CHAPTER - 4

RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS

4.1. Introduction

In the previous section, we have noted that resistance to disease causing germs is the biological trait of all living beings including humans. Nature herself has equipped plants and animals with some or other means to withstand adverse climatic conditions and the like as sheep like animals are furry in winter prone areas and cactus like plants in desert areas have modified water-storage systems. Human beings curiously lack any such adaptation mechanisms, but could compensate for this with many intricately devised gadgets that range from the parasol to the parka.

It was also noted that beyond the physiological level of resistance, human resistance is a unique phenomenon that assumes collective dimensions in complex socio-cultural settings. Human resistance efforts are therefore to be contextualized for analysis as group/collective expressions of the irresistible need to resist, and on this level, resistance efforts are carried out not on the individual level but as concerted ventures that take the shape of what is generally referred to as ‘movement’. A dictionary definition of the term is “a group of people who share the same ideas or aims.” A movement is the expression of either one or many interconnected forms of resistance based on specific ideological undercurrents. Thus
movement, resistance and ideology are the three correlated components that determine the dynamics of social change.

It is quite commonplace that a society generally includes many groups/communities with their own distinct customs and ways of life, which means that each group has its own culture and any one/some of them will become dominant over others. The other cultures are different from and disapproved by the dominant culture of the whole society. The dominant group is not ready to accept a common agenda and belief system as it claims that there is only one correct way to understand and organize the different areas of life. The people in the dominated cultures naturally unite to resist the dominant culture’s policies and practices. These sub-cultural groups include indigenous peoples, religious minorities, feminists, immigrants and ethno/cultural sections within a wider society. The world has been witnessing the emergence of a wide range of movements on behalf of such groups. The question is why these movements? Bhikhu Parekh opines that these resistance movements are formed to struggle for recognition of identity and differences or of identity-related differences (1). Resistance movements appear at macro and micro levels, and this aspect will be taken up for study in the succeeding sections.
4.2. Macro-resistance Movements

Resistance movements manifest either at macro or at micro levels and very often these two levels interpenetrate. The movements that emerge at macro level refer to the issues affecting a wider population composed of different social, economic and cultural layers. There may be different motivating forces, interests and goals, but there will be a common unitary ideological force to be resisted that underlies the power structure of the wider society. We can find many instances of such macro-resistance efforts motivated by common issues of oppression and exploitation. We take here the anti-colonial struggle in India and anti-apartheid movements in African countries as paradigms to understand the characteristics of macro-resistance movements.

4.2.1. Anti-colonial Movement in India

As we have discussed earlier, Indian subcontinent was one of the rich repositories of natural wealth. So, economic exploitation was the primary motivating force behind the British rule in India. It had been further strengthened with the establishment of a political system and the enterprises of cultural invasion. This complex machinery of power is widely termed colonialism, and we need not repeat the details which have been given in section 3.2.
In the second half of the 19th century, innumerable resistance movements were organized against the colonial rule which later developed into a national struggle for independence. Economic policies, land revenue system and the administrative and judicial system of British rule transformed and ruined the traditional agrarian structure of the villages and pauperized the farmers. This had ultimately deteriorated Indian economy as a whole, and consequently there were indications of resistance towards the growing oppression and exploitation.

Indians found that their real enemy was not only the indigenous exploiters like the landlords but also the Colonial State. They fought for their very survival in the context of mounting oppressions. In the beginning, the territory of these resistance movements was limited and confined to particular local regions. The local movements that arose in spontaneous response to the immediate social, economic, religious and such other conditions exhibited the characteristics of mrms. People rebelled only when they realized that their very existence and survival was in peril. We can say that in most of the cases the mrms such as the regional peasant movements could make no direct impact upon the supremacy of the British rule on the national level.

The impact of colonialism made tremendous changes and posed unprecedented challenges in the life of the tribal and rural folk of India. The
new system of land revenue and taxation on tribal products gave rise to a new group of money lenders and middle men or agents among the peasants. The middle men were instrumental in bringing the villagers within the circle of colonial economy and exploitation. Gradually, local people lost their lands and were inferiorized as mere agricultural labourers or serfs. The colonial government in effect carried out their exploitative projects mainly through the provincial rulers, native feudal lords and the middle men.

The nature and intensity of mrms differed from one region to another. But the rapid changes in the agrarian structure of the tribal communities and villages led to the formation of many tribal and peasant uprisings all over the country. “The colonial intrusion and the triumvirate of trader, money lender and revenue farmer in sum disrupted the tribal identity to a lesser or greater degree” (Chandra et al. 45).

In spite of the differences in location and times, all such mrms shared a common character not because they were organized together for a common goal but because the economic and social conditions that prompted the resistance efforts were almost identical, i.e., they all experienced the empirical consequences of colonial exploitation very often carried out through the local elite and provincial powers. They were controlled and ruled directly or indirectly by the Colonial State irrespective of caste, class and such other divisions. Even though the actions and policies of the British
rulers were different in different regions, the consequences were the same for different native communities in different regions.

We have already seen that peasant movements and the movements against caste discrimination had emerged mostly as localized reactions against the oppression and exploitation by the British in collaboration with the provincial rulers and middle men. Although the local people had no asserted political or nationalist inclination, the mounting dissatisfaction and displeasure about the emerging forces and conditions of oppression compelled them to resist the oppressors. We cannot, in most of the cases, identify any obvious political implication of such movements. That is why they had their own drawbacks and limitations in their social expression and organization. There is no doubt that these movements reflected the courage, sacrifice and solidarity of the peasants and villagers in hours of crises. Even in the times of extreme casteism, people of different castes and communities united against the external forces of oppression. They were even ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause of survival and subsistence of both the humans and their natural and cultural environments.

Bipan Chandra observes, “The major weakness of the 19th century peasant movements was the lack of an adequate understanding of colonialism” (59). They had no specific ideology, or socio-economic and political programme. Their struggles took shape within the traditional
framework of social order. Widespread illiteracy and lack of social and political awareness affected the success of these movements. They failed to converge into a macro level resistance movement against the British rule and remained at the micro level for most of the time. These movements lacked the concept of India as a national entity and because of this they could not give rise to a nation-wide political activity in the initial phases. The absence of a national leadership was also a drawback. It is true that it was not easy to resist the monolith of colonial machinery without a well defined nationalist spirit and unified leadership. But none could be blamed for the failure because time was not ripe for grasping the new complex phenomena related to colonial invasion.

Thanks to the influence of modern science and western ways of thought, the Indian intellectual landscape had changed remarkably in the modern period. Thus the 19th century India witnessed an intellectual and cultural awakening which enabled the people to realize the weaknesses and strengths of Indian culture and social systems. Casteism and its concomitant class distinctions remained a crucial hindrance to the spread of patriotic feeling among Indians. There emerged gradually many socio-religious reform movements in India. “The socio-cultural regeneration in nineteenth century India was occasioned by the colonial presence, but not created by it” (Chandra et al. 82).
Bromo Samāj, under the leadership of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal, was one of the earliest reform movements. There were many other religious reform movements like Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sabha, Arya Samāj, Theosophical Society and the Aligarh Movement. The modus operandi of these movements may be different but they shared the common concern for liberating the society from the evils and superstitions like untouchability and ritualism. Socio-religious reformation was the major concern of these movements. Renaissance Gurus argued that spirituality should not be divorced from the material conditions of life. They realized that religious reformation in India was a necessary precondition for the social reformation as both of them were interconnected. For this, they reinterpreted the traditional scriptures and social systems in the light of the conditions in the changing world. The changing voice is echoed in the following observation made by the best known representative of Indian Renaissance Swami Vivekananda:

… piercing through the mass of whatever good or evil there may be is seen rising the sure emblem of India’s future prosperity - that as the result of the action and reaction between her own old national ideals on the one hand, and the newly-introduced strange ideals of foreign nations on the other, she is slowly and gently awakening from her long deep sleep (472-73).
The socio-religious reform movements set the soil for the emergence of nationalism. In fact, these movements developed against both the socio-cultural framework and the colonial hegemony that had existed in those times. Gradually, the struggle to reform religious and cultural practices got merged with the anti-colonialist struggle. Many such movements emerged in different parts of India to fight for equal opportunities of education and temple entry for the Avarnas. The socio-religious reformers realized that before preparing the people for a nationalist struggle against the British, it is necessary to unite them by eradicating casteism which was the strongest divisive force that in effect alienated them from the cause of national liberation. It is true that the people at that time were more conscious of protecting their indigenous cultures and community practices rather than resisting the colonial state and its oppressive enterprises.

