 dated 28.3.1981) requested Fr.Saldanha to undertake study. The actual work in the field commenced on 22.4.1981 and on 31 August 1981 an interim report was submitted which on 19 September 1981 was placed before the Bedthi Committee’s meeting at Ambibikanagar with a verbal presentation of the findings along with colour slides.

In the original report of Father Saldanha as member, submitted to the Narayan Rao Committee, he located the Bedthi Aghasnashini HEP’s in the broader context of the other HEPs and their consequent impact on the forest, in addition to the existing pressures on the forests, and concluded that "Hydel Projects alone could submerge over 40,000 ha of Forest in UK" (p.1), which excludes other additional forest area required for infrastructural facilities and other connected works of the project area required for transmission lines and the rehabilitation of the displaced people. He did a monetary estimation of the forest value which at a conservative estimate was enormous, with the commercial value of timber extracted in the submerged area of Bedthi state I coming up to Rs.46.24 crore alone. The
non-quantifiable losses were enormous. He recorded that the response of the local people as was initially enthusiastic about the massive development efforts taking place in their district for over 25 years, but it has now turned into alarm and opposition to the development projects.

Fr. Saldanha concluded that "The degradation which the Bedthi Stage I project will cause to the environment for the generation of 120 MW power, when taken in conjunction with the other causes of environmental depletion in the district, makes me hesitate in recommending the project.

Having already initiated the Kali project with a potential of 1316 MW, it would be better to complete it as quickly as possible without disturbing the people and environment of one more river valley for a mere 120 MW" (1981: 5-6) (emphasis added).

According to Fr. Saldanha who had not recommended the BHEP from the environmental angle, he was asked by the Bedthi Committee whether the project could be taken up with the FRL of 1540 which would considerably reduce the submersion area. He felt that if the government is anyway taking up the project then it could be taken up with less environment impact and agreed for a reduced FRL of BHEP.
The original 5 man committee had expanded to 7 man committee due to the efforts of the UKJVVS's efforts to attain a balance of engineers and environmentalists. Two more experts, Fr. Saldanha from the environment angle and Mohandas Moses, Managing Director KPC Ltd. from the engineering and government angle were added. Hence, the revised and expanded committee composition was 4 engineers and 3 environmentalists. The original recommendations regarding the taking up of the BHEP of the three environmentalists S.R. Mavinkurve, M.A. Parthasarathy and Fr. Saldanha were negative. On being asked whether the BHEP could be taken up with reduced FRC of 1540 which would reduce only the forest submersion area considerably. Mavinkurve and Parthasarathy did not recommend and Fr. Saldanha recommended of the remaining four members, three including the Chairman of the Committee, recommended that BHEP could be taken up with a reduced FRL and the last member, the Managing Director of KPC was non committal and said "Further careful studies are required" (1992:3). As the majority opinion was in favour of the project with the reduced height, the Bedthi Committee communicated this to GOK.

Though officially the report was submitted in 1986 and never made public, the contents of the report were unofficially known to many concerned people.
Anasuya contended that it was not in the terms of reference of the committee, to reduce the FRC level of the dam and that the Chairman of the Committee is not a voting member but a neutral person. The terms of reference framed by the GOK, specifically the third term of reference dealt with "Recommendations on such other matters like impact of the project on the ecological balance of the area as are relevant in the context of the study contemplated and measures to minimise any adverse ecological implications" (GOK 1981:1). This broad term of reference could be interpreted in many ways (a) concerning the existing project and (b) concerning the revised project, the Committee was required to look into the environment and social impact of the existing project and not a proposed, hypothetical revised project which had not even been approved and cleared by the competent authorities. The Committee could have taken the recommendations of the members separately on the existing and the hypothetical projects. This was an area of contention between the government and the environmentalists concerning the role and scope of the committee.

With the public hearing of the Bedthi Committee on 18th September 1981, protest activities ceased and the movement quietened down and it was considered by many that the BHEP had been dropped completely by the
government. The awareness and commitment to fight for their cause remained intact as was vocalised by the respondents and as was evident by events, eleven years later.

The movement originally was located and concentrated in and around the BHEP area - Yellapur and Manchikeri. The movements strength in terms of manpower was rooted in the Yellapur taluka which would be affected directly and indirectly by submergence. At this juncture, it is necessary to examine the socio-economic profile and the reasons for their opposition to the BHEP and the perspectives on environment and development to attain a comprehensive perspective of the entire movement.

Of the 24 respondents interviewed in the Yellapur area, 37.5 percent were in the age group of 21-30 years, which meant that at the time of the agitation, they were in their teens. The age groups of 41-50, 51-60, 61-70 years each had 16.6 percent of respondents respectively who at the time of the movement were in the age group of 21-60 years. 8.3 percent of the respondents was in the age group of 31-40 years and 4.1 percent of the respondents was in the age group of 61-70 years. Thus, a majority of the respondents were 62.5 percent were in the age group of 31-70 years.
The educational profile of the respondents is as follows. 58.3 percent had education of 1-5th standard school level, 16.6 percent had school level education of 6-10th standard, the uneducated were 12.5 percent of the respondents and included upper and lower castes. 4.1 percent had an educational level of 11 to 12th standard, data for 8.3 percent was not available. Thus, the educational level was poor with 12.5 percent uneducated and 58.3 percent have education between 1-5th class.

The occupational profile of the respondents is as follows: 91.66 percent were Thotagars and 8.33 percent were Pujaris, who also owned and cultivated the land. Thus, majority 91.66 percent were land dependent population.

Land was owned by 95.9 percent of the respondents and for the remaining 4.1 percent data was not available. 56.52 percent of the land owning respondents owned land between 1-5 acres of land on which areca gardens and paddy, sugarcane were growth; 39.13 percent of the respondents owned land between 6-10 acres, and 4.34 percent owned land between 11-15 acres. Thus majority (i.e., 95.65 percent) owned land between 1-10 acres and come under the small farmers category.

The prevalent type of family in the area is the joint family. 79.16 percent belonged to joint families and 12.5 percent belonged to nuclear families, no data
being available for 8.3 percent. The significance of the joint families indicates the number of people dependent on land (completely or partially) and the greater support given to other members to participate in the movement.

95.83 percent of the respondents had stayed in the present residence for 200 years and 4.1 percent of respondents were staying for 11-20 years at the present residence.

95.83 percent of the respondents were the original respondents and 4.1 percent were migrants. The 95.83 percent of the respondents gave attachment to their land as one of the reasons for their opposition, the migrant category of 4.1 percent also subscribed to this reason.

70.8 percent of the respondent's homes and fields were 1-5 kms away from the actual project site. 25 percent stayed 6-10 kms away from the project site and 4.1 percent stayed 31-35 kms away from the project site.

The percentage of respondents who would be submerged was 66.66 and the not submerged but affected respondents comprised 37.5 percent. The directly affected category had 100 percent of the respondents.

There was no previous awareness or involvement in any environmental activity. The respondents' awareness of the project was 29.16 percent through surveyors; 29.16 percent project activity and construction; 16.66
percent project activity in personal property; word of mouth - 16.66 percent and through newspaper - 4.1 percent. Thus, the majority of the respondents became aware of the project through project related activities.

Respondents were aware of the impact of the project on themselves due to surveyors - 50 percent word of mouth, 25 percent through contractors workers 16.66 percent through activists 8.33 percent.

The sources of awareness of projects impact on the environment were through activists - 33.33 percent through meetings; 29.16 percent word of mouth; 29.16 percent by scientists and 4.1 percent by government officials. The respondents awareness of the nature of the projects impact on the environment which were cited by 100 percent of the respondents.

