CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The present pattern of planning and policy making has been questioned, not only, by the scholars and social activists, but also, by the common people at grass roots. After about a century of colonial occupation the ‘Third World’ countries assumed responsibilities for rapid economic progress. This required massive building up of infrastructures. Hence, emphasis was on sophisticated modern technology and heavy capital investment.

India, after independence, followed the same pattern of development and technology. Both development and technology are decided and designed through the centralised planning system. This genre of development has required evacuation of large number of people and their rehabilitation. The indigenous people are displaced in the name of ‘larger interest’ or ‘national interest’, without any participation or share in the benefits of the development project that displaces them. Various studies show that while the technical aspects of the projects are worked out meticulously, the problems of displacement and rehabilitation are mechanically handled. Rehabilitation is only nominal, and studies have indicated that fewer than 25 per cent of those displaced during the last three decades, have been rehabilitated properly (Hansda, 1983).

However, in recent times, such planning and projects imposed by the state from above have been resisted widely. This exposes a contradiction between ‘state’s action’ and ‘people’s interests’. Such contradiction has created a new arena of ‘conflict’ between the state and people. The stakes which are
valued and desired by the state, are opposed by the people. Such 'conflict' has manifested in the form of andolans or social movements.

As pointed out in the very first chapter, studies have been conducted to find out the consequences of displacement and rehabilitation, but such andolans have remained outside the purview of scientific investigation. The study of such andolans at grass roots may provide vital insights into the processes of development, role of the state in development, and also the structure of interest constellations in terms of beneficiaries and victims. This may also indicate an alternate 'paradigm of development' which will have it's origin from below.

The present study has focused its attention mainly on the andolan aspect. An attempt has been made to probe the 'people's movement' which has emerged in Balasore district of Orissa, in response to the National Missile Testing Range proposed to be set up at Baliapal- Bhograi area.

The purpose of the study has been to explore; can such collective action be conceptualised as social movement? Why did the movement emerge? Why was discontent generated among the people? How was the discontent mobilised and translated into collective action? Who were involved in mobilisation and who did participate in action? Who provided leadership? Did the andolan has organisational structure and ideological contents? All these queries have been framed into specific objectives as mentioned in the very first chapter.

The study is based on both qualitative and quantitative data collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary sources have been the leaders of the movement, a sample constituted of the people of the movement
area, sets of informants, and the pamphlets, leaflets and other literature published by the movement organisations. The analysis of data has been presented in three parts in order to have a systematic and comprehensive discussion on the phenomenon. The first dealt with the historical account of the movement in terms of the event structure. This acquaints one with the processual aspect of the movement. The second part focused on the macro dimension of the movement which referred to ideology, organisation, and strategy and tactics. The third and final section was centred on the micro dimension. This section focused on the perception of problem by the people at grass roots, mobilisation and their participation in the movement.

The analysis of events in historical perspective established that the movement against the NMTR developed through a gradual process which distinguished it from other forms of collective action. It was made clear that the immediate cause of generation of discontent was the declaration of the setting up of the NMTR in Baliapal and Bhograi blocks in Balasore district. The details of the projects, and the consequent displacement and rehabilitation were first highlighted by the local press. The educated people of the area, mainly the teachers, students as well as the youth were first to receive the information. They interpreted the information and articulated the consequences at perceptual level. This phase could be conceptualised as the pre-organisation stage of the movement.

Realising the need of an organised effort to avert the threat, the teachers, students and youth collectively formed the very first organisation named "Dakshin Baliapal Kshepanastra Ghati Birodhi Samiti (DBKGBS). This
was the inception of the process of formalisation. The leaders of the DBKGBS drafted a constitution specifying the goals, and the means to achieve the goals. The leaders mainly adopted the method of pledge and petition to achieve the end.