The preceding analysis of the Indian anti-colonial experience shows that the development of a macro level nationalist struggle for independence had been in fact the result of a long process of interpreting the conditions here in the light of the newly acquired epistemic-political framework of the West. If the intellectual mould for understanding and interpreting the Indian condition during colonial era had been provided by the new elite educated in the West, the flesh and blood of the struggle had been originally Indian that lay scattered in the numerous mrms representing the pauperized peasantry, marginalized Dalits and the like.
4.2.2. Anti-apartheid Movements

As in the case of India, African countries were also rich in natural resources. This had been the attraction for European invaders since the 1870s for long. The oppressive machinery of colonialism in Africa had been built upon the ideology of racism, and this had given rise to a new era of resistance to colonial oppression. Colour bias or racial segregation was the colonialist raison d'être for exploiting the black masses. In South Africa, the population was classified into black, white, Indian and coloured, and this classification of racial groups became an official policy after the general elections there in 1948.

The racial segregation resulted in discrimination in the fields of education, medical care and all other public services. There were separate bus stops, train compartments, hospitals, and ambulances for blacks and whites. Blacks could work or live in white areas only with a pass called ‘dump pass’. Public beaches, parks, toilets and even churches were segregated. Women in the apartheid era suffered both racial and gender discrimination. They had no legal right to education or to own property. Naturally, violent and non-violent protests that culminated in popular resistance efforts spread into all sections of society.

The members of anti-apartheid movement were from the various sections of African society. They included not only the irate indigenous
groups but also British Communists, Liberals, Labour activists, MPs, Churches and NGOs. They all shared the common goal of fighting the oppression of the black natives by the white invaders. This discriminatory ideology of apartheid, though ended officially with the declaration of free elections in South Africa in 1994, continues to plague the western societies having countable black population.

4.2.3. The Macro and Micro Levels of Resistance

When we analyze the characteristics of Mrms, it is clear that they are based on specific ideologies like nationalism or anti-apartheid position. Unlike mrms, Mrms are moulded and driven by such well defined ideologies. In the case of mrms, protests develop in spontaneous reaction to the oppressions in some particular local region. They do not undergo the kind of ideology formation as in the case of Mrms. This has been made clear in the case of Indian freedom struggle which had taken a visible macro level form only with the advent of nationalism as an ideology adopted from western politics. Mrms become visible only after a long process of the artificial and deliberate unification of mrms. The ideology of nationalism was not the immediate concern of indigenous groups in India, and it has been nurtured by the westernized Indian elite. They fought against the evils of Hindu society and tried to broaden the educational system all with the intention to project the national identity of India against colonialism. We
have already mentioned that Mrms are formed as a result of the unification of mrms under a unitary ideology and towards a unitary goal.

Mrms take up big tasks such as attaining political freedom or abolition of racism in terms of a common cause. When colonialism is replaced with a native national government, it resumes the oppressive systems and devices of a federal government. In spite of the transition from foreign to national, the government continues to be the missionary of the state which is the device of concentrated power. A national government has the asserted goal of unification and hence it is committed to promote common interests and projects without considering smaller, regional and local units like subcultures and subnationalities. This is the major cause of the emerging conflicts between mrms and the nation state. In our study of the instances of mrms, it will be shown clearly that in most of these cases the conflict manifests as the state vs. indigenous peoples. Hence when we analyze the correlation between Mrms and mrms, it is clear that the ideology of the former is not always compatible with the interests of the latter; more is the chance for the conflicts of interests and positions between Mrms and mrms.

4.2.4. The Resistance of Subalterns

What we refer to as the freedom struggle of India was not, at least in its initial phases, a unitary movement in a socio-political sense. This is
evident in the numerous studies on subalternity that placed the unknown ranks of the subaltern groups (like peasants and marginalized tribal groups) against the elitist groups. Historians interested in subaltern studies have tried to develop a rebel historiography because they believe that conventional studies of Indian nationalism have been moulded by colonialist and bourgeois-nationalist elitism.

Readings in subaltern studies note how “autonomous popular movements shaped Indian nationalism by provoking dialogue and tension with national leaders that produced various contingent outcomes” (Ludden 7). Criticizing the tendency of elitist historians to project the leading role of the enlightened nobility in India’s freedom struggle, Ranajit Guha states, “What clearly is left out of this un-historical historiography is the politics of the people” (4). He continues,

Popular mobilization in the colonial period was realized in its most comprehensive form in peasant uprisings. However, in many historic instances involving large masses of the working people and petty bourgeoisie in the urban areas too the figure of mobilization derived directly from the paradigm of peasant insurgency (5).

These observations confirm our conclusion that resistance efforts taking the form of a macro level movement, as in the case of Indian
freedom struggle, is not a unitary phenomenon either ideologically or psychologically. It is the sum total of numerous micro level movements as noted by Ranajit Guha\(^1\). So the concept of a macro-resistance movement sans mrms is a historical construct preferred by elitist individuals and groups. Mass movements arise and operate on grass root level in order to deal with local instances of oppression and exploitation. But there is no inconsistency in perceiving a national or some other similar movement at the macro level because there are distinct stages of history that make possible abstractions in terms of macro identities like nation. Only thing is that it should not be at the cost of concrete micro level resistance movements that fight the local forms of exploitation and oppression. This is the relevance and significance of subaltern studies in analyzing the proper ideological nature of Mrms.

We have so far analyzed the history of the emergence of resistance movements like peasant uprisings and socio-religious reform movements. The question is whether it is historically necessary for mrms to merge into the nationalistic political mainstream. A one word answer to the question will be difficult, but when we analyze the micro level resistance movements it becomes clear that these movements had set the ground for nationalistic political struggle and the patriotic unification of the nation. Most of the mrms in pre-independence India had emerged as a sudden reaction to the oppressive projects in particular regions. From the above study of resistance
movements at macro and micro levels it becomes clear that the emergence of mrms is not at all a novel phenomenon, and they are becoming so widespread that no geographic or demographic unit in any part of the world is without some of them. One crucial factor behind such an increase in the number and intensity of mrms is the emergence and expansion of cultural hegemony in various forms which very often mask, directly or indirectly, the invasive potentials and economic interests behind development projects.

It is clear that the spread of mrms is becoming a universal phenomenon and their number and role is becoming more pronounced in the present day world. We can say that most of the social conflicts today have an ecological dimension and basis. In addition to the mrms, which are specifically ecological, there are also micro level struggles pertaining to issues of caste-gender discrimination and consequent atrocities. But within the limits of this work, we have to focus on ecologically motivated struggles because to cover all the varieties of mrms is not possible here. Anyway, most of the mrms in the present day world have one or another ecological issue underlying the causes and purposes of the struggle. For example, ecofeminists have pointed out the conceptual parallel between the androcentric acceptance of nature-woman equation and the so called male’s right to objectify and exploit both.
4.3. Environmental Movements: A Paradigm Case of mrms

We know that nature is composed of a wide variety of ecosystems that encompass the human species together with the non-human components. Human being by nature possesses the inclination to control nature instead of obeying her. Aldo Leopold, who introduced the concept of a ‘Land Ethic’, argues that Homo sapiens should transform themselves from ‘conqueror of the land-community’ into its ‘plain member and citizen’ of it (4).

Different sorts of crises in the world necessitate social, political, moral, economic and spiritual restructuring as also new ways of thinking about man’s relationship with nature. Moreover, we have to discover new ethical principles that lead us towards an ecologically positive social transformation. Ecological resistance movements are the active expressions of this concern for ecocentric values in human life.

Today, Nature as a whole has become unable to resist the consequences of the aggression and destruction by human beings, but humans fail to realize that Nature is the primary source and locus of life instincts. Len Doyal and Ian Gough observe that ‘survival’ and ‘autonomy’ are the basic needs and they are both conceptual and empirical preconditions for the achievement of other goals (107). Thus, ecological resistance movements have roots in man’s unceasing quest for survival.
Environmental degradation threatens human life and existence, and is creating hazards to the species’ very survival on this ‘only one earth’.

