CHAPTER IV

ROLE OF NGOs IN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT IN KARNATAKA

"In the midst of this darkness, there is a ray of hope... the people's movements, challenging the policies of the establishment. They are expressing the will of the people by demonstrating the people's power on the ground, rather than through intellectual exercises in seminars. They are aimed against aggression and at self-protection. The aggression is of the development projects born of centralized planning, aimed at benefiting the affluent and the regions... The marginalised people kept the soul of democracy – the community spirit – alive, and are the last living representatives of participative democracy".

- Sunderlal Bahuguna

In our race towards progress, a very severe damage has been done on the country's ecology and environment. The State of Karnataka is also not an exception from this grim scenario. Karnataka State is the eighth largest state located in the southern peninsular India, with a geographical area of 1.92 lakh square kilometres, accounting for 6.3 percent of the total geographical area. Karnataka is known for its rich ecological heritage, and it is one of the peaceful states in India. It has been rated as one of the most democratic states in India, perhaps in Asia. It has for example, a lengthy history of comparatively stable multi-party politics, a free and lively press, and a 'culture of accountability'. The state is known for its special geographical location full of variety – its rivers, hills, valleys, plains,

1 State Focus Paper 2005-06, Karnataka, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Bangalore.
2 Cited in David Potter, Democratisation and the Environment: NGOs and Deforestation Policies in India (Karnataka) and Indonesia (North Sumatra) in David Potter (ed.) NGOs and Environmental Policies: Asia and Africa, Frank Cass, London, 1996, p.23.
forests and resources. Karnataka's forests are unique in their formation and diversity. This represents 5.5 percent of the forest cover of the country. The state is ranked fourth in the country in regard to its area under tree cover. The Western Ghats of Karnataka is listed as one of the 18-mega biodiversity hot spot in the world. Biodiversity refers to diversity of species of life forms. Biodiversity is important for everybody. The Karnataka Biodiversity Board (KBB) has said that Karnataka’s biodiversity is among the best in the country, and the Western Ghats has the largest biodiversity area. The board, which was instituted in 2003, has estimated that the state has 5000 varieties of plants, 650 species of birds, 180 species of mammals, 160 species of snakes and lizards, 276 species of fish (marine and backwater) and 202 species of fresh water fish and 300 species of butterflies. Thus, the Western Ghats region of Karnataka is a rich treasure house of natural wealth and this cannot be valued easily in monetary terms. Unfortunately, over the last few decades, man’s activity in the name of development has adversely affected biodiversity in an unprecedented way. According to Gangadhar Maddikare Managing Director of the KBB, 65 percent of plants and trees in the state are endemic to the Western Ghats and many of them are on the brink of extinction. This is because of the unmindful policies of the government. Consequently, the state’s image of peaceful land has been disturbed due to rampant

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3 Ibid. p.8.
6 Ibid.
environmental destruction appeared in the form of displacement by dams, deforestation, pollution from industries and mines and destruction of wild life. In this way, the environmental situation throughout the length and breadth of Karnataka has been facing constant threats. The need of the hour is to reverse this trend and restore the environmental balance of the state. This is the foremost responsibility of the government. But it is ironic that the government instead of safeguarding the environment has systematically undermined it. Sunita Narain of CSE holds that the government cannot be trusted to manage the country's natural resource base - indeed, they can be trusted only to further degrade it.9

During 1989-1994, the Congress governments allowed development projects that cause havoc to the fragile ecosystem of the Western Ghats. Even the opinion of the Yellappa Reddy Commission not to build mega projects on the Western Coast was ignored.10 The consequences of such projects are not fully evaluated under the less than rigorous system of environmental impact assessment being followed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Despite its onerous responsibility as the custodian of the nation's natural wealth, the Ministry appears to be extraordinarily eager to facilitate projects even in ecologically sensitive zones.11 The area of the Western Ghats where Cogentrix was going to set up shop has seen numerous protests. But hardly has the Karnataka government or central government done anything to translate these protests into policy and thus to reassure

9 Sunita Narain, After Non-Governance, Down to Earth, January 15, 2005, p.5.
11 Rain forests should be Forever, The Hindu Editorial, June 20, 2006, p. 10.
the people that their environment will not suffer.12 All the Chief Ministers of the state from Hegde to Devegowda, irrespective of their party affiliation, have been soft to power projects. In this context, it is significant that Deve Gowda as the Prime Minister helped the process of transfer of vital decision regarding clearance of all power projects from the centre to the states in response to the vocal controversy raised on this point by the Chief Ministers.13 At the meeting of State Power Ministers along with Chief Ministers in mid-October 1986, the Prime Minister clearly disregarded the advice of the expert committee and announced that green clearance would now come from the states.14 This indicates that H.D. Deve Gowda, who was once the Prime Minister, had no interest in environmental protection. In September 1998, the CSE has conducted environmentalist’s survey of green rating of the CMS of each state. According to the survey report, Karnataka’s Chief Minister J.H. Patel, who came to power in May 1996, has no respect for either environment or for environmentalists and secured zero marks by the environmentalists.15 Further more, in Karnataka the political party leaders have a very poor image, and common people have a generally very sceptical attitude towards the politicians in their attitude towards environment. Some people go to the extent of just not believing anything politicians proclaim and about their assurances on the problems of environment.16 Therefore, the environmental concern of the affected people had led to the emergence of a number of

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13 Pravin Sheth in Supra no.10, p.135.
14 Indian Express, October 19, 1996.
environmental NGOs in Karnataka such as Samaja Parivartana Samudaya (SPS), Transnational Centre (TNC), Janavikas Andolan, Tungabhadra Parisara Samiti, Citizens Against Nuclear Energy (CANE), Society for Environmental Awareness, Appiko, Uttara Kannada Parisara Samrakshan Samiti etc. These reflect people's concern with water pollution, air pollution and other problems of environment. Thus, the state has an impressive record of environmental NGOs working for the cause of environmental protection.

Recently in a number of instances, NGOs have strongly condemned the government's environmental policy on various grounds. Some of the environmental and social organisations in the state are sore with the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests for not consulting them before formulating the new environmental policy. The network of non-governmental organisations had drawn the attention of the Ministry to critical lapses in the protection of the environment, wildlife and access to resources by communities dependent on the forest. It appeared that the Ministry was not serious about the consultation process or involving the people in the policy making process. Noted environmentalists like Mr. Saldanha, Ravi Agarwal of Toxis Link, Shekhar Singh of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information and Ashish Kothari of Kalpavriksh on behalf of 92 other organisations and individuals, called for urgent initiation of a widespread participatory process of obtaining feedback to formulate a fresh environmental policy. The environmentalists

17 Ibid, p.212.
19 Ibid. p.4.
pointed out that the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) had been paying lip service to transparency the process of consultation and inviting participation from the public. The MoEF had claimed to have held “extensive consultations”, "Leo Saldanha, Co-ordinator, Environment Support Group, said that the fact was that the draft policy was not circulated, translated and distributed through state government agencies and made accessible to NGOs.20 Sharadchandra Lele, Co-ordinator, Centre for Inter-disciplinary Studies on Environment and Development, Institute for Social and Economic Change, wondered how a 30-page draft could be acceptable as a vision for the future, especially when an important issue such as interlinking of rivers did not even find a mention. I detect chaos, loopholes and an attempt to roll back the environmental management strategies", said Sharadchandra.21

In an another front, a national network of 50 environmental organisations and individuals has charged the Ministry of Environment and Forests being the weak link in environmental protection. As people's groups, NGOs and mass movements show, we are deeply concerned and anguished at the way governments over the last few years have severely undermined the importance of environmental issues in decision-making.22 The statement lists the following examples of the Ministry’s inefficiency:

❖ The notification of the Biological Diversity Rules 2004 is “scientifically unsound”;

21 Ibid. p.4.
22 Environment Ministry Failing in its Role, Say NGOs, Business Line, September 08, 2004, p.8.
The scope of the EPA has been weakened by about 30 dilutions such as exemption from EIA for widening highways and allowing mining leases for major minerals for a number of holdings under 25 hectares;

- Allowing SEZs in violation of Coastal Regulations Zone notification;
- Many projects have been cleared without an adequate EIA or environmental safeguards;
- As already noted, a National Environment Policy has been framed without public participation.23

All these important issues, raised by the noted environmentalists and NGOs, indicate their growing concern in protecting the environment. In this way, the responsibility of environmental NGOs in protecting the environment is increasing over the years. In Karnataka, the NGOs deep concern of environmental issues has tended to numerous protest movements from time to time. As a result, the state has become an important battlefield of intense environmental movements. Therefore, it is very pertinent to understand environmental movements of Karnataka. Particularly an understanding of how environmental NGOs of the state spearheaded these movements is also important.

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23 Ibid. p.8.
It appears that these controversial issues of the projects tended to confuse the thinking of the people and strengthen the popular apprehension about the likely effects on the life of the public.
The Appiko Movement

Forest loss and degradation is a hot topic in the Indian and global environmental discourse. However, around 30 percent of the total forest cover of Karnataka is degraded. Consequently, this is a matter of grave concern today.

Uttara Kannada, the northern coastal district of Karnataka is located in rich biological zone. The region is also declared as biodiversity hotspots by IUCN. It is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, many of which are endemic to the region. The region receives an annual rainfall in the range of 2000 mm – 6000 mm largely concentrated in the monsoon months of June-October. The important rivers like the Kali, the Gangavati-Bedthi, the Aghanashini and the Sharavathi take their origin here and flow into the Arabian Sea. The Varada River flows through here before joining the Tunga in the east. The rivers and innumerable seasonable hilly streams serve as the main sources of water for the district.

Forest Wealth:

Uttara Kannada is a complex landscape of rich forest wealth. It harbours at least 1,741 species of flowering plants and 420 species of birds and other wildlife. The region is known for its rich wild economic and medicinal plants.

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26 Ibid. p.189.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
Forest Cover of Uttara Kannada Area in Square Kilometres

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Dense Forest</th>
<th>Open Forest</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Scrub</th>
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<td>6,502</td>
<td>1305</td>
<td>7,807</td>
<td>75.86</td>
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Source: State of Forest Report 2001

The districts landscape has undergone major changes over the last century in its forest cover. A variety of anthropogenic disturbances, particularly those caused by infrastructure development such as mining, townships, hydel project, highways and power plants, have highly altered its vegetation mosaic.30 As a result of this, the forest cover in Uttara Kannada specifically having declined 8,000 square kilometres to 6,000 square kilometres during the past 40 years. The reasons are various, including over utilisation by logging industries, poaching, over-grazing and overuse generally by local people.31 The people of the district have traditionally depended heavily on the forests for fuel wood, grazing, leaf manure, construction material and a wide range of non-wood forest produce.32 This decline of forest cover has had grim consequences, especially for the rural poor. “This district’s natural wealth has now become a curse for it”, says Pandurang Hegde, journalist and co-ordinator of the Appiko-Chipko Andolan Movement.33 Uttara Kannada district has a long history of forest movements, beginning in 1831 with a Jungle Satyagraha against the reservation of forests policy of the British.34 It was during the last few decades that the government undertook a number of infrastructure developments such as the Kali and

30 Ibid.
31 Cited in David Potter, in Supra no. 2, p.23.
34 The State of India’s Environment, the Second Citizens’ Report, 1984-85, Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, p.94.
Sharavathi Hydel Projects, establishment of a nuclear plant at Kaiga, the Konkan Railway Project, the paper mills etc. These projects have changed the habitat of this region altogether. In response, the affected people under the guidance of environmentalists and NGOs have strongly opposed these projects. Thus, the district has the record of significant contribution to the modern environmental movement. It is against this background that it is pertinent to understand the Appiko Movement, the pioneer of environmental movement, which was started in Uttara Kannada district.