100 percent of the respondents were active participants and had participated in the following specific events: 91.66 percent had participated in Dharnas, 87.5 percent had attended meetings, 33.2 percent had participated in propaganda and mobilisational activities. Contribution of foodgrains was done by 20 percent of the respondents; Financial contribution was done by 16.66 percent of the respondents, labour or 'Shrama dana' was contributed by 16.66 percent of the respondents. Many respondents had participated in multiple activities.
91.66 percent of the reasons for participation given by the respondents in the submersion zone were - submergence of their property, the forests and the consequent change in the environment. The reasons for participation given by 100 percent of the respondents in the non-submergence zone, but affected area were - indirect effect of the nearby large body of water, the consequent change in the environment due to forest submergence and reservoir.

The reasons accorded for the success of the movement was attributed to people's movement by 87.5 percent and 8.33 percent attributed to the seminar and people's movement, with, the latter playing a greater role, 4.1 percent of the respondents were too young to be aware of this linkage.

The respondents' perception of the role of the politicians was as follows: 83.33 percent felt that the politicians played a constructive and positive role, 16.66 percent of the respondents were too young at the time of the movement to be aware of this linkage.

The response to the beneficial aspect of the project by the respondents was as follows: 91.66 percent considered the BHEP to be non-beneficial and harmful; 8.33 percent of the respondents were far young to conceptualise the project impact. 91.66 percent of the
respondents were of the conviction that the project will not bring development.

Respondents belonging to all the educational categories - 100 percent were aware of the environmental impact of the BHEP. As the educational level was not very high and the environmental awareness high, it could be inferred that low educational level is not a handicap in awareness of environment impact.

100 percent of the original inhabitants who responded 100 percent to the BHEP development project as not bringing about development and 100 percent were active participants who 100 percent gave the reasons for participation as threatened survival and environmental change.

Of the migrant category, 100 percent migrants considered their BHEP development project to be non-developmental, 100 percent were active participants and 100 percent gave the reasons for participation as indirectly affected and environment change.

Thus, we find that both the original inhabitants and migrants categories, all (100 percent) held BHEP to be non beneficial and were active participants and all the 100 percent assigned common reasons as change in environment.

The genesis of the entire movement began with the protest of the single individual Omkar Bhat against the
KPC officials which evolved into a taluka level mobilisation and then into a district wide movement. The ideology was the survival of the people and the environment achieved through peaceful and non-violent protest modes as determined by the leaders. The leadership was charismatic which emerged in response to the situation. The communication was through pamphlets, word of mouth and newspapers. The movement was organised from the district level to the village level. The movement gradually came to acquire two very strong competing and conflicting aspects at the leadership level due to external intervention which were the people, political aspects and the scientific aspects. Both contributed to the success of the movement with the respondents from the Yellapur region attributing the movement’s success directly to the people’s power and the Sirsi respondents, especially, the leaders of the scientific seminar group attributing to the seminar or the scientific power.

The movement was able to achieve success due to widespread opposition to BHEP, the non-political nature of political party participation, thereby making it an all party participation, a strong and focused leadership. The ‘enemy’ did not exist and was not identified as it was the elected government’s decision and hence, the movement aimed at seeking justice from
the government and consequently the demonisation and sacralization process did not take place. The government consequently cooperated and agreed to the fulfilment of the goal of the movement, which led to the dormant stage of the movement due to the absence of the clear decision of the government. The respondents said that if the government decides to take up the BHEP, then the movement would begin again due to the widespread opposition to the BHEP. Omkar Bhat, felt that the nature of the future movement would be considerably qualitatively different from that of the earlier movement, and at this (1991) stage, it would be difficult to visualise the future.

There was no politicisation of the Bedthi issue and no political party exploited it as an election issue nor claimed the sole credit for it publicly or privately. The success of the movement was attributed to the coordinate working of all political parties and the people. It must be mentioned here that, though the MLA who approached the successive CMs belonged to the Janata Party, which was in opposition in the state, both the Chief Ministers belonged to Congress (U) and (I) and initiated a continued stay against the BHEP.

The caste composition of the movement was predominantly of Havyak Brahmins who were also in a majority in the region and owned gardens and upon whole
activity other communities especially trading were dependent. Thus, the caste composition of the movement was dominated by the Havyak Brahmins and included other castes, communities and tribes of the region. Since the majority of the property of the Havyaks would be affected, the initial opposition stemmed from them. Many tribes who had homes and agricultural lands in the forest but did not have the land owning 'Pattas' or deeds, were not officially counted as the affected people. Hence, the more articulate and immediately affected section of the local population opposed the BHEP. The labelling of the anti BHEP movement a 'Havyaka movement' is traced to the non-Brahmin politicians and the struggle of political economic power at the local level. It would be opportune to mention here that in the Siddapur taluka, where the initial opposition to the Aghanashini HEP took place in the early 1970s, the non-Brahmins were in a majority. The opposition to the HEPs appears to be located in the degree and nature of dependence on land.

The anti BHEP movement could be termed environment movement due to the strong environment component of the movement and one of the reasons for the opposition to the BHEP. The self perception of the people was that of project affected persons and not based on political party membership, nor caste membership, as was evident
in the responses of the respondents who said that the submerging waters would not distinguish between a Janata Party member or a Congress member nor between a Havyak a non-Havyak. The change in the environment would also be affecting everyone. The people's opposition to a development project of the government was based on a different perception of development which would enhance the quality of life by protecting the environment through technology and not use development which are not environment destructive.

ANTI BEDTHI HEP MOVEMENT - II PHASE 1992

Background

The anti-Bedthi HEP movement of 1979-81 constituted the base of the second phase of the movement. The specific background of the second phase of the movement was qualitatively different from the first phase in terms of the political conditions in the state, the nature of the project, the local political situation, the increased environmental awareness and activism since the first phase, of the local people in the subsequent anti-Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant movement and the anti-Sharavathi Tail Race Project movement, the emergence of environmental organisations etc. Hence, it is proposed
to set the political background vis-a-vis the BHEP in the intervening period and which saw the articulation of different political perceptions of the anti Bedthi movement, which were instrumental in the revival of the BHEP.

**Political Perception of anti-BHEP Movement: 1986-92**

As mentioned earlier, the Bedthi Committee was asked to submit its report on BHEP only in April 1986, when the Janata Party government was in power in the state, with Ramakrishna Hegde as the Chief Minister. On February 10, 1986, C. Gopal Reddy, Secretary to the CM, R.K. Hegde, wrote a note (No. Secy 121-86) to the Additional Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, GOK to "Let me know whether we have got some material on Bedthi Project and ecological information, and if not, let us get full details and analyse in our office" (p.3). The DST did not have the necessary information on BHEP.

From 1988 onwards, Bedthi continued to figure in the Assembly with the Congress-I demanding its implementation and the Janata government stating that BHEP is being re-examined. On May 19, 1988, R.N. Naik, MLA, belonging to Congress-I which was in Opposition, asked a supplementary in the Assembly on the BHEP. Naik wanted to know the details of the Narayan Rao Committee’s report and questioned the reason for its not
being published even after two years of its submission. He is reported to have "accused the government of being disinterested in the project as it would affect the interests of a few relatives of the Chief Minister" (IE, 20.5.1988). He said that the Sharavathi Tail Race Project had been taken up even though it would submerge more forest and agricultural land.

The Minister of State for power, Lakshminarasimhaiah responded that the Centre may withhold permission for the BHEP on the ground that large forest tracts would be submerged, even if the state government was willing to take up BHEP. In response, Naik wanted to know whether the sanction of the centre had been obtained before commencement of the BHEP in October 1979 and stated that "the State government was simply trying to make the Central Government a scapegoat" (IE, 20.5.1988).