Our current environmental crises necessitate a new ethics to guide the human conduct towards nature. Moreover, we have to discover new ethical principles to lead us towards ecologically positive social transformation because “Our basic ecological problems stem from social problems” (Bookchin 35). So we have to re-examine the existing values and laws in order to develop an ecological ethics. Conventional ethics rests upon a single presupposition that the individual is a member of community and prompts him/her to co-operate with the other members. It is an ecological necessity to develop an ethics which deals with man’s relationship with the natural environment because ecological definition of ethics is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence (Leopold 1).

The anthropocentric bias of scientific-technological enterprises prompts humans to treat nature as a resource and commodity for human use. There are only two alternatives before us, i.e., either humanity will transform its social relations and conception of life to ensure survival and subsistence, or it will suffer an apocalypse that may end humanity’s existence on the planet (Bookchin 152). It is high time to realize that humankind is facing not only a deterioration in its values and principles but
also the irreversible decline of the natural environment. Hence, most of the conflicts and tensions in the present day world have an ecological dimension and basis.

Humans tend to ignore the fact that we are at the same time the constituents as well as the observers and users of the natural environment. We have to play the role of consumers as well as the saviors of nature. So it is high time to change our utilitarian approach to nature. Human being ‘by nature’ seems to be inclined to dominate nature for monopolizing benefits. Thus our environmental crises emerge from an unjustifiably anthropocentric outlook on nature. Human beings consider everything from the species point of view as if the whole world is there just for us. But it is true that we depend on the non-human components of nature for survival and belong to nature on the same basis as any other species.

Industrialization is the source of activities that lead to deforestation, pollution, land erosion and the constant depletion of fertile lands. This has been affecting mainly the life and livelihood of the indigenous peoples prompting them to unite and put up militant resistance to the ‘industrial juggernaut’. Indigenous peoples directly depend upon natural resources like forests, waters and the like for their means of livelihood. But the reckless exploitation of these natural resources by the invaders compels them to fight against the invasions as they realize that their subsistence is in peril.
We can see that the flourish of resources and the geographical uniqueness of a certain area is the main motivation for industrial exploitation and its consequent miseries. It is true that industries create ‘progress’ satisfying mostly the rich urban consumers, but at the same time cause impoverishment of the local people both culturally and economically. The continuous overuse of resources leads to ecological imbalance which ultimately affects the entire ecosystem in the region. Hence environmental degradation threatens the life and existence of all living and non-living beings in the affected area.

The concept of domination or control is one of the fruitful concepts for analyzing the relationship of human beings with other fellow beings and with non-human nature. The question of environmental justice is centered round the fulfillment of basic needs through the equal distribution of natural resources and the freedom from the effects of environmental devastation. Movements for ecological resistance have the uniform motivating force namely fighting the invaders responsible for depleting the natural wealth that is essential for the subsistence and survival of indigenous peoples. It is not only protecting the first environment for subsistence but also resisting the projects of cultural invasion.

Whatever is the range and scope of resistance movements, the causative factors may be ultimately traced to invasion and exploitation of
natural resources in the interest of a dominating class. So, in fact, the ecological issue is basic to all projects of exploitation including the colonial. We have seen that anthropocentric approach to nature is the cause of these crises. So, (only) humans are responsible to find out a solution to ecological devastation and degradation. This is the realization that has given rise to ecological resistance efforts all over the world. This will be made clear by analyzing the common characteristics of mrms with reference to a few empirical instances.

4.3.1. Save Narmada Movement

Rivers are the most valuable natural resource like forests and there are many conflicts centered round their ecological significance on the one hand and their homocentric exploitation on the other. Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save Narmada Movement) is indeed a notable resistance movement in this direction. It has been the struggle against Narmada Valley Development Plan in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra states introduced in the 1970s. The consequences of the dam project are the submergence of lands and the displacement of poor tribal villagers in the project area. But the benefits of water irrigation will go to Gujarat, especially to wealthy farmers and 70% of the Gujarat’s drought-prone areas, and 90% of tribal areas will be directly excluded from the dam project. Thus the dam projects of the Government have benefits which are not equally distributed.
Opponents of the dam project believe that water and energy can be provided to the people through socially just and economically and environmentally sustainable alternative technologies and planning processes.

The modes of protest like civil disobedience and hunger strike by the NBA activists held in the 1980s and early 1990s invited international attention and led to the formation of a Review Commission by the World Bank. The Commission confirmed the consequences raised by the opponents of the dam project. They reported that human and environmental concerns are excluded from the project planning processes. Hence the World Bank strengthened environmental and rehabilitation standards, and afterwards Government of India has been refused the World Bank loan for its failure to accept the prescribed environmental and human rights standards and conditions. The project has been carried on, but resistance movement has had its own indirect impact. An important result is that there had been a consensus that future dam projects will be pursued only on the basis of environmental and social audit. Because of these resistance efforts, the states have been urged to seek alternative techniques and technologies for irrigation and electricity generation. Moreover, the struggle brought to the fore the ethical issue of the necessary correlation between development and displacement that affect the human population and that of the extinction of a variety of plant and animal species inhabiting the area of development.
4.3.2. Chipko Movement

Forest is a major source of livelihood for rural people and so many of the natural resource conflicts are based on the question of utilizing forest wealth. Chipko Movement represents one of the most remarkable agitations to conserve forest wealth for the use of its original heirs namely the local community. The initial signs of the protest became visible in the 1970s in the Garhwal region of the Himalayas in the State of Uttar Pradesh in India.

Increasing number of forest industries and resulting industrial expansion led to massive deforestation and further it caused heavy floods. The miserable experiences in village life analyzed in the light of folk wisdom urged the villagers to realize the link between deforestation and flooding. As the government continued allotting trees to industrial establishments, the local people began to organize agitations against the loggers. It took the shape of a popular movement of villagers adopting the method of hugging trees in order to protect them from the logger’s axe. It came to be known as the Chipko Movement (*Chipko* means to hug).

Thus Chipko Movement became an organized resistance to the widespread destruction of forests in various parts of India. The first spontaneous action of the movement took place in Garhwal region in April 1973 and further it spread to other parts. The Chipko activists achieved a remarkable success in 1980 with a fifteen year ban on clear felling in the
Himalayan forests of Uttar Pradesh region. It is important to note that most of the activists are rural women who wanted to save their means of livelihood and their community. In response to the strong protests by the activists, the ban was also imposed in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Bihar and in the Western Ghats and the Vindhyas. The impact of Chipko Movement influenced and inspired many other environmental resistance movements in different parts of India that fight for the rights of local people over the forest wealth.

4.3.3. Appiko Movement

The Appiko Movement emerged in the Kalase forest of the South Indian State of Karnataka in the early 1980s. It had been inspired by the vigour and success of Chipko Movement. In the local language ‘Appiko’ means ‘to hug’. It was launched in 1983 to save Kalase forest from woodcutters by hugging the trees in the forests. Increasing number of pulp, paper and plywood industries demanded large scale exploitation of the forest resources and the state government had to permit large scale logging from forests. Teak and eucalyptus plantations replaced the natural forests. This resulted in a recurring phenomenon of drying up of the natural water sources. The ‘development’ activities and increase in population have exhausted the resource system in the Western Ghats area. Deforestation in
the area caused serious problems like drought in provinces of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

In the name of industrial development, forest resources, which are the life supporting systems of the poor, are exploited for the benefit of the elite people. Hence, the Appiko Movement aims at saving the remaining forest resources in order to ensure the survival of the rural masses. The three main objectives of the movement are:

i) To save the remaining tropical forests in the Western Ghats.

ii) To restore the greenery to denuded areas.

iii) To propagate the idea of rational use of forest resources.

Hence the slogan of the movement is to save (ubsu), to grow (belesu), and to use (balasu) resources rationally. Like Chipko, the goal of Appiko Movement is not only to oppose deforestation, but also to provide an alternative model of sustainable development. Such movements project the vision of forests as the source of subsistence and survival of humankind as also of the myriad species of plants and animals.

4.3.4. Energy for the Rich, Extinction of the Poor

Energy is the essential bread and butter of human survival on the earth. It has also become the perennial source of concern and anxiety due to the imbalance in the limited availability of energy on the one hand and the
increasing demand on the other. Hence one of the most hotly debated issues today is ‘energy crisis’ on all levels. Using the Gandhian terminology, we can define the situation as the one that is determined by the need or greed question. We have come to such an impasse that conventional modes of energy production are not sufficient to meet the growing demand for energy. Fast changing world of technology is the major cause of the unprecedented increase in the field of energy consumption. Thus people all over the world are compelled to go for some alternative solution for energy production, and experts are in search of such sources. Industrial giants and technocrats are eager to propose nuclear energy as the only solution.