At this stage, all the efforts made by the DBKGBS did not yield desired result, because the organisation did not represent the masses and was confined to certain categories of educated people. The leaders had neither legitimacy nor mass appeal. Their method of pledge and petition did not prove to be effective.

By this time, other categories of people had already articulated their interests which gave birth to various interest constellations. Such wider articulation coupled with the limitations of the DBKGBS and the failure of its strategy and tactics led to further formalisation of the process. This resulted in the formation of the "Uttar Baleshwar Kshepanastra Ghati Pratirodh Committee" (UBKGPC).

With the constitution of the UBKGPC, the movement witnessed another phase in its life. It signified the culmination of political differentiation. All the mainstream political forces, except the Congress (I), joined under the organisation and pledged to fight against the ‘arbitrary action’ of the State. However, most of the prominent community leaders with the Congress (I) affiliation in the area joined the movement defying the directives of their State and Central units. The electoral interests were relegated to background. The political identities of the people were made secondary to their new identity, created by the movement. In other words, the legitimacy of the mainstream
political parties among the people became contingent upon their commitment to the movement.

The elaborate structure of the UBKGPC aimed at providing scope of representation to the people of all categories, and interest constellations in order to evoke mass participation. Alongside the UBKGPC, various ‘Fronts’ were formed with the intention to mobilise specific collectivities such as women, students, youth and fishermen. However, the dominant interest constellations, e.g. upper castes peasantry and *pana* traders provided the base of leadership to the movement. The analysis of social characteristics of the leadership showed that it was composed of mainly *pana* traders, *pana* cultivators and upper peasantry belonging to mainly upper castes. In a way, the organisation and leadership of the movement reflected the traditional authority structure in the local communities.

The traditional leadership which assumed new role under the changed condition devised a set of strategy and tactics to achieve the goals. The movement identified the State as the antagonistic party and, therefore, directed all actions against the State machineries making it defunct in the movement area. The main plank of the strategy, adopted by the leadership, was non-violence and no-cooperation with the Government. The tactics, devised to confront the State, were blockades, *dharna, gherao* of the State functionaries, rallies and processions and non payment of land revenue. For the first time, the local people were introduced to ‘new political activities’.

The leadership under the new organisational set-up could evoke participation in the movement paraphernalias from all quarters of the local
communities. The conditions which facilitated the crystallisation of collective action, were created by the cash-crop economy, in general, and *pana* cultivation, in particular. *Pana* cultivation integrated the local market with the national market. Such linking of the market forces accrued benefits to all the social categories in the area. The profitability of *pana* cultivation also attracted the lower sections of the society, e.g. lower castes lower peasantry, service castes, and Scheduled Castes and Tribes also. The *pana* centred economy created common economic interests binding all the sections including the artisans. While the profit for the traders and cultivators grew, the wage rate for the landless labourers also increased. The local businessmen found affluent customers, and artisans got rich patrons. These interests commonly rooted in land became the main issues of contention.

The emergence of the UBKGPC and legitimisation of the movement leadership led to the articulation and formulation of a belief system or ideology. Two main strands of ideology were identified and analysed in chapter IV. Both these strands had micro and macro dimensions. The micro dimension was conceptualised as the ‘ideology of *bheetamati*’ which contained comprehensive articulation of economic issues concerning the loss of home and hearth, loss of occupation and threat to survival. Though, social, cultural, and ecological issues also received attention, but they were of peripheral nature. It is because, the people were more concerned with the immediate questions of survival. Hence, the ‘ideology of *bheetamati*’ has encompassed the popular articulations. The macro dimension reflected upon relatively abstract issues such as foreign and
nuclear policies of the country and India’s role in ‘Super Power’ rivalry for hegemony in international politics.

It was found that ideology was not a construction of the leadership alone. The individual discontents at grass roots provided the basis and contents for the formulation of ideology. This belief system, in turn, was communicated to the people by the leaders through mobilisation. Hence, ideology is not a creation of the leadership and does not flow from top to bottom. Articulation of ideology involved a circular process as Blumer (1969) theorizes.