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mallikarjun Kharge, said that the government was purposely delaying the project as it was determined not to execute the BHEP. The Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Lakshmisagar said that until the Cabinet takes a decision, the report would not be publicised.

Though Naik was not satisfied with the Government's response and was demanding explanation, the Speaker moved on to the next question.
Thus we find that the Congress-I perceived the BHEP as against the interests of the CM and questioned the environmental grounds on which it was being re-examined by pointing out that the Sharavathy Tail Race Project's environmental impact was much greater. The motives of the government in withholding the Committee report and the BHEP were suspect according to the Congress-I. BHEP also became an issue with which the opposition could beat the government, and which ultimately paved the way for the reconsideration of the BHEP. The politicisation of the BHEP took place during this time and the anti-BHEP movement was re-read along the party political, caste lines.

It is also interesting to note that both Congress-I and Janata Party were united in supporting the Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant in 1984 and later opposing the movement as they differed in the BHEP issue.

Consequently, the Cabinet considered BHEP and decided that a study on the ecosystem of UK should be made as early as possible. The Chief Secretary, A.B.Datar on 22.6.1988 wrote to the Secretary, Department of Ecology and Environment [henceforth DEE] that "while considering the subject Cabinet desired that

For the first time, the Congress was in opposition in the state and its strength was low in the Assembly. It used every opportunity to topple and brow beat the government.
a study on ecosystem of Karwar District may be made as early as possible" (p.1).

According to a politician, this was one way of stalling the BHEP, and in the end, to drop it on environment grounds. Thus, the proposed study on the UK district was politically motivated at the beginning itself.

The raising of the BHEP issue on the plan of the Assembly by R.N.Naik had its fallout in UK, when on November 1, 1988, in Sirsi, UK, the Urban Development Minister, R.V.Deshpande was gheraoed by more than 100 environmentalists which included women and was asked to clarify his stand on the BHEP. R.V.Deshpande assured them that in the event the government takes up the project again, he would resign from the Cabinet.

The initial ground for future mobilisations was being gradually built up. Whenever the Bedthi issue was raised in the Assembly and outside by politicians, the people responded by pressuring the local MLA's and Ministers to make their position clear. The whole issue was followed very keenly by the people.

The Minister for Power, J.H.Patel on 24th October 1988 made his position clear regarding the environmentalists opposition to power projects that "I have no objection to their concern for environment, but let them suggest the alternatives" (DH 25.10.1988). He
said that the Bedthi project's fate was still unclear and that a team of experts have been asked to study the possible impact on the ecology of the area and the report was expected to be field in middle of 1989.

In the meantime, it was proposed by the EEE to decide the areas of study "as the subject is a sensitive one" (p.2 of Office Notes 19.7.1988) in consultation with the Public Works Department's secretaries I and II, the Managing Director KPC and the Chief Engineer (Irrigation) in charge of the BHEP. The scope of the study was consequently expanded to include Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant, Sea Bird and other activities besides the HEPs in the district, which required extensive coordination from different departments. The EE's efforts to meet the Managing Director, KPC were not successful till October 1989. The KPC refused to respond to the DEE's efforts. The DEE was given the impression that the KPC had dropped the BHEP for the time being in the meeting between Managing Director KPC and the Additional Secretary DEE, Technical Cell in October 1989.

Meanwhile, on 22nd March 1989 in the Assembly the Opposition Congress-I members demanded the government's position regarding the BHEP. R.N.Naik of Congress-I who had tabled the question on power projects in Karnataka charged that though the Committee appointed by the
government to study the environmental impact of the project had recommended the continuance of the project, work had not been started due to "pressure from some forces" (DH 13.3.1989). Bangarappa of Congress-I demanded the government's position regarding the project and alleged that due to political reasons, the project had been held up (emphasis added). The Minister for Power, Lakshminarasimhaiah of Janata responded that the Committee had not come to a unanimous decision, and therefore another Committee was constituted to study environment in the district and whose report was awaited.

The Bedthi issue was raised again the next day, 23rd March 1989, in the Assembly with the speaker Banakar finally declaring that, since the members were dissatisfied with the Power Minister's reply, we would allow a half an hour discussion on the BHEP.

Thus, Bedthi was constantly raised in the Assembly by the Congress-I which was in Opposition and alleging that the BHEP is being stalled due to political reasons and vested interests. Underlying the interest of the Congress-I in the implementation of the BHEP was the traditional caste rivalry of the Havyak Brahmins and the Namdharis or Idigas. R.K.Hegde belonged to the upper caste of Havyak Brahmins, whereas Bangarappa belonged to the backward Idiga caste. The anti-Bedthi movement of
the first phase was termed as a Havyaka movement and serving the interests of the Havyak Brahmins by some politicians, who could have been resentful of the Havyak's power and influence in the area.

On May 16, 1990, the Scientific Officer of DEE had a discussion with the Managing Direct, KPC who was of the opinion that new studies on Bedthi were not required as there are many reports available and that what was needed was a firm decision regarding the project. Moreover, the comprehensive ecosystem study of the entire district may reopen debates on issues on which the government had already taken a decision. Thus, the KPC put the onus on the government to take a decision on BHEP based on the numerous environmental studies. The technical and environmental dimensions have been explored but the political dimension has not been explored.

S.M.Yahya, Minister for Power and Industry in the Veerendra Patel (Congress-I) ministry on a visit to Sirsi on 22.9.1990 assured the people that the BHEP had been temporarily given up and did not figure in the 8th Plan. He said that the old project had been dropped and may be in the future, the Bedthi river waters may be taken through tunnels to the Kali reservoir in Supa.

On December 30, 1990, the Chief Minister, S.Bangarappa (Congress-I) soon after becoming the Chief
Minister announced in Sirsi that the Aghanashini and Bedthi would be revived and that the Bedthi dam would be constructed a lowered height. The CMs announcement of reviving the Bedthi and Aghanashini HEPs rekindled the fears of the local people and raised the controversy.

The announcement of the CM to raise the Bedthi and Aghanashini HEPs generated immediate response from UK Zilla Parishad which on January 1, 1991, passed a resolution urging the government to drop the Bedthi and Aghanashini HEPs due to the environmental damage caused by them. However, 416 Congress-I members opposed the resolution stating that due to the increasing demand for electricity, the projects were inevitable. N.V.Hegde of Janata Dal, moved the resolution opposing the Bedthi and Aghanashini HEPs, along with Gopalakrishna Hegde warned that all the affected 8000 families would fight till their last breath. Pramod Hegde, the Vice-President of the Zilla Parishad said that it was the Congress-I government which had stayed the projects in 1980 due to public protests. Moreover, the expert opinion of the Bedthi and Aghanashini HEPs was that they were uneconomical.

Yeshwant Herwatta, Member of Legislative Council who had raised the question on Bedthi in the Legislative Council said that the CM had replied that in all probability, they will be taken. The CM seems
determined to take up the projects and therefore passing resolution in futile. G.S. Bhat Upponi said that the government had ignored the earlier resolutions opposing the Kaiga and the Sharavathi Tail Race Projects.

Thus, we find the initial differences of response based on party membership to the BHEP, which was absent in the first phase of the movement. Though the Zilla Parishad passed the resolution opposing the Bedthi and Aghasnashini HEPs, based on majority opinion, the party differences remained. Moreover, scepticism was expressed by the members of the value of the opposing resolution in the face of the government's determination to revive the projects. An interesting development was that political party membership determined the response to the development projects.