There are many resistance movements emerging against nuclear power projects in different parts of India. They are all locally centered in spite of the wider attention they attract. In the case of nuclear power projects, mainly there are three standpoints -

i) Nuclear reactors are the only solution to the energy crisis in India. The supporters argue that nuclear energy is the safest and cheapest and other traditional modes of energy production cause global warming and green house effect.

ii) Nuclear energy is one among the many solutions for energy crisis. Nuclear reactors are valuable, but other energy sources should also be utilized. S.S. Bajaj (The Chairman of India’s Atomic Energy
Regulation Board), says “we need to exploit all resources of energy. And as a regulator I will emphasize that nuclear energy, to be acceptable, must be safe” (Dutt n.pag).

iii) Building and operating nuclear plants should be banned totally. Individuals and groups who categorically resist and fight against nuclear projects include

a) The people living in the area earmarked for the project. Normally, they will be those who have been living in that area for generations. Their livelihood has been dependent on one or another traditional vocation such as farming and fishing which requires the natural environment as it is.

b) Activists, both individuals and groups, who join hands with the local people agitating and resisting. They include academicians, environmentalists, politicians and other types of activists who realize the threat not from a local but from an academic point of view.

c) NGOs which serve as potential sources of information, inspiration and education of the agitators. They feed information about identical issues elsewhere and at the same time convey the details over media to the outer world and seek wider support for such agitations.
Among these, (a) opt for the course of resistance due to their immediate and direct experience of the consequences such as displacement from native land and the consequent loss of livelihood, and (b) & (c) opt for involvement in resistance not because the threat is direct but because of their awareness and concern for the issue. Hence, their concern is not locally restricted because they are ready to join any other similar movement in any other place. Their concern is morally motivated and their support is unconditional.

We discuss here a few instances of such resistance efforts against nuclear reactors in different parts of India with the hope that it will help us to sort out the common causes, concerns and consequences underlying them.

4.3.5. Fathehabad Movement

An episode of farmers’ resistance has been reported from Gorakpur village of Fathehabad district in Haryana state. It has been a growing resistance against the government project to erect four nuclear reactors each of 700 MW capacity. The state government is planning to take over 1503.40 Acres of agricultural land for this project. A major portion of this area is in Gorakpur. Within the 3 kilometers of the forthcoming atomic reactor, more than one lakh people live. It includes the most fertile land in Haryana state. There are varieties of crops like cotton, wheat, paddy and peanut. A number
of canals in the area provide irrigation facilities. All these things make Fathehabad the biggest grain producing and trading centre. From this, it is clear that agriculture is the bread and butter of the villager’s life. The issue is to be viewed not only from a subsistence perspective but also from an emotional perspective.

Reports say that the farmers are not ready to sell an inch of their land to the government for the construction of nuclear reactors. Their univocal pledge is that they do not need money but only their agricultural land and the right to cultivation because agriculture has been the source of their subsistence and livelihood for generations. The project will affect small scale farmers more than the big-holders of the land. The farmers are not ready to retreat from their land.

The spokespersons and entrepreneurs of the project argue that if the project is implemented, the villagers will get their jobs assured. The sons and daughters of the soil are skeptical about the promise and they are anxious about its truth. The villagers know that they are not qualified to get the technical jobs in the power stations. Another fear of the farmers is that the electricity produced in the Fathehabad reactor is not for them but for metropolitan cities like Delhi. So the question is why such metropolises do not provide land for establishing mega-power projects? The local people argue that this itself is the explanation for the potential risk in establishing
nuclear power stations. The benefits go to urbanites while the risk is to be borne by the rural folk. So the farmers demand that if the reactor is a must, the project should be implemented where the people in need of the electricity live.

As in the case of any other unwelcome ‘development project’, resistance to the proposed atomic energy projects have been taking shape and assuming strength in Fathehabad. It is true that the structure, range and aim of Fathehabad resistance is not yet clear. The demonstration of resistance started with dharna in front of the Fathehabad Collectorate and (while writing this) it has already exceeded 400 days. The resistance is not so strong and organized, and it is of course in the primary stage.

Fathehabad resistance is not only a reaction against nuclear reactors but also against the emerging land mafia. The real estate boom is the order of the day, and unfortunately there will be a land mafia with its own calculations about buying the poor farmers’ agricultural land in the surrounding area of the proposed project at a cheap rate and later selling it at a very high price when demand for land increases with the progress of that project. For example, the project brings in new brigades of employees and their families at different stages of the project, and it becomes necessary to acquire more and more land for providing housing and other amenities for them. In such a situation, the otherwise low priced land becomes costly,
and it is the time for land brokers to make good of the situation. The
government value for land is according to the revenue tariff based on the
low rate of land price in the agricultural sector. So the poor farmers are
further deprived of the hike in land price due to the project. The issue can
never be solved with compensatory payment for evacuation because the loss
of cultural identity, lifestyle and heritage of the farmers can never be
compensated for. In the light of these facts, it becomes clear that the
Fathehabad resistance movement is yet another instance of the conflict
between cultural identity and developmental culture.

4.3.6. The Kudamkulam Agitation

The agitation of the local people of Kudamkulam against the
proposed nuclear power reactor being constructed in the village has recently
attracted much public attention within and beyond the country. Kudamkulam
is situated in Tirunelveli district of TamilNadu. Kudamkulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP) was conceived in the 1980s and the
project contract was signed in 1988 by India Government. The project
consists of 2 units of 1000 MW electricity and it is to be materialized with
Russian collaboration.

Anti-nuclear power group (People’s Movement against Nuclear
Energy - PMANE) in Tamil Nadu was launched in 2003. The goal of this
movement is to get the Kudamkulam nuclear power plant closed down and to preserve the coastal landscape unaffected.

There are various empirical causes as well as other motivational factors that create the tense atmosphere of resistance and struggle in this small village. The local people are from fishing communities and fully depend on the sea for their livelihood. It is feared that the dumping of nuclear waste in the sea will spoil the marine flora and fauna which form the primary source of their subsistence. The resistance of local people becomes more invigorated in the light of the big explosions that had taken place in some nuclear reactors in developed countries like the US, Russia and Japan. After the Fukushima disaster in 2011, there has been mounting protest against the existing as well as proposed nuclear power projects.

The local people were misguided by the project planners with the cheating promises like 10,000 jobs, water from Kanyakumari and ultimately the development of the entire village. There are more than one million people living within the thirty kilometers area of the project site. If a nuclear disaster occurs it is not possible to displace so many people from the site of disaster within a short time.

In addition to this, the local people have the genuine fear that not only the loss of their livelihood but also the heavy radiation spreading around from the plant will force them to flee the abode of their existence
and culture. The fear becomes more intense as the reactors are situated in a tsunami and earthquake prone area.

Moreover, critics have expressed the doubt about the efficiency of third world authorities to manage a nuclear crisis in a country like India especially in the light of the recent nuclear calamities in developed countries. It is reported that the authorities of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCI) have not yet conducted any site evaluation and safety analysis.

The aphoristic slogan of the agitators is Kadalē Uyiru, which means ‘the sea is our life’. This is only a simplistic translation because more than this it connotes the local people’s reverence for the sea as the breath of their life. Their cry is - ‘if the sea is dead, we are also dead’. The cultural spirit that strengthens the struggle for survival echoes in this slogan. They believe that if the Kudamkulam people are detached from the sea they have no existence. If their sea becomes dead and sterile they have no existence. The indigenous culture has been so much linked with the sea that the people cannot conceive a life away from and dissociated from the sea. That is why they are determined to die for the cause of preserving their culture and tradition which is essential to the preservation of their livelihood.
4.3.7. The Posco Struggle

The state of Odisha is immensely rich in natural resources, but a major part of the population lives still below poverty line. Today the state is undergoing remarkable political changes in favour of global monopolist companies like Posco and Vedanta. The South Korean company Posco is going to invest 54,000 crores of Indian money for their multifaceted project including iron-ore mining, steel plants, energy reactors and harbours. Just the Posco Steel-Harbour project requires more than 4000 Acres out of which a major portion is forest land. The land which Posco demands includes also the most fertile agricultural land in that area. Here the farmers cultivate betel plants giving the best betel leaves available in the country. Betel plant cultivation needs special soil, environmental and irrigation conditions to be maintained with utmost care.