The activists of the Appiko movement were heavily inspired by the celebrated Chipko movement of the Himalayas. Thus, like a migratory bird, Chipko flew from north to far south. It was in the southern state of Karnataka that the people of Sirsi Taluka, in the Western Ghats, launched Appiko (Kannada word for Chipko) Movement on September 8, 1983.\textsuperscript{35} Pandurang Hegde spearheaded this movement under the name of Appiko, as he was closely associated with Sunderlal Bahuguna and participated actively in the Chipko Movement. This has helped him greatly to acquire rich experiences about forests and forest departments.

In this district, Uttara Kannada, the forest department have for several decades been promoting teak plantations after clear-felling the existing mixed semi-evergreen forests.\textsuperscript{36} Many times the villagers of this region requested the forest department to stop the tree felling activities for commercial purposes. Despite the appeals of villagers, the


\textsuperscript{36} Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha in \textit{This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India}, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p.224.
forest department continued its tree-felling operations. It was at this time, Sunderlal Bahuguna, a noted environmentalist and one of the leaders of the Chipko Movement, visited Karnataka. He gave a fascinating story of the Chipko Movement in the Himalayas. The speech by this wiry, white-beared man, with sparkling eyes, greatly moved the people in the audience. He told them about the approach of non-violence, to embrace the trees to prevent the axe man. At the end, the people took an oath to save their forest by embracing trees. This important meeting took place on the 15th of August 1983.37 “Not knowing how to protect their trees the idea of hugging the trees gave them hope”, says Keshu, a farmer and member of the Yuvak Mandali which is spearheading this movement.38

The first Appiko was sparked off on September 8, 1983 by the forest department’s felling of trees in Salkani forest in Sirsi taluka. One hundred and sixty men, women and children hugged the trees, forced the woodcutters to leave, and kept vigil in the forest for the next six weeks.39 Thus the novelty of embracing the trees did not confine itself to the Himalayan foothills. This idea of embracing the trees to protect them travelled from North to South India. It reached Uttar Kannada district in Karnataka, a region well-known for its forest resources.40

Husri is a small village with 45 families, all of them depending on agriculture. In 1969, their natural forest of 900 acres was clear felled to plant eucalyptus.41 This has resulted in the shortage of basic needs

38 Supra no. 34, p.94.
39 Ibid. p.94.
40 Pandurang Hegde in Supra no.37, p.172.
41 Ibid. p.172.
and decrease in the agricultural production. In October 1983, the Forest Department had sent axe men to cut down more trees near Husri. Consequently, the villagers decided to launch Appiko and the next morning nearly 200 people comprising men, women and children marched towards forest and stopped the felling activities.

In Kalase forests where trees were to be cut down by match manufacturer Wimco, Appkio activists not only hugged the trees but also performed a puja to appeal to the religious sentiments of the people. In Bengaon, when villagers began their movement, the forest department reacted in anger. It shows that the government, instead of assisting people's environmental movements, works against them through its experts, reports Pandurang Hegde. Further, he took strong objections to the government's environmental policy. According to him, "though we cannot say much about the Karnataka government's environment policy as a whole, the forest policy as such is far more progressive than other southern states. But it is only the policy, which is good. In actual implementation, these policies are forgotten. The state government run by the Janata Party claimed to be Gandhian and dedicated to decentralised rural development. So it set up mini-cement plants in the midst of evergreen forests in the western Ghats and it allowed the setting up of more plywood and paper mills which will use more forest resources. The government publicises social forestry and school forestry. But there is nothing but big publicity. Real issues are rarely touched."
In November, the movement spread to Nidgod and Kelaginjaddi villages of Siddapur taluka. The villagers wanted the forest for their basic needs, while the government wanted the forest for commercial purposes. These conflicting goals resulted in the outbreak of the movement. Ultimately, the local people succeeded in protecting their forest from the commercial interests. In the same way, villagers of Bilegal forest of Hulekal range also saved their forest resources.

In this way, by December 1983, the Appiko movement was extended to eight areas in Uttara Kannada, and it successfully drew the attention of newspapers and magazines. This non-violent approach was helpful in making the Appiko a great success. The movement drew statewide attention and support, and the state government sent the Forest Minister to the area to study the situation first hand, and, in its light, make the necessary changes in the forest policy.46

Finally, in the last week of December 1983, then state forest minister, Mr. Jivijaya paid a visit to the area, walked with the people through the forest and heard the problems of villagers. Then he gave specific orders to halt felling of natural forests. This was a significant success for the people's movement.

Within a short span of time the Appiko movement became popular all over Karnataka. Another front of the movement is in Kodagu. The hill district has more than 80% of its area under 'some of the best [evergreen and moist deciduous] forests in the world.' But it was the 'luxuriant growth' of coffee plantations responsible for most of the loss of 'natural' forest in Kodagu. Today it accounts for nearly half

46 Pandurang Hegde in Supra no.37, p.173.
of the tree cover in the district, and is the source of tremendous concern for wildlife and 'natural forest' lovers.47 People have objected to the raising of coffee plantations and forced the state government to put an end to the felling of trees in the forest.

During the course of the movement, the people faced a number of challenges from forest contractors and bureaucrats. Even the forest officials dubbed Appiko as unscientific and anti-development. They argued that the people were solely responsible for destroying the forest resources.48 But it was the strong will power of the activists that defeated the tactics of forest contractors and bureaucrats. This is a clear indication of the success of the Appiko message. The movement emerged victorious with three objectives.

1) Protecting the forest resource of Western Ghats.
2) Creating an atmosphere for the natural regeneration of trees.
3) Rational use of natural resources.

In order to carryout these objectives, Parisara Samrakshana Kendras (Environmental Conservation Centre) were formed in Sirsi. Thus, the Appiko movement led to the formation of an environmental NGO. The Appiko movement, a counterpart of the Himalayan Chipko movement, is a watershed in the history of the state's protest movements. It had a far-reaching effect on the government's attitude towards ecological degradation in the Uttara Kannada District of the state.49

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47 Sharathchandra Lele in Supra no.24, p.35.
48 Pandurang Hedge, in Supra no.37, p.175.
Protest Against the Bedthi Dam Project:

As elsewhere in India, the State of Karnataka has also witnessed strong anti-dam protests. One of the early reported yet successful movement was that against the Bedthi dam project in Karnataka.\textsuperscript{50} The Bedthi is one of the four major west flowing rivers of Uttara Kannada, the others being the Kali, the Aghanashini and the Sharavathy. These rivers originate in the Western Ghats at altitudes of around 600m and drop abruptly to sea level.\textsuperscript{51} It is an unfortunate coincidence that many of the major hydroelectric projects are located in the climax-forests of Western Ghats.\textsuperscript{52} Dogra estimated that the proposed dams on the Kali, the Bedthi and the Aghanashini rivers and their tributaries, combined with the Seabird naval project at Karwar and the Kaiga nuclear plant, amounted to an expected displacement of 150,000 people over the next two or three decades. If one includes indirect displacement caused by the gradual encroachment of mining, this figure rises to 2,50,000 about one fifths of the districts population. Such livelihood vulnerability is, of course, also an ecological catastrophe in the making.\textsuperscript{53} The controversial Bedthi dam alone, if it is taken up for construction, would have submerged 6065 hectares of fertile land, including 4126 hectares of thick forest and will displace 4000 tribals.\textsuperscript{54} The Bedthi project was proposed for generation of 420


\textsuperscript{51} Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, in Supra no.32, p.185.


\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Down to Earth}, March 31, 1999, p.36.
MW of power. The entire amount of electricity generated was to be used by industries in metropolitan areas. There were no benefits to agriculture because the waters of the dam reach the Arabian Sea within a few kilometres after flowing down the Western Ghats. Thus all the benefits were to accrue to the rich, organised metropolitan sector, while the external costs were to be borne by the rural poor. This is a classic case where the benefits of development are transferred from the poor to the rich, while the external costs are borne by the rural poor. There is a strong feeling among the local people that the project, if at all it is implemented, will have negative implications.

The project was initiated by the Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL), which drew up a schedule for the first stage of implementation of the project and submitted it to the Central Electricity Authority in April 1979. The Planning Commission cleared the project after some suggestions for environmental protection. The state government's intention to go ahead with the construction of the project was greeted with stiff opposition and subsequent protests by the local people. Earlier, the movement was started under the leadership of Anusuya Sharma, a woman MLA from the district. Later on, intellectuals and NGOs, like Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishat (KSSP), joined the campaign. A national seminar was organised in December 1980 at Sirsi which presided over by the doyen of Kannada Literature, Dr. Shivaram Karanth, and addressed by, among others,

58 M.V. Nadkami in Supra no.55, p.86.
the Chipko andolan leaders Sunderlal Bahuguna and Chandiprasad Bhatt, as also by Professor V.K. Damodaran, a stalwart of Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishat. Officials of the Karnataka government's Forest and Planning Departments also participated. The seminar was quite successful in highlighting the shortcomings of KPCL’s project evaluation and drew the attention of the public about the harmful effects of the development project. In the wake of strong agitations, the successive chief ministers of the state have not been able to implement the project. Whenever they have made an attempt to start the project, environmentalists, NGOs and people have strongly reacted against the pro-dam policies of the government. R. Gund Rao, who succeeded Urs as Chief Minister, set up an expert committee in 1981 to decide on the benefits of the project. The committee recommended minimising the adverse effects of the project on the environment. Around that time, the environmental groups which conducted their own studies concluded that the project would do more harm than good to the environment. As a result, the project was temporarily abandoned. When Ramkrishna Hegde subsequently, became Chief Minister; he was in favour of the project. It was again due to strong apposition that he gave up the proposal of implementing the project. S. Bangarappa came to power in the state, he woke up the proverbial sleeping giant by signing a MoU with an American firm, Caithness International Power Corporation, for the execution of the 210 mw hydroelectric project across the Bedthi river in Ankola of Uttara Kannada district, which would comprise a dam and cost Rs.305 Crore. Even before the final contract could be signed, protests started again. It was because of

59 Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha in Supra no.32, p.186.
60 Anil Agarwal, Sunita Narain and Srabani Sen (eds.) in Supra no.57, p.162.
these objections that the project was again shelved.\(^{61}\) All these protest movements and hectic lobbying ultimately led the government to scrap the project.

In the meantime, the environmentalists and NGOs came with an alternative project to generate hydroelectric power with the help of a retired engineer, who once headed the Karnataka Power Corporation; they have been able to propose an alternative scheme.\(^{62}\) As a result, consecutive small projects of 10 mw each have been permitted to be setup at six places, which would mean minimal submergence of land, and less displacement. The construction of these six projects would produce at least 250 million units annually.\(^{63}\) This alternative model of development reveals the brilliance of Uttara Kannada people. They have not only succeeded in halting the project but came with the brilliant idea of sustainable development which is the crying need of the hour.

The Kali Bachao Andolan (KBA):

Kali River is one of the important rivers that flow in the thick forest area of the Western Ghats. The west-flowing Kali originates in the hilly regions of Western Ghats in Kusavali on the border of Goa and Karnataka. Kaneri and Pandhri are the main tributaries of Kali. The 184 kilometres river flowing through magnificent valleys and joins Arabian Sea in Karwar.\(^{64}\) Kali River is a small river compared to other rivers of the region. But the unique features of the river have immensely contributed to increase the natural beauty of the region. Therefore Kali valley is one of the most attractive tourist centres of the

\(^{61}\) Ibid. p.162.
\(^{62}\) Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha in Supra no.32, p.187.
\(^{63}\) Anil Agarwal, Sunita Narain and Srabani Sen, in Supra no.57, p.162.
\(^{64}\) Deccan Herald, January 18, 2005.
south India. The Kali valley is the home for forest dwelling tribal communities like Kunbis, Marathi, Siddi and Gowlis. They live amidst the forest cultivating small paddy fields and harvesting non-wood forest products like honey, fruits and resin. These tribal communities have lived harmoniously with nature for centuries.