The local MLA, Umesh Bhat of Congress-I was reported to have been pressurised since the CM's announcement regarding the certainty of the revival of the Bedthi and Aghasnashini HEPs, by the local leaders to oppose the projects in the Assembly and to raise questions. Umesh Bhat is reported to have declined stating that it would conflict with his party's interests. He was then asked to acquire the information regarding the BHEP and the Report of the Narayana Rao Committee which was not made public and the government's response to the project implementation. He finally
wrote on October 7, 1991, to the Managing Director KPC seeking information on the proposed BHEP as it would not conflict with his party interests.

Though the CM had made announcements inside and outside the Assembly, that Bedthi and Aghanashini HEP would be taken up, the actual decision was taken only on October 10, 1991 in the Adjourned 129th Meeting of the Board of Directors of KJP the Chairman of the KPC Board is the CM. According to the minutes of the meeting, the Managing Director of KPC stated "that there was urgent need to take up new projects like ...Bedti as necessary infrastructure for these projects exists." "The Chairman observed that the states were hamstrung in their effort to augment power generation as Central Government clearances were required for Technical, Financial and Environmental aspects" (p.2). The Board discussed the merits of taking up the Bedthi and Aghanashini HEPs. Regarding the Bedthi HEP, the Board felt that though BHEP was earlier cleared by the Central Government, it had been held up for several reasons. As there has been considerable expenditure on the BHEP and the necessary and preliminary infrastructure already exists, "...it was vital to revive these schemes to get early benefits". The present estimated cost of BHEP would be Rs.356 crores, "... and that the state government would have to take a decision on resuming
work on the Bedti scheme on the basis of the Narayana Rao Report. The Board noted that the report had suggested lowering the height of the dam from 1570 feet to 1540 feet which would result in marginal reduction in submersion of land" (p.3). Regarding the fresh clearance from Government of India, "It was also felt that since work on this project cleared earlier by Government of India had been stopped by GOK due to some local agitation, resumption of work does not require fresh clearance by GOI. The Board decided to request the Govt. to take an early decision on the report. (p.3) (emphasis added).

Regarding the Aghanashini scheme, the Board felt that this was "very attractive schemes and should be taken up early. The Board was informed that there had been some opposition to Aghanashini and Barapole projects" (p.4) (emphasis added). The minutes of the Board Meeting of the KPC brought out the political nature of the decisions to take up HEPs, besides the technical aspects. The KPC had deemed that the Narayana Rao Committee had recommended that BHEP with lowered height could be taken up and that the government should decide whether the BHEP could be taken up, underlining the political nature of the decision making process. The GOK till 1993 had not vacated the stay given by successive Congress governments. Moreover, the attitude
of the government regarding the environmental clearance was brought out when the Chairman of the Board (who is also the CM of Karnataka) felt that states were hampered by the environmental clearance of GOI in augmenting power generation. On 14 October after the 129th Board Meeting was held, the KPC informed Umesh Bhat, MLA (vide letter No. AIGIA) that "Orders of the Government of Karnataka for resuming the works in implementing this project is awaited" and gave the details of the revised project.

Thus, crucial information was being gathered by the potential opposition to the BHEP, and initial preparations had commenced in response to the government's actions and was waiting for the next moves of the government.

On 22nd October 1991, the DEE informed the Department of Energy, GOK that "The ECC\textsuperscript{2} is not in opinion of recommending Bedthi Hydro Electric Project, since, about 97,121.5 ha (12.78 percent) of good forest land is going to be lost due to the various development projects alone, leaving aside the impact of developmental projects on this aspects" (p.1) (emphasis added).

\textsuperscript{2} ECC is the Environment clearance committee of DEE which is the decision making body of deciding the clearance or non-clearance of projects on environment grounds.
Thus, with the refusal of the state's DEE to clear the BHEP, it should have been dropped by the GOK, according to the rules and procedures, wherein prior state approval was required before seeking the central approval. The GOK violated the environmental rules and procedures in obtaining and refusal to comply with the non-clearance of DEE of BHEP. On October 21, 1991, Yeshwant Herwatta, MLC wrote a letter to the CM, Bangarappa appealing to take into confidence the people of UK and to study the pros and cons of the Bedthi and Kali-II projects before approaching the Planning Commission for their approval. According to him, there will be a serious problem in rehabilitation due to the overburdening of the district, by the following projects - Sharavathi Tail Race, Kali Stage I, Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant, Sea Bird and the Konkan Railway.

The gradual build up of pressure from the MLC's and the non-Congress MLA's of the area was evoking the determined response from the government to initiate the implementation of the projects.

The CM in the budget session held in October 1991, stated that during the Eighth Five Year Plan, Kali II, Bedthi and Aghanashini would be implemented. His announcement was in total variance of the earlier proclamation of his Minister of Power that funds were not allocated to the BHEP in the Eighth Plan.
Consequent to the decision of the KPC in its 129th meeting held on October 10, 1991; the preliminary survey work of the Aghanashini HEP in Siddapur was begun in the last week of January 1991. The local people at Pandavakatte opposing the project burnt the pumpsets and borewell sinking machinery of the KPC. It was reported the (H, 29.1.1992, Sirsi) that "People would have resorted to the destruction to express their anger against the proposed project". Though the newspaper reports vary in the accounts of the actual sequence of events the local MLA's role in the incident, the respondents told me in June 1992, that it was Kanade of Congress-I, who after addressing the meeting at Golimakki village led the gathering to Pandavakatte which resulted in the burning of the machinery. The incident indicated the future trend of response to the government's indifference of the opinion of the local people. The response to the Agha HEP from the people of Siddapur taluq since 1970s has been a trend setter.

The CM's announcement that the BHEP had been included in the Eighth Five Year Plan for implementation, was contended by the ex-CM, R.K.Hegde who openly accused the present CM, S.Bangarappa of lying, at a public meeting in Sirsi on 9th February 1992.
The ex-Vice President of the Uttara Kannada Zilla Parishad, Pramod Hegde of Janata Dal addressing a press conference on 19th February 1992, who said that 95 percent of the affected people belonged to the Gowli, Siddi and Kanubi tribes and that the 500 displaced families belonged to the extremely groups. He announced that the Janata Dal would protest at the initial stage of the project. The initial politicisation of the anti-BHEP movement had already begun which was indicative of the parties political perspective and interest regarding the movement. This new trend of political party response to an environment issue and movement was a post Bedthi phase I movement and in the movement against the Kaiga nuclear power plant and more specifically in the post election situation. Consequent to the politicisation of the green environmental issue in 1989, each political party at the district level articulated its stand on vis-a-vis power projects.

The Congress I MLA Umesh Bhat from Uttara Kannada raised the question on the implementation of the BHEP during the question hour on 4th May 1991. The Minister of State for Energy Ramappa responded that the work or the BHEP will be shortly resumed with the reduction of the dam to 1540 feet resulting in considerable reduction of the forest land.
The MLAs and MLCs were constantly pressurised by the local leaders and people to ask for information, withheld from the public by the government and to raise questions in the Legislative Assembly and Council on the BHEP and seeking the government's position on the BHEP.

Consequently R.V. Deshpande, the MLA from the nearby Haliyal Constituency, wrote on 12th March 1992, to the CM, Bangarappa asking the state government not to start the BHEP in order to preserve the ecological balance of the district and to prevent the submergence of "precious forest and agricultural lands". He said that there was absence of consensus among the Committee members regarding the project which has not yet been approved by the Department of Environment of Government of India, besides being economical.

