APPENDIX III

Present Situation in Baliapal-Bhograi Area

While the empirical study was conducted in mid-1989, preparations for the elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly had already started. In view of the elections, there was pressure from the Centre and State level Janata Party leadership on the movement leadership to lift the barricades (people’s curfew) for the purpose of holding elections, and thereby, not obstructing the democratic processes. The Centre and State level leadership of the ‘National Front’ which had the Janata Party as a major partner promised to scrap the proposal of the NMTR, if the ‘National Front’ candidates were voted to Lok Sabha as well as the State Legislative Assembly.

In 1989 elections the ‘National Front’ formed government both in the Centre and the State of Orissa. But no step was taken towards either withdrawal or shifting of the NMTR. A national daily quoted the statement of Sri Raj, the President of the UBKGPC, “National Front leaders like Mr. V.P.Singh and Mr.Biju Pattnaik had whole heartedly supported our agitation against the test range when they were in opposition. But today they are mysteriously silent on the issue” (the Times of India, May 5, 1990).

The barricades which were lifted for the elections in 1989, were again set up after the elections and they had been guarded regularly (ibid).
However, the movement has been in a state of lull for about the last two years. It is, probably, because there has been no provocation from the Government. Recently a national daily reported that the agitation against setting up of the test range at Baliapal-Bhograi area, which remained dormant for about two years would be relaunched in November, 1991 (The Indian Express, October 22, 1991). To quote the same daily, “The decision to revive the mass movement was taken on Friday at Narayanpur village in Baliapal block by Baliapal Khepanastra Ghati Pratirodh Committee* which spearheaded the protracted agitation five years ago” (ibid).

* The name of the organisation is not correctly reported.