However, the series of development activities undertaken by the Karnataka Government in the Kali valley have dramatically altered the ecology of the region. Like many rivers in India that have been abused in the name of “development”, the Kali River is no exception. It has been polluted, dammed and sand mined.

**Industrial Pollution:**

The West Coast Paper Mills (WCPM) was promoted in 1955 and is currently owned by the SK Bangur Group of Companies. It is situated in Dandeli in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. The WCPM provides direct employment to 3000 persons. As of April 2002, WCPM had 2068 workers and a staff of 784. Around 10,000 people are being indirectly provided employment by WCPM. With the establishment of the WCPM Dandeli became an industrial town and people thought that the industry will bring numerous employment opportunities. But unfortunately, the local people were denied employment opportunities due to lack of necessary skills to join the industry. Hence, most of the people who got the employment in these industrial units were non-localites while the workers are mainly localites from the nearby areas of Dandeli. Thus, the fruits of the

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65 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
development were gulped by somebody else, whereas the local people got only pollution and its associated problems.

**Environmental Effects of West Coast Paper Mills (WCPM):**

The pollution of Kali River caused by WCPM has been very serious and adverse impacts on the health of local communities and also on the local environment. For decades WCPM has discharged untreated effluents into Kali causing serious pollution of the river and groundwater. Its pulp has floated into downstream dams stinking up the waters and destroyed agriculture. A December 1999 ISRO study commissioned by the mill to assess the possibility of ground water contamination found that one kilometre stretch of the Kali River was affected and ground water was contaminated in villages situated along the river. The analyses of effluent samples from 2001 to 2003 by the central and state pollution control boards show non-conformance of standards set by the regulatory agencies. Despite the violation of environmental norms, WCPM has been reluctant in installing a proper effluent treatment plant.

The concerned regulatory agency, the KSPCB has done very little to curtail the damage despite being aware of the resulting dangers. A number of environmentalists along with affected people of Uttara Kannada want to put an end to this grave problem and want to protect the river for posterity. As a result, the Kali Bachao Andolan (Movement to Save the Kali) has been formed by Parisara Samrakshana Kendra of

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69 http://www.phmovement-org/en/node/78
70 http://www.narmada.org/related_issues/kali/press-releases/20030923.html-17k
71 Supra no. 67.
72 Ibid.
73 Supra no. 66
74 Supra no. 67.
Uttara Kannada and the Environment Support Group along with several local community organizations and tribal villages of Uttara Kannada.\textsuperscript{75} Recently, over 30 representatives of Kali Bachao Andolan met with Mr. J. Alexander, Chairman of KSPCB, Mr. Ramaiah, Member Secretary, and Mr. M.D.N. Simha, Chief Scientific Officer, to press for action against the WCPM. The delegation also complained that the factory since its inception extracted bamboo from Uttara Kannada forests has completely depleted bamboo forests, now it is using eucalyptus, acacia, and subabul and demonstrated wanton disregard in retaining the region's environmental quality.\textsuperscript{76} The Board Chairman Mr. Alexander noticed the complaints made by the activities and promised necessary legal action. But the powerful industrial-political nexus is hindering the process of brining in any change in the status quo. The politicians try to incite people against the KBA, by stating that the closure of the industry would deem 40,000 people would be unemployed. However, they ignore the interest of four lakh people who live on the banks of Kali and in the valley. It is this larger picture that has kept the support base of KBA.\textsuperscript{77} The struggles of KBA and Environment Support Group achieved some success in protecting the river from pollution. At present, the Central and State Pollution Boards are monitoring the position of the water pollution in the river. However, the movement is not demanding closure of the WCPM, rather it is more concerned to bring down the pollution level for the benefit of the community living in the region.

\textsuperscript{75} Supra no.66.
\textsuperscript{76} Supra no. 70.
\textsuperscript{77} Supra no. 64.
Construction of Dams in the Kali River Valley:

During the 1980s, another era of development activities started in the Kali Valley. The main emphasis was particularly on the construction of the hydel dams across the Kali River and its tributaries. The Supa Dam built in 1985 is one of the biggest dams across the Kali river. At present, there are six dams on the Kali River generating 1400 MW of power.\(^78\) This indicates that the Kali River is the major source of power generation for the state. In addition to the hydel power there is a nuclear plant established on the banks of Kali River at Kaiga. Thus, it can be said that the Kali valley is the power valley for the state. The contribution and sacrifice in terms of displacement of the people in Kali Valley for the benefit of common good of the state is unparallel in the history of the state. But what have they got in return for this sacrifice? They have been displaced, have lost their forest resources, and above all, the river is polluted.\(^79\)

Dams, Displacement and the Forest Loss:

- Dams across Kali: Supa Dam, Kodasalli Dam, Kadra Dam, Kaneri Dam, Tattihalla Dam, Bommanahalli Dam
- Catchment area of Kali River: 1,88,900 acres.
- Forest area submerged in Kali Valley; 32,708 acres.
- Families displaced by Kali Projects: 1,665

Now, the controversy is centred around the proposed seventh dam to be built at Mavalangi near Dandeli. If approved, it will be

\(^{78}\) Supra no.64.
\(^{79}\) Ibid.
constructed by Murdeshwar Power Corporation Limited (MPCL) to generate an additional 18 MW of power at the cost of submerging 210 hectares of forest area.\textsuperscript{80}

As noted earlier, there are already six dams generating 1400 MW of electricity, and the Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant generates 400 MW of electricity. Under such circumstances, environmentalists rejected the proposal of a new dam on various grounds. Why is this new dam being built? Is it worthwhile to pay the high environmental and social costs to generate a mere 18 MW?\textsuperscript{81} asks the environmentalists. On financial ground too, the new dam does not make much sense. At a cost of over Rs.180 crores, the electricity costs over Rs.10 Crore per MW and is one of the costliest power projects proposed.\textsuperscript{82} Thus, on several reasons, the new dam will not serve the purpose, and needs to be scrapped.

It may be recalled that the Dandeli Mini Hydel Project was cleared in Karnataka’s Global Investors Meet held on 5\textsuperscript{th} June 2000. The proponent MPCL in an attempt to secure environmental clearance had provided a plagiarised Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) prepared by Ernst and Young.\textsuperscript{83} Environment Support Group (ESG) along with Parisara Samrakshana Kendra, Sirsi, ran a campaign to stop the dam. ESG exposed the shocking plagiarised report prepared by the international consulting firm. The Indian Express, the leading English daily in its issue of 27\textsuperscript{th} of August 2000 provided front page coverage to the issue and termed it as the worst ever scam in environmental decision making history of India.\textsuperscript{84} For coming out of this embarrassing situation, the Karnataka government ordered a fresh

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{80} Supra no. 66.
\item\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{83} Supra no. 70.
\item\textsuperscript{84} http://education.vsnl.com/esgl
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
EIA for the project. This time Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI) which was commissioned to conduct this study, produced the EIA within a month. On review this was found to be based on fraudulent data.85 Keeping in view the mounting pressure by the environmentalists, the plagiarised reports by the scientific agencies and growing public opinion against the project forced the government to reject the project. Finally, the Karnataka's Industries Minister Shri R.V. Deshpande confirmed that the proposal to build the 7th dam across Kali river at Dandeli had been abandoned in the ecologically sensitive Uttara Kannada district. Mr. Deshpande made this clarification in a meeting with various representatives of KBA who met with him on 20th September 2003, at Bangalore.86

The Anti-Kaiga Movement:

Nuclear power may have a new dawn, though many wrote it off as a sunset industry. Recently, while speaking at a Pennsylvania nuclear power plant, President Bush focused most strongly on nuclear energy, calling it a source of power that is abundant, affordable, and safe.87 Worldwide, nearly 80 percent of the 441 commercial nuclear reactors currently in operation are more than 15 years old. New reactors will have to replace decommissioned ones to maintain nuclear power's position in the overall mix.88 It seems that still the world has not learnt a lesson from Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The closure of Chernobyl sends a clear message that the nuclear power is dangerous and unprofitable.89 What is unacceptable and deplorable is that India is playing into the hands of the nuclear lobby. It is actually wooing

85 Ibid.
86 Supra no. 70.
88 Ibid. p.15.
89 Down to Earth, January 15, 2001, p.5.
Russian technological assistance. After all it was this very technology that provided the recipe for the Chernobyl disaster.\textsuperscript{90} However, there is a difference of opinion among the scientists with regard to the safety of the nuclear technology. Consequently, the nuclear power has become a controversial and debatable subject. Therefore, it is pertinent to understand the anti-Kaiga movement in all its dimensions.

The decision of the government of India to construct an atomic power plant at Kaiga has received a popular reaction. Kaiga, once a tiny village located amidst sylvan surroundings of Western Ghats and situated on the left bank of the river Kali, in the Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka, is now home to India's most controversial nuclear power plant.\textsuperscript{91} By 1987-88 the anti Kaiga movement took firm roots and people protested against the site in the ecological fragile Western Ghats.\textsuperscript{92} Opposition and resistance to Kaiga project was intensified in most parts of Karnataka and Goa, because for the local people and other inhabitants of these areas Kaiga nuclear project meant a threat to their survival, the erosion of their resource base, forcible eviction, displacement from their traditional home-lands, exposure to radiation hazards and unknown death. Even with sufficient precautions taken by the government and nuclear scientists to deal with the likely problems of environment in Kaiga project, public has always feared that a reactor would one day explode. Being aware of the consequences of one such accident i.e. Chernobyl, they do not want to be exposed to such risk.\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid. p. 5.
\textsuperscript{91} File://Gi\:\kaigaconstruction of Kaiga An overview.htm
It was against this background, that a large number of NGOs, like Society for Environmental Awareness of Sirsi, Parisara Sourakshana Samiti of Yellapur, Bangalore based NGOs like "Prakruti", Avinash, Trans-National Centre (TNC), Citizens for Alternatives to Nuclear Energy (CANE), Citizens for Democracy (CFD), Mannu Rakshan Koota, the Snehakunja at Kasargod, Society for Ecological Awareness at Karwar and Samaja Parivarthana Samudaya of Dharwad, have vehemently opposed the construction of nuclear power plant at Kaiga, and played an important role in mobilizing the people against the Kaiga nuclear project through seminars, padayatras, cycle jathas and so on.

Prominent personalities of the state have actively joined into the anti-Kaiga agitation and awakened the people about the likely hazardous effects of Kaiga nuclear power plant. Eminent literary figure and Janapada award winner Shivaram Karanth, was involved in the Kaiga Struggle. He also unsuccessfully contested a Lok Sabha election. One important name that requires special mention in the intellectual discourse is the late Kusuma Sorab, a doctor, who died four years back while returning after filing a stay order against mega-projects in Uttara Kannada. Kusuma Sorab, popularly known as 'Kusumakkka' was a Gandhian, who participated in the 'Janandolan of Medha Patkar', and Chipko Movement of Bahuguna. She established the Uttara-Kannada Parisara Koota (UKPK) and fought against the projects at the Sharavathi, the Kaiga, the Bedthi and the Taj Resort. The Uttara Kannada Ulisi Andolana (UKUA), which she led, came out

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95 Ibid, p.4900.

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with 20 demands, including declaring Uttara Kannda as a forest-agriculture-fisheries district, shelving the tourism plan, giving up privatisation of Karwar and Ankola ports, reconstruction of forestry, stopping Kaiga nuclear plant and rehabilitation of those displaced by Konkan Railway and other projects. Journalists, like Nagesh Hedge, Vishnu Kamat and other eminent citizens have also joined the movement.