Most of the people living in the project area depend on the forests for their livelihood and subsistence, and this bears the testimony to their rights as traditional forest dwellers. According to the Forest Rights Act, the forest dwellers who have occupied a certain forest area for long have the right to continue subsistence in the same area. So any act of invasion in the area will be in direct violation of this Act, but such instances are numerous.

Now the resistance is mainly against the proposed steel plant and harbor because the land which Posco demands for the two projects is the
most fertile land that has been providing food and livelihood for the indigenous peoples for centuries. The farmers largely adopt traditional mode of cultivation devoid of chemical pesticides and fertilizers for betel plant cultivation. The land is full of sand-beds. The sand beds are the source of the most pure water in seashore areas. If the Posco project is materialized the sand beds will vanish forever.

Mangroves form another biome which is under threat of destruction from this project. Mangrove forests help to increase the fish stock in that area. The subsistence of 30,000 fishermen will be in peril due to the construction of the harbour. There is already a harbour in Para Island, which is only 12 kilometers away from the project area. Harbour construction will cause the extinction of various marine species including sea-turtles. It is to be noted that sea-turtles are already on the verge of extinction and their conservation is a global concern.

Anti-Posco agitation is led by Posco Sangram Sangarsh Samiti. The locals including women and children are participating in the agitation with devotion and hope. Hatavo Hatavo Posco Hatavo is their slogan. What they need is to stop the State government from destroying their means of livelihood. The agitators say that they will never surrender or hand over their forests, waters and land to the invading industrial giants.
4.3.8. Pettipalam Waste Dumping Issue

A number of agitations going on in different parts of Kerala are specifically identifiable as micro level localized, collective movements fighting the issue of utilizing rural/sub-urban locations in the midst of thickly populated areas for dumping assorted waste materials mainly left out from urban households and markets. As a representative instance of this kind of struggle we shall analyze the one located in Pettipalam, near Thalassery town in Kannur district of Kerala. I shall give below the details of my field visit to the site of agitation.

As the place is situated a few kilometers away from my research institution, I could make a few visits to Pettipalam and make interactions with the participants of the struggle. Pettipalam Malinya Viruddha Visala Samara Munnani (Anti- Pettipalam Waste Dumping Agitation Front) leads the agitation to protest waste dumping in Pettipalam trenching ground by Thalassery Municipality. The agitation has the support of different religious bodies like the local temple, mosque and church committees. There are other components involved in the agitation namely Parisasa Malineekarana Viruddha Samiti (Anti-environmental Pollution Front), and some NGOs also are in the forefront. Different political parties also have extended support to the agitation. The area has already become unfit for living, and the local people are facing crucial problems like drinking water
contamination. It is also reported that different types of skin diseases and breathing ailments have become common among the inhabitants of the region surrounding the trenching ground.

The components involved in the resistance movement include political parties, apolitical movements and religious bodies. This is the testimony to the fact that the issue affects the whole population in that area irrespective of caste, creed, gender and age. Notwithstanding caste-religion-party differences they have joined together with the one purpose and determination to stop waste dumping by the municipality in and around their living places.

As we look at the demographic components involved in the resistance, we can see that women are in the forefront of the agitation. This shows that women are the most affected by the disposal of wastes. A majority of the local women spend much of their time in their houses carrying out domestic chores. Hence they are persistently exposed to the foul and pungent smell of polluting wastes. Continuous breathing of this kind of air containing decayed and poisonous material causes lung diseases and breathing ailments. These women with their babies in their arms are forced to remain indoors keeping the doors shut. They cannot open their windows and doors due to the polluted air. The waste includes plastic, hospital wastes, waste from butchers’ shops and many such things.
The agitators have mentioned that the problem has been there since the time of colonial rule. Now the issue has come to surface mainly due to the growing awareness of local people coupled with the increase in the quantity and variety of waste materials. The local people are well aware of the consequences of this waste dumping. They know that day by day the quantity of waste will increase. The people in this area blame the Thalassery Municipality for not taking the issue seriously. They need an alternative solution to tackle the problem. But the municipal authorities have been trying to convince the local people that they are planning to install a biogas plant as an alternative to this. But the local people argue that the biogas plant can never be a viable alternative because the proposed plant requires at least 100 tons of waste everyday and now the quantity is only around 38 tons, so in order to install the plant, the municipality will be forced to buy waste from other municipalities and panchayats. The local people are not much confident about the success of the plant, because most of the biogas plants already installed in some other parts of Kerala are almost dead today. Moreover, the promises and offers of the municipality so far remain hollow.

Similar cases of resistance have been reported from some more suburban localities in Kerala like Vilappilshala in Thiruvananthapuram district, Lalur in Thrissur district and Chelora in Kannur district in Kerala. In all these places, life of local people has become miserable due to the large scale dumping of urban wastes.
4.4. Micro-resistance Movements - Common Features

When we analyze the common characteristics of ecological resistance movements, it is clear that they originally emerge in a certain local region, that is, they take shape at the micro level. The local communities have their own indigenous traditions and beliefs. But the interference of industrialists and other invaders creates disharmony and conflicts in such areas. Richness of natural resources in the area attracts exploiters to extract the resources with different types of economic interests. Ultimately there arises the question - Who has the right to the natural resources in a given area of land? Is it the traditional inhabitants of the area or the invaders?

Naturally the local people develop a sense of resistance against the invaders. When we go through the history of the emergence of the resistance movements, it is true that more than the mere love of nature it is the empirical deterioration of local peoples’ sources of subsistence that motivates ecological resistance movements. Ultimately it is a matter of the survival of indigenous peoples together with the flora and fauna that support their life. In the beginning, these ecological resistance movements do not have an environmental agenda, because they develop on the basis of some specific threat to subsistence that is limited to some specific region.
The urban elite holds a utilitarian perspective towards natural resources like lands, rivers and forests. But the indigenous groups treat them as their only productive asset to generate food and livelihood. This conflict in perspective is one of the reasons for the emergence of mrms. We can see that the mrms are in one or another way directed against the State that issues license for logging trees, building dams and roads, and other ‘development’ projects. Yash Tondon observes, “The state sets the whole macro economic framework of the exploitation of natural resources” (171). This observation can be further substantiated with reference to the following pledge of the National Alliance of Peoples’s Movements (NAPM), which is a cross section of alternative movements in India:

We, the toiling people of India, women, men, and children, farmers, workers in the unorganized sector, in agriculture, fisheries, building construction, large scale and small scale industries, Dalits, Bahujans and adivasis, resolve to defend and protect life and livelihood. Water, forest and land are rapidly exhausted, degraded and eroded because of misguided development, harmful technology and exploitative trade practices. This trend is escalating under the New Economic Policy. We resist the designs of MNCs, World Bank and WTO to claim our resources and impose their culture, hand in
glove with our own ruling classes. We resist this murderous policy of displacement (7).

The above declaration echoes the motive behind the numerous alternative resistance movements destined to fight against the policies of the international economic institutions implemented through the ruling classes in the country. It exposes, in precise terms, the plight of different marginalized sections of society which are affected by the rapid depletion of natural resources that had been supporting their life and livelihood.

The utilitarian attitude towards nature is one of the important characteristics of modernization and urbanization. But utility and benefits always flow into a minority of the society, which is the upper class or the rich people. The majority of the community consisting of the local populace is mostly deprived of the benefits. We know that a major portion of the population of third world countries like India is rural and they continue to remain below the poverty line. They have their own lifestyle and means of livelihood. But the invasion of industrialists takes away the means and sources of the livelihood of these poor inhabitants of traditional landscapes.

The rural poor directly feel and experience the negative impact of industrialization. They totally depend upon their natural environment for subsistence. That is why most of the social conflicts have an ecological content and dimension. Local community gets organized against ecological
destruction as they experience and realize the impact of industrial enterprises that undermine their traditions and ecocentric ways of life. Their culture, values, lifestyle, social relations and the like are intertwined and cannot be separated. Indigenous people believe in the human-nature identity as an empirical fact, and this moulds their belief systems. But the bifurcations or binary oppositions essential to modern and urban societies mould a view of nature and man as two distinct and independent things. This attitude of modernity to nature and ecology has been shaped by its utilitarian and pragmatic approach. They consider environment as a ‘geometrical container, a box, with things in it and the useful things are called resources’ (Wisner 187).