It must be recapitulated here, the differing positions of R.V. Deshpande vis-a-vis the hydro-electric and other development projects in the district. The open opposition to the BHEP on grounds of danger to the ecology and economy of the district was absent when he was minister in R.K. Hegde's government in the context of the movement against the Sharavathi Tail Race Project in the nearby taluka of Honnavar which was also supported by Sirsi taluka in the year 1987 and onwards. Similarly, in spite of the mass movement against the ecological and environmental effects of the Kaiga
nuclear power plant, Deshpande did not oppose the project on ecological grounds when he was minister in R.K.Hegde's government. The opposition to the BHEP is expressed when Deshpande is in the opposition and some parts of his constituency Haliyal would come in the submergence zone.

Meanwhile, Bedthi continued to prominently figure in the Legislative Assembly and Council with the opposition and the ruling party members contesting different stands on the BHEP. On 24th March 1992, the Minister for State for Energy, Ramappa responding to the question of M.S.Katagu's (Congress-I) question on Bedthi, said that the revised BHEP with reduced FRL of 1540 feet had been approved by the state government subject to the necessary environmental safeguards and that the revised project report was under preparation and the revised cost of BHEP was Rs.305 crore.

Yeshwanth Herwatta of Janata Dal said that the revised BHEP had not yet got the Planning Commission's approval and that there was opposition to BHEP from the people of UK.

R.N.Nage Gowda of Congress-I expressed his opinion that work should be completed speedily with the allotment of more funds.

The BHEP implementation became an issue of Congress-I and non-Congress-I political parties at the
state and district level. This context influenced and resulted in the formation of the people’s organisation against the Bedthi and Aghanashini HEPs which mark the mobilisational and organisational stages of the movement.

**Movement Organisation and Mobilisation**

In April 1992, the Bedthi-Aghanashini Kolla Rakshana Samiti (The Bedthi-Aghanashini Valley Protection Committee) [henceforth BAKRS] was formed with the Swamiji of Swarnavalli Mutt at Sonda as the Honorary President. It was considered to be non-political in nature and included among its members and office bearers of different political parties and environmental organisations. Its Working President, G.N.Hegde, Ajjibal told me that by including all political parties, it was aimed to make the organisation non-political and apolitical; hence the choice of the President of the Committee was the Swamiji of the Swarnavathi Mutt who commanded influence over large area and different communities and who could command the commitment of the people and was the unquestioned leader above political considerations.

Anasuya Sharma, President of the UKJVVS was one of the Vice-Presidents along with the President of Parisara Samrakshana Samiti, Sirsi. Each organisation was allowed to function independently but under the overall
guidance of the BAKRS. Similarly, other organisations like Sahyadri Parisara Vardhini were functioning under the BAKRS. Erappa Harijan, Kiravath, the Mandal Pradhan was one of the Vice-Presidents and Santharam Siddi one of the Secretaries.

The composition of BAKRS was composite which contained different political interests, environmental organisations, communities, castes which was capped by the religious component, functioning in a co-ordinate manner for a common goal, which was the unifying factor.

'The Hindu' newspaper on 27th April 1992 reported that the recent statement of the Electricity Minister Ramappa in the Assembly that the revised BHEP would be implemented has made the people of Sirsi, Yellapur and Ankola talukas uneasy and to organise themselves into agitation groups.

In the second week of May 1994, the UK District Janata Dal in its meeting protested against the Bedthi and Aghasnashini HEPS due to endangering pollution of environment and the displacement of the Siddi and Gowli tribes. The party asked the ex-CM R.K.Hegde and ex-Minister R.V.Deshpande to participate in the agitation of the BAKRS. The political power is being consolidated and the politicians were being pressurised to work under the aegis of BAKRS which would also contain the possible usage of the BHEP for political ends by politicians.
By mid June 1992, the organisational dimension of Phase II movement against the BHEP was clear. This time, the entire strategy was laid beforehand and the BAKRS was waiting for the right moment of time to launch the movement. The local press over years had been giving extensive coverage to the Bedthi issue. The press was regularly informed about the latest developments for better coverage of the movement activities. Political support was mobilised across political parties and many leaders of political parties were approached for support for the BAKRs. The writ petition against the KPC and GOK environment and forest grounds was already prepared. Financial Contributions had been mobilised in a systematic manner from the village level. The Bhairumbhe Mandal was the first to announce its system of finance collection for every one acre of areca plantation Rs.100 would be contributed by the gardener, and for every one acre of paddy, Rs.10 would be contributed. According to the kind of crop, donation was fixed. In Yellapur taluka, propaganda and awareness generating programmes had been initiated with Omkar Bhat and people were being mobilised for future action.

The BAKRS had prepared itself to effectively protest against the BHEP, by its comprehensive strategy of political, legal, people, financial, publicity and
religious dimensions. Crucial to the entire organisation was the religious dimension which would be binding on all the people and would contain the divergent trends in the BAKRS. In the event of any difference of opinion or any problem, the Swamiji is the final authority. The activist role of the Swarnavalli Mutt was quite evident in the II Phase of the movement, whereas in the I Phase, the role was passive. The intervention of the Swarnavathi Mutt in the movement was in response to (a) the determination of the GOK to implement the BHEP, in the event; submerging the Mutt in the BHEP II Stage; (b) the reported open statement of the CM S. Bangarappa in a public meeting in Siddapur that he will see to it that the Havyak Brahmins sink, meant that the Havyak Brahmins which were in majority in Sirsi taluq, the prominent followers of the Mutt would lose their property with the consequence that the Mutt would be submerged. The casteist statement of the CM generated a caste protective response from the Mutt. (c) The Mutt would lose its supporters from the five communities who would be affected by the BHEP. (d) The politicisation of the green issue of the anti-Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant was consciously sought to be prevented in the movement against BHEP by the intervention of the Mutt. (e) Dispersed support of the people sought to be consolidated.
By the first week of July, the ex CM Gundu Rao of Congress-I and ex CM R.K.Hegde of Janata Dal had given their support to the BAKRS. In addition, the BJP had also extended its support.

According to the Indian Express (dated 6.7.1992), the Executive Vice-President of BAKRS, G.M.Hegde Hulgol had said that if the government does not drop the project as demanded by the people, then a public interest litigation would be filed in Supreme Court, followed by exercising social and intellectual pressure through leading scientists, environmentalists, experts etc. on the government, failing which "...we are all prepared to launch an undeclared war against the government and resort to any possible means to achieve our goal."

On 10th June, the Environment Minister B.Basavalingappa visited Yellapur and was presented with memoranda from the UKJVVS and BAKRS urging him to drop the BHEP.

At a press conference on 17.7.1992, the office bearers of the BAKRS informed the press that from October 11, massive agitation against the BHEP would begin under the leadership of the Swarnavalli Swamiji. The working Vice-President G.M.Hegde Hulgol said that either, in end July or early August, case would be filed in the High Court. The scientists from Indian Institute
of Science and the Save Western Ghats Movement, Samagra Vikas and Avinash were supporting them.

Meanwhile, in the neighbouring Siddapur taluq, where the proposed Aghanashini HEP was to be located, the Congress-I MLA Gopal Kanade reiterated on 22.7.1992 that he was strongly opposed to the implementation of the AHEP which would submerge the entire Siddapur taluka and consequently it would create trouble for him as his position as a legislator would be shaken besides being politically ruined. He is reported to have vowed to fight against the government's decision to revive the AHEP and gave assurance to the people that he would be everything possible to make the government drop the project.

The survival of multiple interests - environment, caste, community, tribe, political, economic and religious were at stake in the Bedthi and Aghasnashini HEP. The conjunction of these varied interests and groups composed and characterised the movement.