The Uttara Kannada Zilla Parishat passed a unanimous resolution opposing the setting up of an atomic power plant in its district. However, the government of Karnataka strongly pursued the project against the will of the local people.

Thus it appears that the government has laid the foundation for the grave for the burial of the democratic process. India is the biggest democracy in the world. However, its government through the nuclear establishment appears to be acting systematically against people's aspirations.

The Kaiga issue figured in electoral politics and even the Supreme Court directed the government of India to reconsider its decision on the nuclear project. But all these efforts have been largely unsuccessful in stopping the project although they have drawn the attention of the government to the negative aspects of nuclear power.

96 Ibid, p.4900.
97 Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, in Supra no.32, p.42.
98 B.J. Sukumar and S.S. Patagundi in Supra no.93, p.97.
The Konkan Railway Controversy:

The Konkan Railways Project was a long-standing demand of the people residing in the west coast region of India for a cheap and fast transport to improve the economic conditions and make accessible the hinterlands in the state of Maharashtra, State of Goa and State of Karnataka. Their dreams came true when the central government decided to provide a broad gauge railway line from Bombay to Mangalore and thereafter to extend to the state of Kerala.100 For this purpose, the Konkan Railway Corporation Limited, a public limited company, was set up. The length of the line from Bombay to Mangalore along the west coast is 760 kilometres, and out of that 106 kilometres line runs through the state of Goa. The cost of the project was envisaged at Rs.1391 crores in the year 1991-92.101 Later on, the cost of the project increased to 4000 crores.102 The Railway Line will have 136 major bridges and 1670 minor bridges and there will be 71 tunnels with a total length of 75 kilometres. The Konkan Railway is the biggest railway project undertaken in the sub-continent in the present century.103 Thus, the Konkan Railway Project was the India’s most ambitious railway project of the post independence era.104

But in reality the project has caused enormous environmental damage. By ignoring sound technical advice, Konkan Railway jeopardises the fragile Western Ghats environment and the lives of

100 http://envis.msc.ac.in/index.asp?PA=leeisla&S=4#silent
101 Ibid.
103 Supra no.100.
104 Anthony Simoes in Supra no.102, p.50.
many people. The main problem, however, is the destruction of the rich agricultural lands, which the railway will traverse. The fast trains need embankments thirteen metres high, which threaten the entire water systems of the area through which the railway line passes in Goa.

**Incidents of Accidents:**

The Konkan Railway came into force on January 26, 1998. Since its inception, the train service met a series of disasters. On the day of 'dedication ceremony' itself the first train derailed near a tunnel. It delayed the Prime Minister, three Chief Ministers and the other dignitaries by five hours. In the two and half years since January 1998, the KRC has witnessed over 400 rock-falls. These incidents clearly indicate unsound technological methods and failure of engineering service being adopted by KRC.

The project proponents called the project a dream but it has turned out to be a nightmare. They said it would be one of the wonders of the world but it has turned into a big blunder. They called it a national project but what we have is a national disaster. Therefore, the question is we need development, but not this kind of development, which portends disaster.

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105 Ibid. p.50.
107 Anthony Simoes in Supra no.102, p.51.
108 Ibid. p.50.
The Konkan Railway Realignment Action Committee and its protest organisation agitating against the justification related to realignments of the Konkan Railway Project also generated considerable debates.109

**Environmental Movements Spearheaded by Samaja Parivarthana Samudaya (SPS):**

Samaja Parivarthana Samudaya (SPS) is an important NGO of Karnataka, working mainly for the protection of environment. Ever since its inception, SPS has been involved in various environmental protection activities by organizing people's movements. The significant environmental movements in which SPS has been closely associated are; the fight against Tungabhadra water pollution, the movement to protect common lands and the organization of Save Western Ghats March. Therefore, in this context, an attempt has been made to analyse these environmental movements beginning with the fight against the Tungabhadra water pollution.

**The Fight Against the Tungabhadra Water Pollution:**

Before going to examine the major issues of Tungabhadra water pollution, it is worthwhile to understand the term pollution. Pollution is a relative term, we can define it as any contamination of the air, water and land that harms us or our interests.110 John R. Holm defined water pollution as "the addition to water of an excess of material (or heat) that is harmful to humans, animals or desirable aquatic life, or otherwise causes significant departures from the normal

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activities of various living communities in or near bodies of water.\textsuperscript{111} These definitions of pollution clearly indicate the severity of the problem. If the existence of a pollution problem unchecked, the world will have to see a dire future ahead.

Karnataka is gifted with plenty of river water resources. But it is ironic that waters of almost all rivers, viz., the Kaveri, the Kapila, the Krishna, the Tunga, the Bhadra and the Tungabhadra, etc. are polluted primarily by the effluents of various industries located on their banks.\textsuperscript{112} The Tungabhadra is one such major river and a lifeline of Karnataka. The union of Twin Rivers, Tunga and Bhadra, forms the Tungabhadra, which originates in the Western Ghats.\textsuperscript{113} Once the river is known for its clean and sparkling water. Today it is unfortunate that the Tungabhadra River is polluted due to the establishment of major industries on its banks.

In the year 1972, the Birlas opened the Harihar Polyfibres on the bank of the river Tungabhadra at Kumarapattanam in the Ranebennur Taluka of erstwhile district of Dharwad. Since its inception, the factory has been polluting the Tungabhadra River. The Birla-owned Harihar Polyfibre Company, which is one of the largest consumers of eucalyptus grown in Karnataka, has become notorious for the pollution and the resulting havoc it has caused to the surrounding villages as a result of the technology used to process eucalyptus.\textsuperscript{114} This water pollution has affected the lives of over one-lakh villagers in untold

\textsuperscript{112} S.S. Patagundi, People's Perception of Water Pollution of Tungabhadra River in Karnataka, Indian Journal of Politics, Vol.28 (3-4) 1994, p.138.
\textsuperscript{113} S.R. Honnalingalai, in Supra no.3, p.21.
\textsuperscript{114} K.S. Dakshina Murthy, in Supra no.49, p.774.
As a result of this, the worst sufferers of the pollution are fishermen, farmers, shepherds and labourers.

**Effects of the Tungabhadra Water Pollution:**

The villagers are dependent on the Tungabhadra River water for drinking, bathing, irrigation and for their animals. But it was the release of untreated effluents of HPF in the river that has caused adverse effects on the health of the people, animals and aquatic life. Many studies conducted by SPS and other institutes have confirmed these harmful effects of pollution. According to the Second Citizens' Report on the State of India's Environment, almost all the villagers downstream are forced to use the polluted water and complain of frequent headaches and leg and back pains. Dysentery, indigestion and gas are common as are skin irritation and eruptions. The eyes turn yellow. There is also an unknown malady of the intestines which calls for costly surgical treatment and affects everybody regardless of age. Pollution impact on animal health has resulted into several diseases. A village woman complained that her three buffaloes died by drinking Tungabhadra River water. Another villager opined that the buffaloes' capacity of giving milk had been declining due to the drinking of polluted water of the Tungabhadra River. It has been reported that animals have fallen sick, and cows suffered abortion by drinking water of the Tungabhadra River. Bhoomaraddi College of Engineering and Technology, Hubli carried out a pollution study of the River Tungabhadra, a study project during 1983-84. The project report says, “on February 15, 1984 there was a large scale fish kill, lakhs of fishes were laid dead on the banks by gross pollution of water. This was on account of uncontrolled discharge of the effluent from

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116 Supra no.34, p.36.
HPF. Also the dark reddish colour of the waste water has retarded the photosynthetic phenomenon and hence there is no growth of algae. This has affected the self-purification of the river too.\textsuperscript{118} The polluted water of Tungabhadra River has enormously affected agriculture. Effects on agriculture can be seen from reduction in the crop yield. The fertility of the land has deteriorated.\textsuperscript{119} The project concludes that water near the downstream of the discharge of the HPF effluent is being highly polluted. It is very dangerous and detrimental to use this water for any of the human activities.\textsuperscript{120}

Despite these hazardous effects of pollution, the authorities of HPF have taken a different stand on the issue of pollution. Harihar Polyfibres Factory Management claims that it has taken all the necessary action for prevention of pollution of Tungabhadra River. Further, it states that it has effluent treatment plant units and it is spending Rs.80,000 per day for this purpose. S. Krishna Singh, deputy general manager of Harihar Polyfibres said that the factory was the first to establish the effluent treatment plant and had even got the ICMA award for environmental control strategies and safety in chemical plants in 1991.\textsuperscript{121} On the other hand, the affected villagers say that the plant never functions or functions only when the authorities visit the factory for investigation. In a bitter commentary on this process, the common people of Dharwad district have come to refer to the noxious air outside Harihar Polyfibres as ‘Birla Perfume’ to the water of the Tungabhadra River as ‘Birla Teertha’ (holy water of the

\textsuperscript{118} Cited in R.R. Kongovi and Others, \textit{Pollution and its Effects Caused by Industries on Tungabhadra River at Kumarapatnam, Ranibennur Taluka, Dharwad District, Karnataka State}, Samaja Parivarthana Samudaya, Dharwad, 1993, p.34.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid, p.34-35.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid. p.35.
\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Indian Express}, August 8, 1994.
Role of SPS in Facilitating People’s Movement:

Earlier, the villagers, especially the poor, used to believe that only the politicians and ministers can solve this pollution problem. But the industrialists know the art of silencing politicians. It reveals that the polluter-politician-bureaucrat nexus is extremely strong. As a result of this, people lost faith in their own elected representatives. Therefore, the affected people felt that they could do something to solve this grave problem. Consequently, the people of this region reacted strongly against the problem.

It was at this moment that SPS was exposed to the problem of pollution of Tungabhadra River. Earlier the members of SPS were closely associated in a rural development organisation in the same area. The Birlas have established a similar unit of Gwalior Rayon Factory on the bank of the river Chaliyar in Mavoor near Calicut, Kerala. Here also the untreated effluents of the factory severely affected the health and caused a number of problems to the villagers who are residing in the down stream area of this river. “The Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), an environmental NGO with an excellent record of creating science awareness and people-oriented development, studied this case of pollution and brought out the extent of environmental hazards caused to the downstream villages. This

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124 Sadanand Kanwalli, in Supra no.1 15, p.1.

125 Anil Agarwal, When will India be Able to Control Pollution? *Down to Earth*, April 15 2000, p.25.
created a spirited movement against this factory and forced the factory owners to close down their unit. This successful story of KSSP encouraged the people of SPS in organizing the movement effectively. For this purpose, they visited Mavoor and learnt the experience of KSSP in tackling the pollution problem by organizing local people. Therefore, SPS decided to launch a powerful movement against pollution based on the lines of KSSP, Kerala.

The basic approach evolved by SPS included: facilitating formation of Village Environment Committees in all affected villages with priority for women, fisherfolk, shepherds, etc., who are the worst affected ones. It is these environmental committees from various villages, which have formed an apex organisation, called the Tungabhadra Parisara Samiti, which is in the forefront of the movement against pollution and makes all decisions about people’s actions. The Samiti wrote letters to bureaucrats and elected representatives, organised padayatra in the affected villages, conducted environmental camps and had dialogue with the authorities of the industry and the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) officials. Distinguished persons, like Gnanapeeth award winner Shivaram Karanth, Justice D.M. Chandrashekhar, S. Nijalingappa, former Chief Minister, Kuldip Nayyar, a noted Journalist, all supported the movement. Also some scientific studies have been conducted to study the impact of pollution. Village Environment Committees have promptly reported the episodes of fish killings. As a result, SPS encouraged fishermen to file a case against the industry for depriving

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them of their livelihood in the local court of Ranebennur. The agitators adopted various tactics to draw the attention of the government. They entered the premises of the factory and formed human chain. In a dramatic event the women involving both urban and rural, burnt rayon clothes and took an oath that in future they will not wear artificial cloth produced by the industries. They decided to wear cotton clothes instead of rayon clothes. A major Satyagraha in front of the factory on October 2, 1984 awakened the state government because of widespread coverage of the event by news media and made it send a high level delegation of officials, who invited the affected people and voluntary agency representatives to join. In this way, the movement was successful in drawing the attention of the government with regard to the growing menace of pollution.