In our search for the common characteristics of ecological resistance movements, it is difficult to apply a single analytic tool to analyze different in the micro level, and the issues vary from community to community. So the ideologies are also different according to the nature of the community, the locus of invasion and such other factors.

The culture and the tradition of a particular community mould the form of its resistance movement. In a face to face discussion, Ramachandra Guha, the prominent social scientist and environmentalist author could enlighten upon the issue of how cultural identity becomes a major
determinant of mrms. Thus the components of life like culture, tradition, indigenous forms of organization etc influence the emergence, development and expressions of ecological resistance movements. That is why Bron R. Taylor remarked that the diversity of these movements makes it difficult to find an adequate umbrella term of reference for them (2). Thus we can see that the methods and techniques of mrms may vary according to the nature of the area and demographic components. When we take the example of Chipko Movement we have seen that the protesters have used the method of hugging trees for preventing the loggers. It was a gesture of their mental and spiritual attachment to their ‘holy trees’. They were ready to sacrifice their life itself for protecting their ecosystem.

Ecologically motivated movements at micro levels have different perspectives and patterns of resistance. Guha and Alier in the ‘Introduction’ to Varieties of Environmentalism observe that poor are not interested in mere environmental protection, but they have to respond to the consequences of environmental destruction directly affecting the ways of life and survival of their population. Environmental conflicts occur mostly between the rich and the poor that may be between rich nations and poor nations or between the have and have-nots in a certain geographic region. Environmentalism of the poor and the rich differ in their ideologies also.
Environmentalism of the poor originates as a conflict over productive resources and the environmentalism of the rich is linked with the issues of human rights, distributive justice, ethnicity and so on. The two varieties of environmentalism differ in their mode of protest also. Environmentalism of the poor relies upon traditional networks of organization and traditional forms of protests like hunger strike and sit down strike (Dharna).

Environmentalism of the rich uses the method of media campaign, court petitions and political lobbying. Such struggles might be seen as the manifestations of a new kind of class conflict (Guha and Alier 5). These new types of struggle aim at retaining the access to natural resources and other means to support bare existence. The rich and the poor have the natural right to possess these natural resources without any discrimination, but in effect only a minority monopolizes these resources, and ultimately this leads to tensions and conflicts. We have seen that these conflicts or struggles are bounded in time and space i.e., locally determined and spatially confined.

Environmentalism obviously refers to the overblown and uncompromising concern for the natural environment. This implies the anti-anthropocentric view of nature as the primary supporting source of human life. In many cases of micro level environmentalism, we can see localized
belief systems such as the ‘sacred groves’ tradition and the divinization of hills and rivers playing a motivating role.

When we analyze different resistance movements at the micro level as those presented here, it is clear that without any sense of difference in terms of religion, caste, class, gender, or party affiliation the affected people have united to protest those responsible for the issue. They are not driven to agitation by any fractional motive but just by the need for survival and subsistence. The local people agitate because they have been under the threat of displacement or imminent destruction/gradual wiping out of the resident people. So it is a matter of the survival of people and culture. When we try to bring out the common factor behind this kind of resistance efforts in the local area, it is clear that subsistence/survival is the common and the most basic and necessary factor which unites the affected people. They are ready to sacrifice even their lives for protecting their environment and ecosystem because that ecosystem is their livelihood. In the case of Fathehabad resistance movement, Posco struggle and in Pettipalam agitation we can see that invasion of the traditional land of local people by external forces and interest groups leads to resistance which is linked with their life in the given locality.
4.5. Causal Factors of Resistance

So far we have studied a few empirical instances of mrms in order to find out their common characteristics. Thus we are able to bring out some specific causal factors that give rise to such movements.

From the abovementioned examples, we could see that the communities of people participating in mrms can be classified into two on the basis of their demographic composition. One type is the ecological ethnicities like tribal communities and the other includes multiethnic communities. When we analyze the different types of mrms in different parts of the world, we can see that in one way or another each one of them is located within a particular ecosystem and geographic area. The people engaged in mrms have been dependent on that particular ecosystem for their means of livelihood and subsistence. We have already noticed the emotional or psychological bond between an indigenous group and its ecosystem.

This is the characteristic feature that makes them ecosystem people or ecological ethnicities. In the case of mrms like Narmada and Chipko movements, the participants are mainly of some particular ethnic community. In these movements, the resistance is not only for protecting their means of livelihood but also for the preservation of their cultural identity which is inseparable from their ecosystem identity. Hence the
struggles of these peasants, tribals and such other indigenous groups are determined by their identity crisis of which the protection of their ecosystem is one essential component. In these movements “… issues of ecology are often interlinked with questions of human rights, ethnicity and distributive justice” (Guha and Alier 18).

The culture of the people engaged in these kinds of mrms is necessarily moulded by their ecosystem. Thus the struggle for the preservation of ecosystem is also for preserving their culture itself. Their food habits, mode of worship and rituals, means of livelihood and in total their way of life is determined by the ecosystem in relation to which they live. That is why the resistance of these ethnic communities against mega projects becomes the struggle for protecting their cultural identity too. We have noted that the most important motivating factor behind mrms is the urge of a community to protect its cultural identity together with the means of livelihood necessarily connected with it. This is mostly the case of ecological ethnicities. Yet in the fast changing social conditions of today, mixed cultural groups occupying a certain geographic area also have to face certain common problems. Hence they develop transcultural identities determined by common physical needs and challenges to continued existence. The background of such instances we have discussed in the section 4.3 dealing with mrms.
It is relevant here to note that a good number of the mrms emerging nowadays steer the resistance efforts carried out by the people in multi-ethnic groups. In the instances like Pettippalam waste dumping issue and in Kudamkulam anti-nuclear project struggle, the affected people are from different religions, castes and cultures. In the case of micro-resistance in the areas with multi-ethnic/cultural population, the conditions are slightly different. In these instances, the cases of resistance are not plainly ecological, but more related to human life and health. As in the case of waste dumping issues, for example, the project does not directly cause the devastation of natural environment; in the case of suburban habitats ecological damage has already crossed limits. So here it is primarily a problem of pollution affecting the human population in the form of serious health hazards.

In the case of ethnic communities, people are primarily concerned with the preservation of their means of livelihood and for this purpose with the protection of their traditional lands with natural assets. In these kinds of mrms, the primordial motivator is the biological urge to subsist and survive that further motivates the urge to preserve cultures. The affected people join hands in resistance movements with this common bio-cultural motive.

In the case of multiethnic instances of resistance, there are notable trans-cultural elements of unification that unite the people of various
cultures into mrms. The resisting people are from different cultures and the only commonality between them is the sharing of the same geographical area as habitat. In these mrms, the resistance efforts transcend the pressure of cultural identity. Cultural obstinacies are deferred as they come face to face with the threats to survival and subsistence. Hence it is clear that the role of cultural factors in resistance can be traced back to biological conditions and compulsions. From this analysis, it can be noted that culture is formed by more basic things than culture itself. The roots of culture lie in biological, geographic, climatic and such other physical components. But culture itself is not functionally biological as it transcends further to determine its own formative components.

Ensuring economic, political and social equality is only secondary, and self-preservation is the primary goal of mrms. It is only the human level manifestation of the most basic instinct of every living being. In this sense, every micro-resistance movement arises in the emerging context of the conflict between the ideology of survival and that of invasion. The conflict in due course also assumes further contentious dimensions like

i) Localism vs. globalism, and

ii) Need vs. greed.

The stalwarts of a development project are not worried about the continuance of the life of local people in the same area. Development itself
is the ideology of these project planners and their sponsors. Hegemony is the essential tool with which they impose their ideology over others. With this hegemonic urge, they often use non-violent means and modes to win the trust of the oppressed. It may be in the form of psychological persuasions and promises of material comforts. The asserted goal of ‘development’ is to improve the material conditions of life, but in the case of the present day technological enterprises for tapping energy sources or for building infrastructure for transportation, the question is ‘improving whose conditions of life?’ The installation site of project $P_1$ is $S_1$, but the ultimate beneficiaries of $P_1$ are the people of $S_2$ or $S_3$, and the negative consequences of $P_1$ like pollution and displacement go to the people of $S_1$. The inhabitants of $S_1$, in addition to the sufferings, are deprived not only of the benefits of $P_1$ but also of its economic profit which is appropriated by the corporate giant implementing it. Instances will be discussed in section 4.5.1.