In the meantime, the memorandum of understanding for Beathi HEP costing Rs.350 crores was signed on 21.8.1992 by the GOK and Caithoness International Power Corporation of USA in Bangalore in the presence of the CM S.Bangarappa who assured complete support and assistance and the highest consideration from the state government. Immediately, tenders for Rs.30 crore work
on BHEP were called by the KPC. The BAKRS announced on 21.8.1992 that this matter would be discussed in its special meeting on 23.8.1992 and called for a bundh on September 7.

**Genesis of Protest Activities**

The calling of tenders in August 1992 indicated the government's intention of reviewing the BHEP AND AHEP precipitated the BAKRS preparedness into action.

In the Panchayat meeting held in mid August in Sirsi taluq the BHEP was opposed by most of the mandal pradhans who said that the state government should not begin work on the project which had no clearance from the Centre. They also asked the President of the Panchayat Samiti Umesh Bhat, an MLA of Congress-I to make his position clear. Bhat said that in the Assembly he had made his position clear. As the reply did not satisfy and the arguments, continued Bhat offered to resign from the Assembly and join the anti Bedthi activists, if that would stop the implementation of the project. Dissatisfied the pradhans vowed to oppose the project.

**Active Intervention of the Swamiji**

After the meeting of BAKRS on 23.8.1992, the Swamiji issued a statement appealing to the contractors not to respond to the tenders called for the Bedthi
project which was opposed to low, did not have the required environment and forest clearances and uneconomical and which had provoked the opposition to the A&BHEP.

The Swamiji declared at a meeting some time around 26th August of devotees on the occasion of the Sarvajnanendra Saraswati Swamiji's samadhi and the Dinga Prathisthapana Mahotsava that after September 12, a padayatra opposing the project would be launched from the Math to the BHEP site.

The bundh called by the Swamiji on 7.7.1992 was successful with Sirsi, Siddapur, and Yellapur observing complete bundh.

On September 14th, the five day non-violent padayatra called by the Swamiji began in the morning, from the mutt premises with more than 6000 activists. The Swamiji led the padayatra whose objective was to mobilise public opinion against the environmentally destructive project. He stated that, "Our fight is not against any individual but against destruction of forests of the Western Ghats". Slogans like "Greenery is our life breath" and "Protect forest to preserve our country" were raised by the padayatris (H, 15.9.1992) among whom were the Jain Mutt Swamiji and the ex district Congress-I president M.M.Jalsatgi who led the Ramakshatriya people and a large number of women.
The leader of the opposition, R.V. Deshpande issued a statement on 16.9.1992 urging the government to scrap the BHEP in interests of the people and which did not have clearance either from the Environment Ministry or the Planning Commission.

Meanwhile the padayatra was gaining strength with people joining it at every village. The Swamiji addressed public meetings at Chavatti, Ummachgi, Manchikeri and Malgaon. In Manchikeri, the Swamiji addressed the press and told them that the agitation was launched by the entire district to "save natural wealth which has already been provided to a great extent" (IE, 18.9.1992).

The other leaders present informed the press about the future programme which was a demonstration on September 24 at Bangalore which would coincide the date of the opening of the tenders.

The number of participants had swelled to 51,000 by the time the padayatra left for Yellapur from Manchikeri.

On 19th September, the fifth day of the padayatra which ended at Magod, the site of the BHEP the Swamiji addressed a gathering of more than 20,000 men, women, children and the old who since morning poured into the inaccessible place by walk and by vehicles. He announced that the struggle against the Bedthi and
Aghasnashini HEPs would continue until the government's announcement of giving up the project. It said that "...agitation would be peaceful but the governments moves will be answered by counter-moves. People have lost faith in all politicians. Now it is time for all to come together to preserve the environment" (DH 20.9.1992). He said that the government is insensitive to the affected people's sentiments and is bending rules to impose its will on the people and "that the struggle is not against one person or one government, but against all anti-people and anti-environment forces" (DH, 20.9.1992).

He said that the government should examine other alternative sources of power and it was unreasonable to exploit the district further, as it was already generating one-third of the electricity generated in the state.

He planted two saplings at the dam site and administrated an oath to preserve the environment, which "must have echoed through the valley" (H, 20.9.1992).

Politians from BJP and Congress-I and Janata Dal were present and the BJP Member of Parliament from Mangalore, Dhananjay Kumar expressed the opposition to the BHEP which had been designed to "plunder" UK's rich forests and was ill-conceived. He announced that he had appraised Jaswant Singh, the Chairman of the
Parliamentary Committee on Environmental Protection about the situation and that a site visit was expected shortly.

V.S. Acharya, the Vice-President of the State Unit of BJP gave message of support of the Swamiji of Puttige Mutt in Udipi who is on paryaya.

P.S. Rane the dissident Congress-I MLA from Karwar and who had earlier supported the Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant expressed his support to the anti-BHEP agitation and said that it was good that the movement's leadership was a religious head instead of politicians in whom the people had lost faith and that it was high time that an end was put to the rampage done by a coterie of "corrupt politicians and bad officials" in "looting the state". He said that the struggle should be above caste considerations and all-party affair. P.S. Rane had opposed the sea-Bird Project and criticised the indifferent manner of the State government in the rehabilitation of the Kali displaced persons.

G.S. Hegde Ajjibal said that the reported oval orders of the CM to cut trees in the forests of the BHEP region was extremely dangerous.

The padayatra by the Swamiji was the key event of the 2nd phase of the anti-BHEP movement. It roused the entire district and more specifically the Sirsi and Yellapur talukas. It consolidated the opposition to the
BHEP and presented a show of strength to the government and as well as people's united opposition to the BHEP. It also brought together, the warring political parties and presented a combined opposition of the political, environmental, people and religious dimensions to the government. As mentioned earlier, the crucial binding factor was the religious dimension which was above all other dimensions. The Swamiji seemed to be articulating the people's perceptions and feelings which was totally supported when in his speech said that "We are not against progress. But we don't want a progress of the kind the government has visualised, we have already paid heavy price by allowing several massive power projects to be set up in our district - the Sharavathi project, the Supa project and the Kaiga Plant and contributed more than one-third of the electricity generated in the entire state. But still, those in power are squeezing us. Time has come for you to show your strength" (IE, 21.9.1992).

The Swamiji is reported to have urged the agitators to pay the government in its own coin if it resolved to manipulative strategy.

Thus, the perception of the kind of development envisaged by the people and the sacrifice and deprivation felt by the people was articulated by the Swamiji who had no political interest in the movement.
He also indicated the nature of opposition in face of future actions by the government.

The movement against BHEP had the support of not only the common people but, all primary co-operative societies, milk societies, youth organisations, traders organisations etc.

The response of the CM Bangarappa to the mobilisation of the people against the BHEP was that the HEP would not be dropped by the government though he had respect for the Swamiji, it should be understood the necessity of BHEP in the wider perspective of power needs of the state.

Since the response of the government was to continue the BHEP despite the massive public opposition to it, the next plan of the BAKRS was to hold a protest rally in Bangalore on 24th September coinciding with the opening of the tenders for the BHEP works to create awareness of the government's high handedness in continuing with the project despite complete knowledge of the consequences. Similar rallies would be held simultaneously in Sirsi, Siddapur and Yellapur taluqs the petition filed on forest and environment grounds against the BHEP was scheduled to come up for bearing in the last week of September.

It was also announced that all attempts to commence the project work in October would be blocked by the
BAKRS and its associations and that the agitation would continue until the CM Bangarappa gave the assurance of stopping the project. On 22nd September, Ajjibal Hegde told press persons that a "non-violent direct action" would begin at Magod to prevent the beginning of work on the project (H 23.9.1992).