Despite all these protests, the officials of KSPCB have become silent spectators of the whole issue. They have not initiated any action against the culprit as yet. So, the affected people under the leadership of SPS filed a complaint against the officials of KSPCB before the Lokayukta. Ultimately, this action of agitators ended with the removal of the incompetent Chairman of KSPCB by the Karnataka government. Henceforth, the officials of KSPCB started coming closer to the people and they have shown films of awareness in a famous festival of the region called Mailar Jatra. Besides, the KSPCB also filed a case against HPF in the JMFC Ranebennur for polluting the Tungabhadra River. This is perhaps the first time that a Pollution Control Board anywhere in the country could take a Birla owned industry to court.

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129 Sadanand Kanwalli, in Supra no.115, p.2.
All these collective efforts of SPS and other like-minded groups got partial success. The movement has not been able to exert pressure to the extent of closing down the factory, as it happened in Kerala. Inspite of this, the movement has some remarkable achievements to its credit. It was due to the sincere efforts of SPS and concerned people that the Tungabhadra River is less polluted today than it was before. Certainly this movement has reduced the magnitude of the problem to a considerable level. At present, SPS with the help of local watchdog committees is monitoring the position of the Tungabhadra River water.

Movement to Protect Common Land:

This is another significant movement launched by the SPS in order to protect village common lands. Before going deeper into this controversy, it would be pertinent to examine the historical roots of the problem. Such an examination could help us in understanding the present situation in a better way.

The genesis of this problem dates back to the colonial days. Before the advent of the modern state, grazing lands, forestlands and water bodies were mostly common property, and village communities played an important role in their use and management. The British were, however, the first to nationalise these resources and bring them under the management of government bureaucracies. In other words, the British initiated the policy of converting common property resources into government property resources.\textsuperscript{130} No wonder, after independence the government of India not only continued the colonial

legacy but it has accelerated this process. Thus, both colonial and post-colonial governments have ruthlessly exploited common property resources, depriving the poor, of the sources of their daily needs.

The post-independence period also witnessed a major change in the use of forest produce. From the early sixties the central government provided financial incentives, in the form of central plan funds, to encourage state governments to take up industrial plantations. 'Production' forestry has had as its mainspring the clear felling of existing forest stands and their replacement by fast-growing commercial species. Even where forests were replanted, it was at the cost of natural forests. Huge areas of natural forests were cleared to plant trees like eucalyptus needed by the industry, thereby destroying in the process bio-diversity in the concerned areas and also depriving the local communities of sources of their biomass supply. To compensate the loss of rich forests, the government began to transfer huge areas from Revenue Department to the Forest Department. All this activity takes place in the name of so-called “scientific management” of forests. This policy of the government, instead of bringing people into social forestry, has only alienated them further from grazing lands and wood lots which met their biomass needs. This led to stiff resistance and people's movements.

Why is the government so keen on promoting its brand of social forestry and, in particular eucalyptus? The answer is not very difficult to find. An FAO expert in 1959 said with reference to India “expanding

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131 Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, in Supra no.36, p.187.
133 Ibid. p.38.
economy on the eve of modern industrialisation requires the highest tonnage of production of organic raw material within the shortest possible period, and at the lowest cost". Forest officials responded, and a changed strategy was evolved with greater emphasis on the production of ‘economically attractive resources’ through large-scale plantation of quick-growing, high-yielding tree species, to replace ‘inferior’ slow-growing ones.135 Though there are 600 species of eucalyptus species in the world, the one used exclusively in India is the eucalyptus hybrid plantations of which are ecologically inappropriate for vulnerable dry land ecosystems where water is limiting factor for biological productivity.136 Eucalyptus has been praised by foresters as the panacea for all ills and bitterly attacked by environmentalists as being totally unsuited to Indian conditions. Its critics invoke social as well as environmental arguments.137 Finally, it has been observed that eucalyptus, as it involves little supervision and is not browsed by animals, is an attractive option for absentee landlords, especially the urban gentry.138 In this way the introduction of eucalyptus under the banner of social forestry has led to a serious controversy.

Despite these disastrous consequences of this monoculture, the question arises why the government is firm in its stand on growing eucalyptus? Because the government has yielded to the pressure of industrialists, its hands are tied by the contracts it has entered into for supply of eucalyptus.139 In this respect Karnataka is one state, which has taken all the necessary steps to introduce eucalyptus in the midst

135 K.S. Dakshina Murthy, in Supra no.49, p.774.
136 Ibid. p.774.
137 Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha in Supra no.36, p.190.
138 Ibid. pp.190-191.
139 K.S. Dakshina Murthy in Supra no.49, p.774.
of vehement opposition to it. The powerful eucalyptus lobby in the government has managed to stonewall any objections so far and large tracts of land in other states continue to be inundated with eucalyptus. “Could eucalyptus, which has been planted on a mass scale in Karnataka, have any relation to the unprecedented famine in the state, is what ecologists are asking”.140 Thus, the obsession of the Karnataka Forest Department with eucalyptus monoculture, especially under the social forestry programme, has attracted much criticism.141 This historical account of encroachment of common property resources and blind drive of ‘eucalyptisation’ of common lands in Karnataka, as elsewhere in India, illustrates how it was the marginalised people who faced hardships due to unscientific policy of the government.

With this background, it is noteworthy to mention the Karnataka Government’s policy of planting eucalyptus in the village common lands. In the year 1984, the government of Karnataka entered into an agreement with Harihar Polyfibres, a unit of Grasim industry owned by the powerful Birla family. By this agreement a new company, called the Karnataka Pulpwoods Limited (KPL), in which the government had a holding of 51 percent and Harihar Polyfibres held 49 percent was formed.142 The sole intention of KPL is to grow eucalyptus and other fast-growing species of trees for the captive consumption of Harihar Polyfibres Factory (HPF). For this purpose, the state had identified 30,000 hectares of common land, spread over four districts in the northern part of Karnataka.143 The land was granted by the state to

141 S.R. Ramaswamy, in Supra no.52, p. 130.
142 Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez-Alier, in Supra no. 122, p.6.
143 Ibid. p.6.
KPL on a long lease of 40 years, and for a ridiculously low annual rent of one rupee per acres. As much as 87.5 percent of the produce was to go directly to Harihar Polyfibres; the private sector company also had the option of buying the remaining 12.5 percent.\textsuperscript{144} The government of Karnataka was even willing to stand guarantee for the loans that were to finance KPL's operation; loans to be obtained from several nationalised banks, one of which was, ironically, the National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development.\textsuperscript{145} By looking into the terms and conditions of the agreement, one must come to know that this is a wonderful agreement, which puts Birlas into an extremely advantageous position. As a result of this agreement, village people, especially the poor, who depend on common lands, have to face acute shortage of their basic needs. These common lands have been the major source of the basic needs of over 5,00,000 villagers, most of whom are poor. With one stroke, this act of the Government of Karnataka is depriving most of this vast section of the people of their only available village common land, as in Kusnur cluster of villages.\textsuperscript{146} Since the vast area is planted with eucalyptus saplings, the poorest villagers have been the hardest hit. Nothing else grows where eucalyptus is planted; no grass, no undergrowth, no flowers; no animal will touch its bark or leaves. No birds sing, for no bird will nest there. Eucalyptus trees are useful only to satisfy the enormous appetite of the Harihar Polyfibres Plant at Harihar about 90 kilometres away.\textsuperscript{147} Thus, the Karnataka Pulpwood Company (KPL) has become a brutal

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid. p.6.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid. p.6.
engine of exploitation, allowing nobody to stand in its way. Consequently, it is this act of the Government, which has led to the outbreak of the movement at all levels.

One of the first to raise the voice of protest was Dr. Shivaram Karanth, doyen of Kannada Literature and Jnapith Laureate. This was soon followed by other public-spirited citizens and voluntary organisations. Dr. Karanth also wrote an article entitled 'The Total Destruction of Forests' which was published in two leading Kannada Dailies 'Prajawani' and 'Kannada Prabha' towards the end of December 1984, in which "he warned the public of Karnataka about the growing friendship between the Government of Karnataka and the Birla Industry: Harihar Polyfibres, a highly polluting industry. He called upon the people of Karnataka to totally oppose 'this friendship between the Birlas and the government' and the resulting Joint-sector company.

The writings of Dr. Karanth were well received by the people within and even outside Karnataka. As a result, eminent people came forward to oppose the unholy alliance between the government and KPL. Well-known persons, like D.M. Chandrasekhar, former Chief Justice of Karnataka, the late Kadidal Manjappa, former Chief Minister of Karnataka, justice V.M. Tarkunde, Journalists, like Kuldip Nayyar, Ajit Bhattacharjea, Khadri Shamanna and Nagesh Hegde lent their active support to the popular movement against the expropriation of the right to livelihood of the poor. K.M. Munshi the scholar-statesman

148 Ibid. p.18.
149 S.R. Ramaswamy in Supra no.52, p.131.
150 Sadanand Kanwalli in Supra no.115, p.3.
151 Ajit Bhattacharjea in Supra no.147, p.19.
152 Ramachandra Guha and Jaun Martinez-Alier in Supra no.122, pp.7-8.
long ago said, "the politician has the knack of getting money from the rich and votes from the poor on the pretext of protecting the one from the other".\textsuperscript{153} This statement seems to be true particularly in this KPL Controversy.

In the forefront of the movement against KPL was the SPS. As we are already aware of its inspiring role in the movement against the Tungabhadra Water Pollution caused by HPF. The SPS had, in fact, cut its teeth in a previous campaign against Harihar Polyfibres.\textsuperscript{154} The basic approach on the issue of common lands has been the same as in the case of the movement against pollution.\textsuperscript{155} Therefore, as in the earlier struggle, SPS has formed local people's organisation like Tungabhadra Parisara Samiti (TPS). In the same way in this struggle also SPS was instrumental in organising Hill Area Development Committee in the affected villages. Along with these organisations, Vruksha Samrakhisri Vedike (Save Trees Forum), Shimoga, and Karnataka Rajya Raita Sangha have also extended their active support.

In addition to this local assistance, SPS was also able to get the support of state and national level organisations, as SPS was closely associated with the activities of FEVORD-K (Federation of Voluntary Organisations for Rural Development – Karnataka). In fact, SPS was the guiding spirit in organising the FEVORD-K. Scientists of the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (IIS), Bangalore and the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), New

\textsuperscript{153} Sadanand Kanwalli in Supra no.115, p.4.
\textsuperscript{154} Ramachandra Guha and Jaun Martinez-Alter in Supra no.122, p.8.
\textsuperscript{155} S.R. Hiremath in Supra no.123, p.392.
Delhi for influencing the Central Government,156 have all contributed for the success of the movement. The representatives of these NGOs submitted memorandums, tendered reminders and personally met the then Chief Minister Ramkrishna Hegde. In spite of these pressures of the concerned people, the Hegde government did not respond on the whole issue. As a result, members of these organisations went to the people in the four KPL-affected districts, they have informed the people about the growing government-HPF nexus and awakened their awareness.