The movement area has witnessed persistent conscious mobilisation activities both vertically and horizontally. The process of vertical mobilisation involved the leaders at various levels to construct the consciousness of the masses and evoke their participation. However, it was found that each leader had his own ‘zone of influence’ where the particular leader proved to be effective in mobilisation. This could be traced through careful observation of similarities in the set of vocabulary used by the particular leader for mobilisation and the vocabulary used by those mobilised ones to express their discontents. Vertical mobilisation has been done both at collective and individual levels. The chief mechanisms of such mobilisation have been mass public meetings, padyatras, rallies, processions, small informal meetings and personal contacts. So here one finds the use of ‘traditional’ communication channels in mobilising the people for ‘new’ activities. In this context it could be mentioned that the traditional socio-cultural arrangements such as hata, mela and yatras assumed new political functions of mobilising the people in a new social situation. In horizontal
mobilisation, neighbourhood relations, interpersonal relations in the family, and social acquaintances were found to be the chief mechanisms.

The above findings clearly establish that the collective resistance launched by the people against the state action was neither a sporadic outburst nor some episodes collective action. The andolan had a history behind it, though relatively short. It also developed a formal organisational structure and an ideology. The andolan was characterised by persistent mobilisation and conscious collective action. All these features drive to the conclusion that the andolan epitomised in Baliapal-Bhograi area is a social movement.

While the above discussions relate to macro dimension of the phenomenon, the following delineation would deal with the micro dimension which refers to the perception of the problem at the grass roots, generation of discontents and participation in the movement from below.

The study attempted to find out the cognition of the people regarding the nature, dimension and consequences of the project. It was assumed that cognition played a major role in forming the attitudes. It was discovered that the people at grass roots were aware about the setting up of the project and the consequent displacement. However, a majority of them were found to be ignorant of the dimension and nature of the NMTR. It was because of the absence of efforts on the part of the Government as well as the ruling Congress (I) to inform the people about these facts. Absence of correct information also contributed to the formation of unfavourable attitudes of the people towards the State's action. A majority of the people rejected the rationality extended by the State for installing the huge project on their home land, and thought it to be a
politically motivated one aimed at destroying the traditional vote bank of the 
Janata Party.

It was found that almost all were aware of their resettlement in model 
villages but unaware of the details of the rehabilitation programme. The idea of 
resettlement in model villages was rejected by a large majority because they 
assumed that the modern structures would not take care of the prevailing 
socio-cultural matrix. And the modern amenities would be grossly inadequate 
and alien to the people.

A majority of the people knew that they would be given homestead 
land and built up houses. But almost all of them discarded such compensation 
promised to them under the rehabilitation programme. The structure of the 
house did not fit into the rural psyche and also their socio-cultural ethos. The 
one-room structure of the house in the model village was thought to be 
inappropriate to their existing interpersonal relations in the family. The structure 
of the house also did not take cognizance of the comprehensive notion of family 
held by the rural people. For them, family included, not only, human beings, but 
also, their livestock and other inanimate objects.

Almost none was correctly aware of the amount of compensation for 
trees, ponds and other assets. A commonly held opinion was that the loss of such 
objects and assets could not be compensated since these did not have economic 
value only, rather these were inextricably linked with their socio-cultural life. 
What was worse, as considered by the people, in general, was the loss of land and 
occupation. Loss of land for them meant loss of baraja which would amount to 
destruction of pana economy. Such a situation, as commonly perceived in the
area, would render them destitutes by robbing them of their economic affluence, social status and rich cultural life. People with different occupations, especially the *pana* cultivators, peasants, fishermen and artisans felt that they could not pursue any other occupation except their traditional ones as the skills were acquired through generations. The landless labourers were of the view that they would neither get the same number of man days nor the wage rate anywhere else. The local businessmen opined that without their traditional customers it would not be possible for them to continue with their occupation. The perception of destruction of the social arrangements, economic structure and cultural life of the people and their resettlement as 'powerless' and 'rootless' persons in alien places have caused a threat to their socio-psychological identity. They presumed to lose their well consolidated identity which, in consequence, would render them human being without social significance. Though this is not verbalised categorically by the people, but it is apparent in their expression of discontents.