The State Environment Minister, B. Basavalingappa spoke to the Press on 22nd September 1992 and expressed his opposition to the BHEP as it would involve destruction of virgin forests. According to him the CM was on record that the state government was waiting for clearance from Union Environment Ministry whose decision was binding. He said that he had already written to the Union Environment Minister and the Union Power Minister. He criticised the position of the ex CM R.K. Hegde and asked why the BHEP was not scrapped while he was CM and Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission.

It must be noted here that Basavalingappa, the State Environment Minister does not mention the non-clearance of the BHEP from his own department. Secondly, at the time of his public opposition to the government’s position vis-a-vis the BHEP he had strong differences with the CM and was later considered to be a dissident minister.

Sri Balakrishna Swami of Tarali Mutt of Siddapur taluq asked people to be ready for any sacrifice to
oppose the environmentally harmful Bedthi and Aghanashini HEPs and declared that Bedthi and Aghanashini rivers are like the two eyes of human beings. He said that the Swamis of the Mutt would not remain if the disciples lose their hearths and homes. Thus we find the mobilisation of people increasingly based on Mutt membership and influence, which was absent in the earlier phase.

On 24th September, the editorial in the widely circulated English newspaper Deccan Herald published from Bangalore stated that power generation should not be at the cost of people and that the projects should be reexamined in the context of the Environment Act of 1986. On the other hand, the protestant should consider the overall benefit to the community from the project to avoid charges that they are opposed to any kind of economic development and that they represent the vested interests of the rich farmers.

On 24th September, thousands of (estimates vary from 2000 to 4000) people from Uttara Kannada in a demonstration raised slogans of blow couch shells, protesting against the implementation of the BHEP. G.M. Hegde Hulgol submitted a memorandum asking the CM to drop the project to the KPC's Technical Director Nagaraj who said that the opening of tenders would be postponed by six weeks and which was considered to be a
political victory. State leaders of the major political parties Congress-I, Janata Dal, and BJP were present at the demonstration. Gundu Rao addressing the demonstrators at the Mahatma Gandhi Park said that all those who are concerned with mankind and environment should protest against the project. The CM Bangarappa was giving the wrong impression that the BHEP had been cleared and urged the CM to do one good deed by dropping the project before going out of power. He is reported to have said (IE, 25.9.1992) at the demonstration, to the CM that “this is not a matter of prestige for anybody. It is not possible to add political colour to matters like this. The future of the people of the state lies in the Western Ghats.... If you are obstinate, we are ready for any struggle. If the government does not heed us, the Courts will have to be approached. We will have to discuss with the President and the PM”. It should be recalled that the stay given by Devraj Urs was continued by Gundu Rao when he succeeded Urs as the CM and he had appointed the Technical Committee to review the BHEP and at present though still in the Congress-I fold was not holding any position.

P.G.R.Scindia of Janata Dal and the Deputy Leader of opposition in Legislative Assembly said that the Janata Dal had given the green signal to the project
when it was in power and would not repeat the same mistake. Pramod Hegde and Yeshwant Herwatta were also present.

The mobilised political power at the state level was exercised to politically influence the CM, did not appear to succeed with the CMs declaration that "Let them do what they want. The government will do what it wants" (DH, 25.9.1992). He said that there should be a limit for agitations and that the government does not have any moral right in approaching the Planning Commission for fresh projects, without implementing the approved projects. He informed the Press that Aghanashini was not approved and hence was not before the government.

The simultaneous protest march was taken out in Yellapur with thousands of people shouting slogans like "save the environment" and "save the earth". Later, a memorandum urging the CM to stop the Bedthi and Aghasnashini HEPs which would submerge thick evergreen forests and cultivable land was submitted to the tahsildar.

On 7th October 1992, the Writ Petition filed by the BAKRS and 39 others praying for a direction to stop the BHEP Stage I in UK district was admitted by the Karnataka High Court by Justice and Rajendra Babu. The
petitioners prayed for an interim order to restrain the respondents from cutting trees in the project area.

With the government proclaiming its commitment to go ahead with the BHEP despite the widespread people’s opposition and the political opposition in the state, the BAKRS decided to take the matter to the Central Government. R.K.Hegde and Gundu Rao led a delegation of BAKRS to the Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Pranab Mukherjee and submitted a memorandum to him against the ecologically hazardous project on 16.10.1992. Later, the delegation announced that according to the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, the BHEP does not exists as far as the Planning Commission is concerned. Later the delegation which included three ex CMs of Karnataka, R.K.Hegde, R.Gundu Rao and S.R.Bommai met the Union Minister for State for Environmental and Forests on 22.10.1992 and appraised him of the situation. Kamal Nath declared that GOK has been directed not to proceed with the controversial BHEP, in the absence of environmental clearance from MEF. He declared that GOK had not sought the mandatory clearance from MEF and that legal action would be taken if the project was not stopped by GOK. He said that he had directed the Director General of Forests to investigate whether trees were being cut and
said that action would be initiated under Forest Conservation Act, 1980 if trees were felled.

The delegation informed the Minister that under the Ashraya Scheme, the state government was distributing, mainly forest land of 2 to 4 ha to the landless and displaced of the weaker sections.

Considerable political support ranging from Congress I, Janata Dal to BJP was mustered by the BAKRS to counter the political power of Bangarappa; and to pressurise the Congress-I Minister in the Union Government. Each political leader utilised his contacts to exert pressure on the Central Government Ministries. The presence and support of the three ex-Chief Ministers of Karnataka R.K.Hegde of Janata Dal, S.R.Bommai (earlier of Congress-U of Devraj Urs in 1979 and had toured the district during the election campaign) of Janata Dal and R.Gundu Rao of Congress-I considerably influenced the Central Government. It also highlighted the political considerations in the decision making process.

Consequently, L.K.Advani (BJP), the leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha in a letter to the Prime Minister asked him to consider afresh the BHEP in context of the ecological implications and asked that the GOK be restrained from proceeding with the project. Thus BHEP became an issue at the level of national
parties. Meanwhile, R.K. Hegde declared that the CM Bangarappa is "painting a communal picture of the opposition to the project" (IE, 30.10.1992).

In Sirsi, Ajjibal Hegde and G.M. Hegde Hulgol announced on 30, 1992, that the agitation will stop only after the complete shelving of the project and the future course of action was to hold seminars in Bangalore and UK on mini-hydel projects and ruin of the river scheme and alternative energy plans and the integrated development of the district with the cooperation of the UK district Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture.

In Bangalore the speaker S.M. Krishna said that the government is not concerned with environment but liquor. The Bangarappa ministry felt soon afterwards and the new ministry headed by Veerappa Moily of Congress-I came to power, in November. The new Power Minister S.M. Yahya said on 21st November that due to financial constraints, the present government would not be able to take up during its remaining term and that the issue could be thrashed out with face to face discussions with locals and environmentalists that the dam could be constructed with less height. Important issues cannot be decided on the basis of caste or partisan politics. Consequently, the Chief Minister Veerappa Moily declared that the BHEP is being examined by his government.
Discussion

The re-emergence of people’s movement against the BHEP in 1992, eleven years later than the earlier movement was due to revival of the project for implementation by the state government in 1992. The background against which the second phase of the movement was set was radically different from that of the first phase (a) the Bedthi issue had acquired caste and political overtone in the state Assembly. It was alleged by some politicians of the Congress-I (opposition) and belonging to backward castes that the Bedthi HEP had been held up mainly to benefit the Havyak Brahmins and the relatives of the Chief Minister who belonged to the Janata Dal; (b) the increase in the awareness and participation of the Yellapur, Sirsi and Hounavar population in two environmental movements against the Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant and the Sharavathi Tail Race Project and the formation of the district level Environment Protection Association in 1987 which emerged in response to the increasing location of development projects take power generation plants either hydel or nuclear in the district and (c) the politicisation of the green issue by the ecological movement against the Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant, by the movement itself when its candidate contested for the Lok Sabha elections of 1989 with the consequence that by the
next general elections of 1991 May, each political party had appropriated the environment issue, which was absent in the previous General Elections. Ecological issues began to be perceived as election issues and the supporters and participants of the movement as an important vote bank. Hence, the attempt to politicise in a sanitised manner, the environment issue of the Kaiga nuclear power plant backfired when the local politicians of all political parties perceived it as another election issue and attempted to convert the support for environment issues into a vote bank.