A delegation comprising eminent persons, like Kadidal Manjappa, D.M. Chandrasekhar and Dr. Shivaram Karanth met Ramkrishna Hegde on 12 August 1985. But the Chief Minister ended the meeting only with the patient hearing and no fruitful result came out of this. Despite popular protests and reasons presented by economist, social workers and scientists the state government was not convinced that its policy was wrong.157 However, KPL operations continued without any hurdles. Ramakrishna Hegde went all out to oblige the Birlas. Veerendra Patil too favoured them in several ways. Any future incumbent may not be an exception. Whoever be the Chief Minister and whichever the party be in power, it is the industry lobby that controls the levers of power.158 This indicates that the successive state governments, instead of taking stringent actions, supported the industrialists. Consequently, the aggrieved people supported by SPS


158 Sadanand Kanwalli in Supra no.15, p.5.
and Dr. Shivaram Karanth deemed it necessary to move towards law courts for justice.

The first suit was filed in the High Court by a group of farmers and a youth organisation in Sagar Taluka of Shimoga District. Justice Bopanna issued a stay order instructing the Deputy Commissioner of Shimoga to see that common lands were not given to the KPL. In December 1986, SPS along with the Centre for Science and Environment and Dr. Shivaram Karanth as the first petitioner filed a major public interest litigation in the Supreme Court, mainly on the ground of the violation of fundamental rights, especially Article 14 and Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. The petitioners also contended that the planting of monocultures of eucalyptus as envisaged by KPL, would have a 'disastrous effect' on the ecological balance of the region. On 24 March 1987, the Supreme Court responded to the petition by issuing a stay order, thus preventing the government of Karnataka from transferring any more land to KPL. Inspite of this, KPL operations continued.

The people's movement took a vital turn leading to an innovative Satyagraha called "Kittiko-Hattiko (Pluck and Plant)" on November 14, 1987, the third anniversary of the formation of KPL. About 2,000 people converged at Kusnur. Men, women and children took an oath of non-violence in a schoolyard, and then proceeded for a novel protest. Led by drummers, waving banners and shouting slogans, the protesters moved onto the disputed area. Here they first uprooted 100

159 Ibid. p.7.
160 S.R. Hiremath in Supra no. 123, p.393.
161 Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez-Alier, in Supra no. 122, p.9.
162 Ibid. p.9.
163 S.R. Hiremath in Supra no.123, p.393.
saplings of eucalyptus before planting in their place tree species useful locally for fruit and for fodder. Before dispersing, the villagers pledged to water and tend the saplings they planted. This and subsequent events, including a major Satyagraha on August 8, 1988 (Quit India Day), made Kusnur a well-known name. It was due to intense struggles and mounting public pressure that the government of Karnataka was forced to appoint a one-man commission comprising the noted ecologist Madhav Gadgil to look into the matter. But the government has purposely delayed the appointment of Gadgil commission because of the critical attitude of the ecologist towards industrialists. This resulted in another 'pluck and plant' Satyagraha. Protests continued, SPS kept the issue alive and filed a contempt of court case in the Supreme Court in October 1988. In this context, it is necessary to mention the Supreme Court’s recent judgement with regard to acquisition of lands for industrial purpose. The apex court held that whenever any land is acquired for industrial development, the adverse impact on environment must be properly assessed. Development of the acquired land should not gravely impair ecology. A Bench consisting of Justices Ruma Pal and Dalveer Bhandari said, "While development of industry is essential for the growth of economy, at the same time, the environment and the ecosystem are required to be protected."

On the other hand, the SPS requested the officials of the banks not to release loans to KPL, as the case is pending in the Supreme

164 Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez-Alier, in Supra no.122, p.9.
165 Ajit Bhattacharjea in Supra no.147, p.19.
166 S.R. Hiremath in Supra no.123, p.393.
167 The Hindu, May 19, 2006.
Court. Also it effectively convinced Kamal Nath the then Union Minister of Environment and Forest about the disastrous effects of KPL activities. All these untiring efforts of SPS and the concerned people brought significant success to the people's movement. In February 1988, an official of the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, making a deposition in the Supreme Court, stated unambiguously that the raising of industrial plantations by joint-sector companies required the prior permission of the government of India. Later, the same year, a new National Forest Policy was announced, which explicitly prohibited monocultural plantations on grounds of ecological stability. In June 1989, the Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forests wrote to the government of Karnataka expressing his displeasure about the KPL Project.168

The Mandal Panchayats of KPL affected villages passed unanimous resolutions asking the government to cancel the agreement. Correspondingly, the Zilla Parishad of Dharwad also passed a resolution against KPL. This was followed by a letter to the Chief Minister, signed by 54 members of the state legislature and sent on 11 July 1990, asking him to close down KPL so as 'to reserve the village common land for the common use of villagers'. With public opinion and the central government arrayed against it, and possibly anticipating an adverse final judgement in the Supreme Court, the government of Karnataka decided to wind up KPL. The company's closure was formally announced at a board meeting on 27 September 1990, but by then KPL had already ceased operations.169

168 Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez Alier, in Supra no.122, p.11.
169 Ibid, p.11.
Considering the spirited movement by the villagers, environmentalists and the active support of NGOs in protecting the village common lands from the clutches of industrial giants, Maneka Gandhi, Former Minister of State for Environment and an active environmentalist, while reviewing the field of environment for the decade of 1980, listed Kittiko-Hattiko Satyagraha as one of the ten major events of the decade.\textsuperscript{170} This movement was specially referred in the 1989 annual report of the USA based World Watch Institute.\textsuperscript{171} Thus, Kusnur movement can be described as one of the unique story of environmental struggles.

**Save the Western Ghats March:**

In addition to such movements as discussed above, the SPS has also played a major role in organising "Save Western Ghats March". The Western Ghats is a region, recognised as one of the world’s important tropical forests biodiversity hot spots. It is a region of high rainfall, with rainfall levels reaching 5000-8000 mm per year making the region an area of crucial importance as a sub-continental watershed. As a consequence, all the major rivers of Peninsular India originate in this region.\textsuperscript{172} Today, unfortunately, these vital ecosystems have been facing constant threats due to wanton environmental degradation. The biggest ecological damage inflicted upon the Western Ghats is deforestation. Tragically for the country and the region, most of the forest cover in the Western Ghats has disappeared.\textsuperscript{173} The hill areas of the Western Ghats have paid a heavy price for the planned

\textsuperscript{170} Cited in Sadanand Kanwalli, in Supra no.115, p.16.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid. p.16.
\textsuperscript{172} http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/subglobal.ghats.aspx.
development. Its forest wealth is depleted, its reservoirs are silting up, its horticulture is plagued by outbreaks of new diseases, polluting the environment and bringing little benefits to the local population. The fragile ecosystems of the Ghats have tended to collapse under the assaults of exploitative development of the last few decades.\textsuperscript{174} If this trend is unchecked, the already threatened Western Ghats will have to face further deterioration, and its consequences will be beyond the stretch of any imagination. As M.V. Kamath puts it beautifully, the Western Ghats carries an unspoken message. The message says: 'Save me!'\textsuperscript{175} ‘Save the Western Ghats’ is an anguished cry that is being heard throughout the southern peninsula, for several decades. There are sporadic voices of protest from environmentalists and conservationists against the shortsighted developmental activities in this ecologically very fragile region. There have been gatherings and awareness marches in the past.\textsuperscript{176} The most notable padayatra of this ilk was the ‘Save the Western Ghats March’ of 1987-88. Following seven months of preparation involving over 150 voluntary organisations (from the states – Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra), the march commenced on 1 November 1987 simultaneously from the two extremities of this 1600-kilometer long mountain chain- Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu and Navapur in the Dhulia district of Maharashtra. Three months later, marchers from north and south converged at Ponda in Goa for the meeting that marked the march’s conclusion.\textsuperscript{177} It was SPS that took a leading role in organising this unique ecological march. SPS was entrusted with
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid. p.5.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid. p.5.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid. p.6.
\textsuperscript{177} Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, in Supra no.32, p.101.
the responsibility of co-ordinating the march in Karnataka. With the active participation and co-operation of FEVORD-K organizations, the SPS was successful in involving environmentalists and village poor mass in this march.

Nearly 160 NGOs from five states contributed to organise the padayatras to save the Western Ghats in 1987. In the history of ecological movements, perhaps this is one of its kinds where 160 NGOs took active part not only in the subcontinent but also all over the world.178 This march helped to have a first hand information regarding environmental degradation and its effects on communities living in the Ghats. It was also successful in creating an awareness regarding people's participation in the management of natural resources.

This unique ecological march subsequently inspired environmentalists and NGOs to undertake numerous padayatras across the country. In the winter following the Western Ghats campaign, a 'Save the Nilgiri's March' was organised. Again, a 'Save the Sivaliks March' was undertaken across 200 kilometre of the Sivalik range in Jammu and Kashmir following the Western Ghats of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa.179 In the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Haryana environmentalist have organised 'Aravalli Chetan yatra in late 1993'.180 This padayatra drew the attention of the public to the damage caused by illegal mining.

Finally, it is important to mention the Kanayakumari March organised in the year 1989. The theme of this March was “Save Water,
Save Life. Again SPS shouldered the responsibility of co-ordinating the march in Karnataka. Local organisations like Tungabhadra Parisara Samiti, Uttar Kannada Samrakshna Samiti, and Hill Area Development Committee have all supported SPS and actively joined in this march.

**Environmental Struggles in Dakshina Kannada District:**

The Dakshina Kannada district in Karnataka is considered as one of 34 ecologically sensitive areas in the world. But the Karnataka government has, all along, transformed it into an 'industrial zone'. More than 30 big industries, like Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL), Cogentrix, Mangalore Chemical Industries and other industries coming up – some of which helped Deve Gowda when he was the Chief minister of Karnataka and also when he was the Prime Minister of the country.\(^{181}\) Well connected by rail, water and air, Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka is an investor's heaven. But the district – which is blessed with the Arabian Sea, the Verdant Western Ghats and where rivers, streams and estuaries abound – is also plagued with a host of controversial ‘development’ projects.\(^{182}\) From this, it appears that the tentacles of industrialisation entered into every nook and corner of the district, causing severe ecological degradation, and greatly ruined the lives of the people. As a result, environmental issues started taking firm roots in Dakshina Kannada in 1991. Since then, issues pertaining to environmental degradation because of the industrial growth have been a major bone of contention in the district.\(^{183}\) At the beginning, people

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\(^{181}\) Pravin Sheth, in Supra no.10, p.231.
\(^{182}\) Down to Earth, October 15, 2000, p.33.
of the district were under the impression that the environmental groups were anti development and hence they were creating unnecessary hindrance to development projects. This new “human dimension” to the environmental movement in the district led to confusion in the past few years. The divide of preferences between the environment and employment was clearly visible in terms of issues related to Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited. A group argued against the closure of KIOCL operations in Mangalore after mining was discontinued in 2005 at Kudremukh.\textsuperscript{184} However, the environmental groups have been trying hard to convince the people about the adverse effects of development projects. The Dakshina Kannada Parisarakta Okkoota of Guruvainakere in Belthangady taluk has been in the forefront of environmental struggles in the district. The Save Western Ghats Movement of 1989, agitations against petrochemicals complex, petroleum pipeline project, thermal power project and barge-mounted power project and the movement against violation of coastal regulation zone and pollution of the sea are prominent.\textsuperscript{185} In view of these considerations, an attempt has been made to analyse some of the major environmental movements of the district.