In spite of all backwardness in material conditions of life, indigenous peoples prefer to live in their land without breaking the umbilical cord that connects them with that habitat. The ecosystem and cultural milieu in which they are born and brought up provide them with the most comfortable zone of their life. No other material amenities can be a satisfactory substitute for their ancestral abodes. Culture and comfort of a person are closely interconnected and interrelated. Imagine that you are offered the most
relishing and expensive food item of an alien culture and the simplest and cheapest dish of your own culture. The latter will be more preferable for you. Cultural conditioning of the taste buds and digestive system of the person determines the food habit and this in turn determines the level of comfort.

Again, when we take the example of the conception of God, the mode and meaning of worship of God in my culture may be different from that in your culture. Every religion or belief system conceives that God is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, but the worship patterns and systems are different in different cultures. Culture determines the difference and variety in such cases from the preference of food to the choice of gods. Displacement due to development deprives a community of all such unique preferences and that is why we have identified the primary motivating factor of mrms as eco-cultural and all other factors like economic conditions of conflict as secondary.

4.5.1. Development and Displacement

Here we need a deeper analysis of the notion of development induced displacement because these two phenomena are interconnected and cannot be separated. When we analyze the notion of ‘development’ in the modern technoscientific background it is inevitable to conceive, ‘displacement’ also. Development and displacement are intertwined and
inseparable if taken from the modernist standpoint propagated by stalwarts of neocolonial globalization.

It is clear that development and displacement are not complementing or supplementing each other. The lexical meaning of the term ‘development’ is, “the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced, stronger etc”, and ‘displacement’ means to take the place of something or somebody. There is a gap between the lexical meaning and the actual meaning of the term development. In general, development means all round improvement. It is the improvement of economic, social, cultural and ecological systems. The actual outcome of developmental efforts is just the opposite of this intention about the target of development projects. In effect, it leads to the opposite, that is, instead of helping to achieve improvement it leads to impoverishment. Improvement is only for a few because the benefits of developmental projects in effect go to a minority section of society. The other group(s) are not only denied the benefits, but also become the victims of the consequences of the developmental efforts.

The project planners are only concerned with the success of the project, may it be nuclear power reactors, dams, resorts or harbours. To a great extent, most of the projects depend upon natural resources like sea, waters, forests and such other irreplaceable ecosystems, and in effect all
these projects lead to the deterioration of ecosystems. Development, in the technoscientific sense, leads to impoverishment and it is the impoverishment of economic, cultural and above all ecological systems which ultimately affects the life of indigenous peoples.

4.5.1.1. Economic Impoverishment

Developmental projects need land areas on a large scale, and for this it is necessary to acquire in part or in full the lands of indigenous or traditional people. This is made possible only by displacing them from their native abode. As a result of this, they lose their traditional means of livelihood and subsistence essentially linked with their lands. The project planners cannot replace their agricultural land and the native people are normally thrown out of their hereditary vocations like farming, fishing and cattle breeding. In effect, development leads to the economic impoverishment of a particular community that has been occupying the area for centuries.

4.5.1.2. Cultural Impoverishment

In short, every development project leads to impoverishment rather than improvement, and hence what development actually achieves is just the contradictory of what is expected and assured by the stalwarts of industrial development.
Here is an apt remark,

“Development” could not but entail destruction for women, nature, and subjugated cultures, which is why, throughout the Third World, women, peasants, and tribals are struggling for liberation from development just as they earlier struggled for liberation from colonialism (Shiva 273).

Forceful displacement has always been a companion of development throughout history both in developed and developing countries. We know that development projects need large area of land which is available only in remote areas. The people in the remote areas are always the poorest of the population, who are compelled to forceful migration.

Another issue is that the displaced people are thrown out of their traditional vocations and at the same time they do not get the benefits of the project. Naturally there emerges a conflict between the displaced people and the people who implement and get the benefits of the project. The dislocated people do not get alternative agricultural land, and the compensation amount is inadequate to buy sufficient land for cultivation. Thus they fail to earn a proper livelihood in the new place of settlement, and gradually it leads to their impoverishment. In short, development projects necessarily lead to the impoverishment and destruction of native dwellers. Here the notion of people’s development is contradicting itself.

We know that the economic structure of countries like India is based upon
agriculture and small scale industries. Agricultural land is the most essential thing for the development (in the real sense) of the country. So the acquisition or forceful invasion of agricultural land leads to the deterioration of the economic and social conditions of indigenous peoples. The people behind the projects are not concerned with these far reaching consequences of the so called development projects.

We have already mentioned that project planners cannot substitute anything for the acquired traditional land with its given ecosystem. The indigenous peoples are emotionally attached to their traditional ancestral abode of existence and subsistence. Their culture as their traditional livelihood is moulded by the natural milieu in which their generations have been living. Their moral values, belief systems, worship patterns and other cultural habits and customs have taken shape in this traditional land with its distinct ecosystem. So the implementation of a development project causes not only the physical displacement of native peoples but also the loss of their cultural values and practices.

For example, when a project is planned to be established in a forest area, we know that there are different tribal communities that wholly depend upon that forest ecosystem for their livelihood. Their belief system as their means of living is inseparably and originally linked with the forest. If the tribal groups are displaced from their traditional forest land to some
urban areas or some other strange habitat then it leads them to a cultural alienation or culture shock. They will be reluctant to accept or adjust with the new culture just because they cannot. Hence this kind of forced displacement ultimately leads to the extinction of marginalized cultures. Development projects necessarily cause the depletion and destruction of ecosystems. We know that one ecosystem cannot be shifted to another place as it is always native to that one place only. Development projects definitely lead to the extinction of the variety of flora and fauna in the given ecosystem. It is the unpreventable and unavoidable consequence of developmental projects.

4.5.1.3. Emotional Impact

Displacement leads to the weakening of social networks and to the disintegration of the community. It uproots the cultural identity of indigenous communities. People are forced to shift from their natural and socio-cultural environment. Consequently, they are deprived of their traditional value systems, beliefs and customs inseparably linked with the natural environment. The affected people are forced to live in a new place in a new atmosphere. This involuntary displacement and resettlement affects the patterns of religious worship and other customary practices of the local people which again are an inalienable part of their traditional way of life like agriculture or fisheries. It is not possible to reconstitute a similar
social structure in the new abode of life into which they have been displaced. By relocation an indigenous community in effect becomes detached from its original abode. Moreover, its members scattered as the rural proletariat will be forced to take up menial vocations in urban areas. Hence the kind of forced displacement due to the invasion of development projects makes the migrating people totally alienated and disillusioned. They have to suffer not only the loss of their traditional land and resources but also the emotional stress of unwilling emigrants.

There are many reasons for involuntary displacement, may it be natural calamities, political riots or development projects. In the case of natural calamities, displacement or relocation is inevitable but there is the possibility to come back and continue the lifestyle in the same social network which can be rebuilt in some time. In the case of riots, the migrated people can come back as and when peace prevails. But in the case of development projects the affected people lose their traditional land forever and there is no hope of a coming back. They have to adjust with the new environment and this necessitates some kind of re-socialization. But the project planners are not concerned with these emotional aspects of the issue. They talk only about compensating for the material loss of the indigenous people. In most of the cases, even the material conditions are not fulfilled and the feelings and emotions of the people are totally neglected.
If the ecosystem is destroyed, then naturally it leads to the deterioration of culture. Displacement of ecosystem is in no way possible and consequently decline of a culture inevitably follows. The officials behind the development projects are only committed to replace the land (not always agricultural land) and to pay the compensatory amount for demolished houses. But the indigenous people have been dependent upon their ecosystem for livelihood. It cannot be replaced by planners. Replacement of ecosystem and culture is not possible, and ultimately development kills the original inhabitants of the project location culturally, emotionally and economically.

4.5.1.4. None is Spared

So far we have been discussing the problem of development and displacement with special reference to the plight of indigenous tribes and farmer communities, but it does not mean that they are the only people who suffer the consequences of invasion.

Constant depletion of agricultural lands leads to total disorder in the economic structure of a country like India. In the name of development projects, the planners are in fact betraying themselves, for the decrease in the size of land, sooner or later, reduces agricultural production and consequently the supply of food. It is true that agriculture is the backbone of the economy of Third World countries like India. Once we convert the
agricultural land for the purpose of constructing buildings and the like we cannot easily retrieve it into the original form or even into a waste land or fallow land. The loss is forever and the consequences are to a great extent not far away but imminent. Hence it is high time to reconsider the development agenda of the country.