Given this background, the revival of BHEP has brought about by the Congress-I politicians who had opposed the movement on casteist and political grounds when it was in opposition generated a different response from the people in terms of the latent and manifest motivations against the project; mobilisation of the resources - people, financial, political and legal and most importantly caste.

In the earlier phase the upper caste factor was not predominant but in the second phase, the casteist dimensions attributed by the government publicly to the entire issue generated an increased awareness of the caste issue among the affected people. Hence, the involvement Swamiji of the Swaranavalli Mutt who being the leader of five castes and held sway in sixteen
'seemas' (areas) and would lend support to the castes which follow him. The Mutt being a non-political organisation was also considered to be counterfoil to the politicalisation of the issue by the government and any political party. In the mobilisation of people, the non-Havyaks were also consciously included whereas in the earlier phase the non-Havyaks were involved extensively as they belonged to the affected category. Special attention was paid to the backward Siddi, Kunuti and Gowli tribes and other backward communities and the Mandal Pradhan of Kiravathi, Berappa Harijan was one of the Vice Presidents and Shantaram Siddi was one of the secretaries. Thus, the conscious projection of the non-Hanyak support to the movement to counter the allegation that the movement against the BHEP is essentially a Havyak movement.

The composition of the second phase of the ecological movement against the BHEP was Havyak and non-Havyak, Brahmin and non-Brahmin, Upper Caste and lower caste tribal, men, women, children and the old which was not significantly different from the earlier phase, and the only difference being that there was representation of some of these categories in the formal organisation.

The caste factor had another dimension - the traditional Havyak and Namdhari or Idiga caste rivalry over land. Ownership which in the 1960s coalesced into
the tenancy struggle led by besides others, by Bangarappa. The Havyaks in Sirsi and Yellapur are more numerous (60 percent) than the Idigas (40 percent) and hence, with the implementation of the BHEP, they would lose their property, influence and power. Hence, the determination of Bangarappa to go ahead "at any cost" with the project was interpreted to settle the traditional caste scores. At this stage it is necessary to mention the CM's decision to hold the Aghanashini HEP in abeyance on the official ground that the project had not been cleared has to be perceived in the context of terms of the Aghanashini HEP's impact on the castes, the Namdharis would be the most affected besides the Havyaks.

The political aspect of the BHEP issue was highlighted, when the Janata Dal's (which was in the opposition) district unit passed a resolution opposing the BHEP. The BJP too was active at the district, state and the national level and counted among its supporters quite a few of the members of the BAKRS. In fact, it was the suggestion of one of the organisations working under the BAKRS - the Parisara Samrakshana Samiti which has very strong BJP leanings, proposed that the Swamiji be the guiding force of the movement. The local Congress-I MLAs like Prabhakar Rane a critic of the CM, G.M.Kanade who did not want his constituency to be
submerged, and Umesh Bhat who was forced by the people to oppose the BHEP too opposed due to different and above cited reasons.

The containment of the political aspect was achieved by the following factors (1) the formation of a non or all political organisation - BAKRS with non-political but environment orientation, (2) the leadership held by a non-political person, the involvement of political leaders at the state and national level to oppose the BHEP on environment grounds. The district units pressurised the state and national levels and mobilised support. For example, the Janata Dal mobilised the support of P.G.R.Scindia at the state level and at ex-CM R.K.Hegde and S.R.Bommai at the national level; the Congress-I could mobilise support of the Environment Minister B.Basavalingappa at the state level and R.Gundu Rao, ex-CM at the National level; the BJP mustered support at the national level, Jaswant Singh and L.K.Advani who was the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, besides active state cooperation. It must be mentioned that both BJP and Janata Dal were in the Opposition both at the State and the Centre and the Congress-I support to the issue was largely dissident based. It is in this very crucial aspect that the second phase differs from the first, in which the involvement of the political parties was
without the power game trappings and was altruistic and more sensitive and responsive to the people. As one politician pout it, "In those days, the politicians were more responsive to the people and their problems, not like now. I don't know, how this change came about in the values which degenerated gradually."

The political and caste dimensions are highlighted only to indicate the existing and changed reality from that of the first phase and have to be viewed in the background of the ecological movement and the different interests and dimensions that form a part of it. The increased environment awareness has contributed greatly to the sensitisation of the people to environment issues and who keep themselves well informed and interact with scientists and experts not only for environmental impact information, but for alternatives to the proposed projects.

The gradual emergence of an alternative development based on ecological balance and which is based on non-resource destructive technology has emerged from the people. They seek an alternative development which is specific to the environment and locally beneficial. The opposition to the development projects is based on equity, environmental balance, appropriate technology and which results in an enhanced quality of life and not merely on blind opposition to the project. The journey
to this stage which began with an individual's fight against illegal encroachment on his lands and for his survival, grew into a district wide environment protection movement into which was interwoven the survival of the people. The movement does not aim for an altruistic protection of the environment, but is concerned with the human dependency on environment for its very survival. Hence conceiving the dependency of human communities on the environment at a general level, the ecological movement, transcended the caste, class, religion and other aspects in both its phases. The alternative vision of development is based on the search for technologies which are less environmentally harmful and socially equitous and less capital intensive, for example, as an alternative to the BHEP stage I, the run of the river scheme was proposed by the BAKRS which was very economical and cheaper than the cost estimate of KPC; environmentally less disastrous and would not submerge any human habitation while generating the same quantum of electricity. This alternative when put forth to the KPC and to GOK did not merit their consideration, leading one supporter to remark, that due to the highly reduced civil works, there is little money to be made out of their alternative by the KPC.

The government's perception of the movement was that it was casteistic, and anti-development and refused to
hold any dialogue with the movement, unlike in the first phase, where the successive governments listened to the people and held dialogues. The non-compromising stand of the government also resulted in the mobilisation of political power by the movement to counter the political strength of the CM and was successful too.

The legal dimension was also explored by the movement as it felt that it had a strong case for justice. This is a follow-up of the success of the anti-Sharavathi Tail Race Movement in the High Court.

The movement operating on the Gandhian principles of non-violence and Satyagraha has the potential to turn militant (a) in the event the government decides to go ahead with the project despite the widespread opposition to it and (b) the silent support given to the violent incident in the Aghanashini HEP also indicated that the people are open to violent means to achieve their ends. As one respondent who played a prominent role in the first phase told me in 1991 itself that "In the future if the government continues to locate development projects and destroy the district by submergence and displacement, the day will not be far off when a Punjab type or a Bodo type movement may take place, demanding a separate state for Uttara Kannada", and which echoed the sentiments of the people of the district.
The ecological movement has evolved in a holistic manner and transcended the human categories and highlighted the importance of the environment and the very vital interlinkage between humans and environment for the survival of all.