**Movement Against Mining in Kudremukh:**

Karnataka is endowed with fairly rich mineral wealth distributed more or less evenly over its territory. It has one of the oldest Geological Survey Department in the country.\textsuperscript{186} However, recently the state has been witnessing upheavals due to large-scale mining operations. On

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{186} S.R. Honnalingaih (ed.) in Supra no.3, p.18.
the one side, the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL) shut down its mining operations in the Aroli-Gangamool ranges of the Kudremukh hills on December 31st of 2005, in accordance with the October 2002 ruling of the Supreme Court aimed at preserving the ecological integrity of the biodiversity rich Kudremukh range. On the other side, the mining activities at Bellary district have created a lot of uproar in the state politics. Thus the mining issue in the state not only disturbed the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats but also caused political instability. Despite the winding up of KIOCL mining activities, still the region has been facing multi dimensional environmental problems. In its nearly 35 years of mining the KIOCL has committed enormous ‘ecological blunders’. As a result of this, there have been sporadic protests led by a number of NGOs, environmentalists and intellectuals to restore the ecological balance of the region. Therefore, it is pertinent to understand NGO led environmental movements centred around KIOCL’s mining operations.

Kudremukh in the Aroli Gangamoola range of Western Ghat in Karnataka is known for its wild beauties. The highest peak of this mountain range resembles the face of a horse. Kudre in Kannada means horse. So it carries the name Kudremukh. Located about 110 kilometres east of Mangalore, Kudremukh is part of the ecologically fragile and biodiversity rich Western Ghats chain of peninsular India, a region which has been identified as one of the 18 ‘hot spots’ of global biodiversity and is part of the Global 200 regions identified by the World Wide Fund for nature (WWF) for concentrated

Kudremukh, which has one of the largest stretches of low, mid-and high elevation evergreen forests, is a unique mosaic of Shola forests and grasslands. Kudremukh also supports the largest concentration of breeding lion-tailed macaques, a highly endangered primate that is endemic to the Western Ghats. The forests of Kudremukh are also home to 42 species of mammals, 169 species birds, 34 species amphibians, 54 species of reptiles and a large variety of flora, including orchids and pansies. Kudremukh receives an average annual rainfall of 7,000 mm. The wet climate and the tremendous water retentive capacity of the Shoal grasslands and forests has led to the formation of three major rivers of the region-Tunga-Bhadra and Nethravathi – that form an important lifeline for the people of Karnataka. However, the iron ore mining by KIOCL has entirely changed the landscape of the region. Iron ore deposits were first discovered in the hill ranges of Kudremukh by the renowned geologist of the erstwhile state of Mysore, P. Sampath Iyengar, in 1913. Kudremukh deposits are known to be one of the largest deposits in the world. On one deposit alone where the mining is carried out at present, reserves of 630 million tonnes of weathered ore and 450 million tonnes of primary ore have been found. Besides, there are other deposits in the vicinity, namely Nellibeedu, Gangkrikal, Bababudan, etc., with probable reserve of 3000 million tonnes.

KIOCL was the country's largest exporter of iron ore and pellets with shipments of 7 lakh tonnes of ore and 3.80 million tonnes of
pellets worth around Rs.1850 crore, mostly to China in 2004-2005. The KIOCL, set up in 1976, inherited a 30-year-lease for mining in an area of 4,604.55 hectares (or 46 square kilometres), originally granted to the National Mineral Development Corporation in 1969. The NMDC had entered into a joint venture with the American Marcona group and the Japanese Mon group, which fell through because of procedural delays. That lease expired on July 24, 1999. When the lease came up for renewal, Environmental Support Group, Kalpavriksh - Environment Action Group and Various groups and individuals from India and abroad pressurised the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) not to extend the lease, instead of urging the ministry to ban mining in Kudremukh. This pressure met with some success, for MoEF provided a year's temporary extension, as opposed to a two-year extension recommended by the Karnataka Government. In this way, the Kudremukh mining issue drew the attention of numerous NGOs and the struggle continue at all levels.

Praveen Bhargav of Wildlife First, which set the rolling ball as far as the closure issue is concerned, with its public interest petition in the Supreme Court in 2001. The petition highlighted the irreparable damage caused to river systems by the mining. The comptroller and Auditor General of India's report for the period ending March 31, 2003, also recorded that the KIOCC had been operating illegally outside the assigned Temporary Working Permission Area of 1,452 hectares and estimated the environmental damage to the tune of Rs.19.33 crores, a

194 Ravi Sharma, in Supra no. 187, p.34.
196 Ravi Sharma, in Supra no. 187, p.35.
sum that was yet to be recovered. What followed was a long drawn court battle that ended in the Supreme Court Judgement on October 30, 2002 where a three-judge bench comprising chief Justice B.N. Kirpal, Justice Y.K. Sabharwal and Justice Arijit Pasayat forbade mining after 2005. The apex court referred to the Article 21 of the constitution that calls upon protection of environment based on sustainability and the precautionary principle. The KIOCL, however, still hopes for a minor miracle, either from the court or from the Union government. The company is optimistic that the court will grant its request for permission to extract primary ore for another 20 years in an additional area of 374 hectare. The plea has the backing of the Karnataka government, which has cited the naxalite problem as a reason why mining should not be stopped. It has the backing too, of the Monitoring Committee appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Several scientific studies have been conducted from time to time to analyse the environmental effects arising out of KIOCL mining activities. Therefore, in this context it is necessary to make an environmental impact assessment of mining operations in the light of scientific studies. When the decision to site the mine of Kudremukh was taken in the early 1970s, the effects and consequences of environmental degradation, habitat fragmentation and biodiversity loss were poorly understood. But today, laws like the Wild life Protection Act, 1972, the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, and the Environment  

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197 Ibid. p.35.
199 Ravi Sharma, in Supra no.187, p.33.
200 Ibid. p.32.
Protection Act, 1986, prevent mining in ecologically sensitive areas. Also, the body of knowledge that is available today makes clear the adverse impact of continuing mining in eco-sensitive areas like the Western Ghats.\textsuperscript{201} However, it is difficult to make an accurate statement about the environmental impacts of over 25 years of mining by KIOCL on the Kudremukh forests, the Bhadra River, the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary and the agricultural productivity and health of the people downstream. This is because both KIOCL and the regulatory agencies have been extremely secretive with regard to their environmental information.\textsuperscript{202} The Karnataka State Forest Department (KFD) has been equally lax in monitoring the impact of mining on the forests. For very long the blasting operations continued throughout the day, disturbing and scaring away wild life. It was only after the locals protested that blasting was relegated to day hours.\textsuperscript{203} Therefore, in the absence of effective regulation, KIOCL has continued its mining operations unabated.

The process of scientific studies has been continued by a number of institutions. These were made by the Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISC and the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI).\textsuperscript{204} A team of experts from the Centre for Ecological Sciences of the Indian Institute of Sciences (IISC), Bangalore made a study of the “Impact of Iron Ore Mining on the Flora and Fauna of Kudremukh region”. The report, which was submitted in January 2001, says, “open-cast mining by its very nature is a very destructive activity that

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\textsuperscript{201} Ibid, p.34.
\textsuperscript{202} Supra no.195
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{204} Jayalakshmi, K. in Supra no 198.
\end{flushleft}
causes virtually irreparable damage". Scientific studies carried out by Karnataka Government's irrigation department and Pollution Control Boards during 1983-87, as well as studies by independent research institutions such as Mangalore University, Edinburgh University and Centre for Wildlife Studies, talk of 'massive damage to Bhadra river and reservoir from mining activities. All these scientific studies question the feasibility of mining in this eco sensitive region.

On the other hand, the KIOCL justifies its mining operations by giving a list of measures they have under taken. According to them, the company has constructed two rock-fill check-dams and a series of check-bunds in the small valleys to prevent the wash-off from mine faces and mine roads from reaching the Bhadra River during the monsoon. It has also built a 100-metre dam across the Lakya, a tributary of the Bhadra, into which the waste tailings in the form of slurry are discharged. It has also planted 75 lakh trees as part of an afforestation programme. Apart from the above, the company has contributed Rs.500 lakh to the Karnataka Forest Department for the development of Kudremukh National Park. It has bagged many awards for its efforts in maintaining and improving ecological balance in and around its mine lease area. There can be no denying that the company has taken some steps to make the mines eco-friendly compared to some other companies. But whether this alone is enough, is the question.

205 www.hinduonnet.com/line/7/1818/18/80640.htm.
206 Jayalakshmi, K. in Supra 198.
207 Supra no. 205.
208 Supra no.188.
209 Jayalakshmi K. in Supra no. 198.
The KIOCL is accused of violating environmental norms, causing cultural displacement and disrupting social life. All these translated into the environmental movement in the Kudremukh region. Even though the movement is almost 10 years old, it has sharpened in recent years. Opposition to KIOCL activities has built up over the years – from environmentalists and wildlife conservationists who are concerned about the threat to the region's flora and fauna, and farmers who are affected by the pollution of the streams that originate in the mining area. The campaign for a ban on mining gained strength with the support of conservation scientists such as Ullas Karanth and literary personalities such as U.R. Anantha-Murthy and K.P. Poornachandra Tejasvi.

The next phase of the campaign centred on a powerful documentary "mindless mining", made by film maker Shekar Dattatri, that drew attention to this critical issue. Several prominent public personalities, like the religious seers of Pejawar, Sringeri, Dharmastala, Adi Chunchungiri, Siddaganga and Sringeri Maths and social worker; H. Sudershan played a key role in persuading the Government of Karnataka to stop the mining.

Another important issue that necessitated the environmental movement was a government order declaring the Kudremukh region as a national park by clubbing together five important reserved forests. It all began in 1983-84, when wild life biologist Ullas Karanth of Wildlife Conservation Society undertook a scientific survey of the distribution of the highly endangered lion-tailed macaque in

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210 Muzaffar Assadi, in Supra no.94, p.4899.
211 Supra no.205.
212 Praveen Bhargav and Niren Jain, in Supra no.190.
213 Muzaffar Assadi in Supra no. 94. p.4899.
Karnataka. Based on his report, the Government notified Kudremukh National Park.214 This action of the government also created a number of problems. Particularly tribals living in the forest will have to face forcible eviction. Tribals have a symbiotic relation with nature. Their culture, identity and lifestyles are identified with the forest. However, they have been the victims of the state through the operation of the state machinery.215 The state is now attempting to evict more than 20,000 tribals living inside the forest to the periphery, ostensibly in the name of the national park. This has consequences on tribal life; tribals have to struggle for new identities; their cultural practices will undergo changes leading to cultural loss, and they would perpetually remain as victims of the state both inside the forest and outside it.216 Kudremukh mining issue also involves the future survival of KIOCL employees who will be rendered jobless due to closure of mining activities. The KIOCL currently has around 1950 employees on its rolls (of whom 1,258 are stationed in the mines at Kudremukh).217 They have been agitating for proper rehabilitation. In this respect appeals have been sent to the Prime Minister. They have also submitted a memorandum to the state Chief Minister, stating that their demands should be fulfilled. But it is the moral responsibility of the KIOCL to offer at least Rs.5 Lakh each to daily-wage workers whose services it has used.218

According to the President of the Tungabhadra Ulisi Horata Vedike (Save Tungabhadra Action Committee) KaliKali Vitthal Hegde,
"the role of environmentalists does not seem to be over with the termination of mining". Hence, an "action committee" has been formed for preparing a plan for the protection of the Western Ghats.219 This reveals commitment of the NGO in its chosen path.

The Cogentrix Controversy:

The controversy with the Cogentrix provides a fruitful case to understand the debate over the environment versus development issues on one side, and the complex interaction between the people/environmental NGOs, Indian government and a multi-national corporation.220 Cogentrix's India project, Mangalore Power Company (MPC) – the company still exists – is a US $1.3 billion joint venture with China Light and Power Company of Hongkong.221 It was selected as one of 8 "fast track" projects by the Indian government, by facilitating speedy clearances in demonstrating its commitment to the liberalisation agenda. Human rights, environmental protection sound economics and transparency in decision making were compromised in the process.222

The 1000-MW coal-fired power plant is to be located at Nandikur-Padubidri near Mangalore. The state government signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the power project in 1992.223 In July 1995, the State Pollution Control Board gave 'no objection certificate' to the company and the MoEF has laid down 26 stringent conditions.224 Some of the important environmental safety measures put forth by the MoEF are as follows:

219 Ibid. p.16.
220 Pravin Sheth, in Supra no. 10, p.228.
221 Supra no. 182, October 15, 2000, p.33.
222 Supra no.84.
223 Supra no. 182, p.33.
224 Pravin Sheth, in Supra no.10, p.229.
❖ The company should ensure all discharges from the plant like gaseous emissions, fly ash or liquid emissions are fully treated before released.