We can see that most of the resistance efforts arise in response to the invasion and acquisition of traditional lands and resources. The question is - Who is the actual heir of the property? People in a particular area depend upon the natural resources obtained from the particular area for their livelihood and subsistence. The alternative solutions provided by project planners are not sufficient to compensate for their traditional way of life. The authorities of developmental projects are eager to offer substitute facilities for the indigenous people. Sometimes the facilities and compensating amount in terms of monetary value are far better than what they possess. But the reality is that material conditions can be replaced, but what about the emotional factors? We cannot re-develop the emotional attachment towards their traditional land and its ecosystem that is lost forever. The displacement of the material and emotional conditions affects the rich and the poor, the young and the old, literate and illiterate alike. It is violence towards one and all humans and further to all non-human components in a certain geographic area.
So involuntary displacement is a kind of total destruction of the culture of a particular community, which is unique in itself. The project planners offer substitute land for those displaced for project installation. Sometimes the offer package includes land for cultivation also. But the problem is that agriculture is a kind of culture or way of life to which a community of people gets adapted through centuries. Cultivation needs special kind of climate, soil, irrigation and farmers’ expertise. Whether it is paddy or wheat cultivation, changes in the ecosystem affect the mode of farming. A particular ecosystem has developed through centuries. Then how can the authorities of the so called development projects replace an ecosystem? They can replace land for their traditional land but not the same type of land with the natural farming environment. They cannot replace the flora and fauna in the ecosystem. In an ecosystem, what is once lost is lost forever.

In normal cases, most of the displaced people are tribal who may be less in number when compared to mainstream population. They live within their own territory holding their own values and maintaining their own collective institutions. Even in this age of technological revolution, most of them are reluctant to change their traditional lifestyle. They want to continue their total dependence upon forests and other natural resources for their subsistence and livelihood. Here the question is - Can the project planners replace the forests and waters that have been fostering the lives of
tribal communities? The displaced people are always like a plant which is rooted in a soil that is fit for its subsistence and survival. When we uproot the plant and try to grow it in an unsuitable soil and environment, it is destined to wither away. Even if it survives, there is much risk. Like plants, the indigenous people cannot live properly and comfortably in the changed places and conditions which the planners offer in place of their lost land.

The problem of development and displacement affect not only the humans, flora and fauna of an ecosystem but also its abiotic components like rocks and rivers. Displacement is visibly a human issue but it does not obliterate the plight of myriad non-human components of an area. There is no question of displacement in their case. They are the helpless victims of the development agenda proposed by a section of human species. In the case of flora and fauna, it is their ultimate doom and at least some of them will never appear again on the earth. Non-human beings are by nature unaware of the imminent destruction and they cannot feel or conceive resistance. It is only the human beings who can develop the motivation for resistance and protest to culminate in collective efforts to withstand and prevent invasion into their living places and cultures. In many cases, resistance is coming to surface mostly at micro levels and that too is against ecological imperialism which is a concomitant of economic and political imperialism. In all the instances discussed above, the persistent issue is the disastrous correlation between development and displacement. The question
of displacement is at the first sight an anthropocentric issue, because the responsibility to ensure survival of humans is taken for granted on both societal and governmental levels.

Indigenous people are reluctant to leave their traditional abode mainly for empirical and emotional reasons. It is empirical in the sense that the local people depend on their land for livelihood and subsistence. They are well versed in their traditional vocation and they find it difficult to learn and do other jobs however promising they are. Environmental adaptation is the main issue that these people face after forceful migration. The life and vocation of a local community depend upon the ecosystem in that particular area. The government can resettle only the humans and not the ecosystem. Total destruction of the ecosystem naturally affects their indigenous culture and means of subsistence. In the emotional sense, the land from which the natives are forced to migrate is not merely a piece of land or seashore that accommodates them and provides their livelihood but also the abode of their forefathers. Living in a place through generations for long means loving it in all aspects. A displaced human being is a fish out of water for such deep rooted cultural and emotional reasons.

In the context of micro level resistance, these two aspects show an analytic distinction, but there cannot be a watertight separation between them. Economic reasons and emotional factors together prompt indigenous
peoples to resist invasion and oppression by someone hitherto unknown for them appearing on the scene with some unknown and unwelcome development project.

**4.6. mrms - The Issue of Coordination**

We have analyzed various mrms emerging in different parts of the country and traced out the common characteristics of these mrms. We have already mentioned that each mrm is moulded by its own ideology and culture. Every mrm is a spontaneous reaction to a particular issue which affects the subsistence and survival chances of a particular local community.

In spite of the common characteristics, a coordinating system/organization of these mrms is lacking. It is true that the unification of mrms is not an easy task, and it has been the case with the long history of mrms in different parts of the world. The displaced and uprooted people are not organized together all over the country. Displacement may be due to the construction of a dam, a nuclear reactor, a harbor or a national highway. But the effect is the same, the forced displacement of indigenous groups and their consequent miseries like loss of livelihood and habitat, abolition of cultures and the like.

It is difficult to find out a common platform for uniting and organizing such mrms even though they have common motivating factors.
like displacement and cultural extinction. So every such movement is destined to confine its operations and functions within the local region where the invasion is taking place. It has been reported that the national level coordination committees like NAPM\textsuperscript{4} could not yet exercise a concerted influence over the unorganized mrms in different parts of the country. Devoted activists of alternative movements like Medha Patkar express the hope thus,

> We will have to create a new politics, new force with the co-ordination and alliance of all the people’s movements. An alternative to the present corrupt, anti-people, electoral politics. This programme would also need a unique Samarpan (sacrifice), Jan Samarpan (Dedication to the people) and not Jal samarpan (Sacrifice in Water) (6).

**4.7. Summary of the Study**

The human urge to resist oppression manifests both at the macro and micro levels as demonstrated in the struggle against colonialism in India. Normally various mrms play a significant role in setting the soil for the emergence of Mrms.

From the study of a few instances of mrms it has been found that one major cause behind the formation of mrms is the invasion and exploitation of natural resources for the benefit of a dominating class. So it is clear that
ecological issues are obviously the motivating factors behind the various instances of mrms which fight for the conservation of natural resources as the source of subsistence and survival.

In addition to marginalized ecological ethnicities there are also multiethnic communities occupying a certain area that suffer the consequences of development projects and urbanization. All such groups experience the threat of displacement and share the concern for ensuring bare subsistence and survival. Hence mrms are motivated by the ideology of survival placed against the ideology of development propagated by project planners and their political sponsors.

Development and displacement are always connected causally to determine the desperate plight of marginalized communities. The loss of land is also the loss of cultural identity. Invasion of fertile land for industrial purposes necessarily affect agriculture and the supply of food materials. Hence it affects not only the indigenous groups but all sections of society and the whole country.

The boundless expansion of industrialization and technoscientific culture further affects the non-human components of an ecosystem including the living beings and the non-living things like rivers, rocks and hills. Resistance is conceived and expressed only by human beings, and they struggle to protect not only their own life and livelihood but also the
non-human components to which their economic and the cultural identities are linked inseparably.

Development, as conceived by MNCs and technocrats, attains just the opposite of it mainly because it gives benefits to a minority section of society while a majority becomes economically poorer, emotionally desperate and culturally alienated.

NOTES

1. Even though the major form of resistance was through peasant revolts, there had been several instances of tribal and Dalit uprisings. (See Gail Omvedt Page 93-97).

2. Eco-feminists stress the need to fight “mutually reinforcing systems of oppression” which operate both on ecological as well as on gender levels. The phenomena of oppression cannot be addressed as a single issue. The liberation of oppressed groups must take into account not only the oppressed human categories but also the exploited nature.

3. Lexical definitions of ‘culture shock’ introduce the concept thus:

   - Disorientation caused by a change from a familiar environment, culture, ideology, etc, to another that is radically different or alien (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary).

   - A sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes with feelings of anxiety that may affect people exposed to an alien culture without
adequate preparation. (Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary).

4. National Alliance of Peoples’s Movements (NAPM) which proposes the unity of activists and movements in unorganized sectors like agriculture, fisheries and small scale industries as also in Dalit and Adivasi liberation movements. For details see ‘Resistance and Hope: Stories and Documents of People’s Struggles’.