The negative attitudes of the people were further reinforced by their knowledge of conditions of the evacuees in other cases of displacement. A majority of the respondents who had such knowledge, were aware of the miseries of those oustees, despite the promises made by the authorities to rehabilitate them properly with suitable compensations. In the light of such cognition and perception of the consequences of displacement, almost all the respondents visualized their future and that of their coming generations to be gloomy and wretched.
All the groups and collectivities articulated their interests in the context of displacement and rehabilitation. Their ‘definition of situation’ was based on the analysis of the present conditions of life and their perception of future after displacement. This led them to visualize a condition of ‘absolute deprivation’ after displacement. This ‘perceived deprivation’ was not confined to their material world only, but extended to their social identity and psychological setup also. So, the structure of their perceived deprivation was constituted of material, social, cultural and psychological elements. Hence, the perceived discrepancy between the prevailing conditions of life which is their creation, and the future conditions which will be created by the rehabilitation schemes, has generated mass discontents. Such deprivation-induced discontent is a general spur to action (Gurr, 1970). However, discontents must undergo qualitative transformation in order to take the shape of social movement (Blumer, 1969). In Baliapal-Bhograi area the perceived deprivation generated social discontents, and social mobilisation done by various ‘agents’ at different levels transformed the discontents into formalised collective actions.

The condition which played a facilitative role in the ‘new’ mobilisation was the prior influence of opposition politics in Baliapal-Bhograi area. (The Janata Party is generally considered as the Opposition party and the Congress (I) as the Ruling party). The involvement of macro political forces sharpened the articulation at the grass roots and intensified the discontents. These forces with their political maturity provided necessary requirements such as leadership, strategy and tactics, and consolidation of rank and file which led to the crystallization of the movement. The political community leaders with their
traditional legitimacy could mobilise their old support base easily. At the same 
time, the impetus for action was also from below. In other words, the ‘affected 
people’ with their intense negative attitudes wanted to channelise their 
discontents to action under certain leadership and through organisations which 
the existing political leaders provided. It can be said that the ‘traditional’ 
socio-cultural arrangements took up ‘new’ functions.

Hence, the movement at Baliapal-Bhograi area can be conceptualised 
as a social movement which possessed all the quintessential characteristics 
required for such conceptualisation. The empirical analysis supports a theoretical 
formulation of Wilson (1973), "Once given the existence of social discontents and 
given the right conditions, social movements emerge as new social realities, 
expressing new ideas and performing new actions which provide a more 
meaningful microcosm for those caught up in the turmoil of change."

Sociologically, it is also important to find out the consequences which 
follow a social movement. The consequences are generally viewed in terms of 
success and failure of the movement. As this study was aimed at probing an 
ongoing movement, it is not possible to deal with the success and failure aspect 
of it. However, at the point of time when the study was conducted, the movement 
could successfully withhold the State from implementing the project. The 
strategy and tactics adopted to achieve the goals proved to be effective. Through 
the movement, the ‘people’s power’ could confront the ‘State power’. The 
movement conscientized the people to the issues related to the development 
strategies of the State. Unintendedly, the movement unravels the undesirability 
of the ‘State’s intervention’ which is conceived at the top and imposed on the
people at the bottom. The phenomenon of collective action epitomized at a micro-cosmic place is a pointer towards the lacunas in the present 'paradigm of development', and the frame of reference of collective interest. At grass roots, the movement developed the solidarity in and among the local communities, and led to the construction of a new identity. The people also got acquainted with new political methods of ventilating their discontents and asserting their rights.