❖ The fly ash and coal storage area must be suitably lined so that leaking into the ground water can be avoided.

❖ Significantly, the nearby Mulki river is guarded against the environmental hazards of this project.\(^{225}\)

Thus, getting environmental clearance from the MoEF is an important issue in the Cogentrix, as the project site is located in the Western-Ghats which is regarded as one of the World's 18 biodiversity region. If the company fails to follow the environmental conditions as stated above, the biodiversity of the region would suffer an irreparable damage. In this respect, the environmentalists, along with local people, have expressed their deep concern about the likely dangers of the project. In 1995, the former Karnataka's Environment Secretary Yellappa Reddy felt strongly about the project and even went in public to record his protest against this aspect of the project. As Chairman of the Environment Clearance Committee (ECC) of the State Government, Reddy warned in his report that “effluents of the Cogentrix plant will certainly lead to concentrated acid rain in the Dakshina Kannada area”.\(^{226}\) Environment Support Group (ESG) worked with the local project affected community to claim their rights and expose the serious ills in the project.\(^{227}\) ESG conducted a workshop on the “The Truth about the Cogentrix Deal” during 1997 in collaboration with the

\(^{225}\) Ibid, p.229.
\(^{226}\) Ibid, p.230.
\(^{227}\) Supra no.84.
National Alliance of people's Movement and Janajagriti Samithi. This was attended by leading media representatives and public interest advocates. In addition to this workshop, the ESG has also conducted a number of environmental awareness programmes and training campaigns from time to time. The ESG also filed petitions against Cogentrix on grounds of violations of environmental, social justice and planning norms. Consequently, the High Court of Karnataka called for a review of the project by Ministry of Environment. A combination of all these efforts resulted in Cogentrix and CLP announcing its withdrawal from the project on December 9th, 1999.

The Struggle against Mangalore Refineries and Petrochemical Limited (MRPL):

The controversy is over the proposal to lay a 364 kilometre underground pipeline between Mangalore and Bangalore to transport petroleum products at the cost of Rs.800 crore. The pipeline will pass through 243 villages in 17 talukas across seven districts – through the mountains of the Western Ghats and prime agricultural land. As a result of this project, the local agriculturalists and farm labourers have lost their prime agricultural land. Dakshina Kannada Zilla Parisarakta Okkoota (DKZPO) has demanded that the current route earmarked for the pipeline be changed because it passes through prime agricultural land and forests. It has also demanded a detailed consultation with the village panchayats, zilla panchayats and affected people.

228 Supra no. 84.
229 Ibid.
230 Ibid.
231 Supra no.182, p.34.
232 Ibid. p.34.
Tribals Agitation in Nagarhole National Park, the Southern Part of Karnataka:

Biological Diversity is a priceless heritage bestowed by mother earth on all its inhabitants. This wealth comprises millions of species, plants, animals and microorganisms. As such, India is one of the 12 mega-biodiversity countries of the world. From about 70 percent of the total geographical area surveyed so far, 46,000 plant species and 81,000 animal species representing about 7 percent of the world’s flora and 6.5 percent of the world’s fauna, respectively, have been described. This diversity has greater importance to the country and the world at large. Today this diversity is facing an unprecedented threat to its survival. Some 10 percent of all plant species and over 21 percent of the 372 mammal species are endangered. India has, therefore, sought to protect its flora and fauna through a wide network of 75 Protected National Parks and 421 sanctuaries covering over 14 million hectares or 4.5 percent of its geographical area. There can be no denying that the government has recognised the importance of preserving the biodiversity by converting some of the forest land into National Parks and wild life sanctuaries. But in the process, the government has neglected the interests of the tribal community. Large areas of forestland are being handed over to mining companies for industries and other projects. Over 100 MoUs have been signed by various State Governments and approved by the centre to grant leases to companies on forestland. From January 2001 to April 2006, as much as 5.73 lakh hectares of such land was converted for non-forest

235 M.V. Nadkarni, in Supra no.132, p.76.
purposes by the government, according to a report of the Expert Committee constituted by the Supreme Court. Therefore, to deprive the tribals of an insignificant portion of hardly one percent of forestland in the name of conservation is clearly unjust.\textsuperscript{236} Historically, the tribals have harmoniously co-existed with the forest. The tribals, who have lived on such land for generations, are suddenly informed one day that it has been notified as a park or a sanctuary. They are then harassed, refused recognition of rights, denied access even to minor forest produce, and often forcefully evicted.\textsuperscript{237} Thus, the tribals have been facing forcible eviction and they have become the victims of government's unjust policy. As a result of this, in recent years tribals have launched an agitation. The recent Supreme Court verdict to vacate the lands occupied by the tribals in the forest region has further sharpened the struggles between the Indian states and the tribals.\textsuperscript{238}

The NGOs who work with the tribals emphasise the rights of the local people, especially the tribals, living in the forests. They also point out that India is a signatory to the UN Declaration on Forced Evictions since 1991, and is duty-bound to honour that commitment. According to the declaration, "Forced evictions constitute a gross violation of Human Rights".\textsuperscript{239} Further, the NGOs have the fear with regard to the government's implementation of rehabilitation package to the displaced tribals. Because the government's track record in providing rehabilitation is not up to the satisfaction of displaced people. Most of the government programs meant for tribal development do not reach

\textsuperscript{236} Brinda Karat, Why Delay the Tribal Rights Bill? \textit{The Hindu}, August 22, 2006, p.9.  
\textsuperscript{237} Ibid. p.9.  
\textsuperscript{239} M.V. Nadkarni, in Supra no. 132, p.78.
the tribal people because the benefits are usurped by the middlemen who are non-tribal, government officials or private persons.240

All these issues and problems are raised in the core of the Nagarhole National Park, which is located in the Coorg and Mysore districts. This part of the state is also known for its thick forest and rich biodiversity. This is a World Bank Project aiming at converting the Nagarhole areas into a National Park or Protected Areas (PA).241 Initially only 284 square kilometres was notified in 1955 as a Sanctuary. A subsequent notification in 1975 extended the area to 572 square kilometres under The Wild Life Preservation Act of 1972. A future notification in 1998 extended the Park area to 643 square kilometres, which stands till today. It was also renamed in 1992 officially as the Rajiv Gandhi National Park.242 However, the declaration of forestland into National Park has negative impacts on the lives of the tribals. The traditional agricultural system is systematically undermined. The so-called modern technology, introduced forcefully by the government, also threatens the traditional life of the people in the tribal areas. Intervention of non-tribal persons in tribal areas also affects tribal culture. It destroys the knowledge, the traditions, the marriage patterns, languages, even the styles of housing of the tribal people.243

The park has 54 tribal settlements or padis with 1550 families and 6145 persons as per the 1991 census. The tribals inhabiting the park belong to different communities, known as Jenu Kurubas, Betta

241 Muzaffar Assadi in Supra no.238, p.84.
242 M.V. Nadkami in Supra no. 132, p.78.
243 Roy David in Supra no.240, p.50.
Kurubas, Hakki Pikki, Yeravas and Soligas. These tribal communities living in the area that has been earmarked for the Nagarhole National Park faced forcible eviction. In response, the tribals opposed the plans of the government. They have formed their own organizations. The struggle began in 1995 in the vicinity of Nagarhole National Park. The major claim was that the tribals were denied the traditional right to collect fuel, fodder and also to worship nature. The most important argument was that "Forest which was our house in the past had become the property of forest department, it was high time we re-established our self rule in forest". In this way, the tribals maintained their symbolic relations over the forest areas.

The National Park suffered extensive damage due to a series of fires in 1992, in 1996, and to a lesser extent in 1999. The relations between the Government and NGOs reached an all-time low degree. It was publicly alleged by the Minister of Forests in Karnataka that NGOs had gone to the extent of inciting tribals to set fire to the forests. This indicates the misunderstanding between the government and NGOs. It was in the same period that NGOs and tribals opposed the plan of starting a star hotel in the National Park.

In this context, it is necessary to mention the forest brigand Veerappan issue. Veerappan is also a product of our forest and wild life policies. These are policies, which have turned the poor into robbers in their own land. An examination of government's forest policies and tribal's interests indicate that both are contradictory to each other.

244 M.V. Nadkami in Supra no.132, p.79.
245 Muzaffar Assadi in Supra no.238, p.85.
246 M.V. Nadkami in Supra no.132, p.80.
247 D.V. Rajashekhara, The Tribal Question Hangs Fire, Deccan Herald, Spectrum Column, April 23.
248 Anil Agarwal, Revamp Forest Policy, Down to Earth, October 31, 2000, p.4.
Therefore, how to resolve this problem is a basic question. Some of the NGOs have put forth an idea that joint forest management (JFM) can be extended to the management of Protected Areas also. But the wildlife experts reject this idea and argue that this will not fetch fruitful results. It will be interesting to see how this debate will be concluded in India because this question has emerged not only in Nagarhole National Park in Karnataka, but also in other parks such as the Rajaji park in North India.249

Protest Against Bangalore–Mysore Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC):

The city of Mysore is 135 kilometres away from Bangalore. There are two highways connecting the cities. And a rail link too. But that wasn't enough, at least not for the Karnataka state government and Nandi Infrastructure Enterprise Limited (NICE).250 Therefore, they came up with a proposal called the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC). Conceived in the 1980s, BMIC took shape in the 1990s251 and in 1995 the Government of Karnataka approved the project.252 The BMIC is India's largest private/infrastructure project, and involves building an expressway connecting these two cities, and building five cities along the corridor. The government notified about 21,000 acres of land towards this project in 1997, of which one-third was government owned land, such as forests, revenue land and "wastelands", the rest being small farms and common grazing pastures which support small farmers and landless labourers.253 The project costs Rs.4,000 crores (Rs.40 billion).254

249 M.V. Nadkarni in Supra no.132, p.83.
250 Supra no.182, p.30.
251 Ibid. p.31.
253 Ibid.
254 Supra no.84.
The proponents of the project have justified their proposal on various grounds. They argue that the project will accelerate the economic growth of the region by providing employment opportunities. NICE claims the BMIC is an environment-friendly project as the level of noise and air pollution will drop significantly, and it will create green areas out of barren and non-cultivable lands. There will be a reduction in fuel consumption for all users of the toll roads as well as Bangalore citizens due to less congestion on city roads. Bangalore will experience a reduction in travel time and accident rate. These benefits of the project as presented by the NICE are just myth. In reality, doubts remain about the very viability of the project. As environmentalists point out, the present highways are already being upgraded. Furthermore, an efficient rail link exists between the cities. Under such a condition, why does the state need another express highway at the huge environmental, social and economic costs? This is a basic question that the authorities concerned should answer. Noted environmentalist, Yerdoor Ranjan Rao of Nagarika Seva Trust (NST) opines that the project is economically unviable and ecologically unsound.

Environmental Support Group (ESG), an important environmental NGO of Bangalore, expressed its serious concern about the likely threats of BMIC project. The project involves potential dislocation of over 2,00,000 people and acquisition of over 21,000 acres of land consisting of private farm-lands, wetlands and forests. The ESG was instrumental in securing a commitment for divulging

253 Supra no.252.
254 Supra no.182, p.31.
project information. It has moved the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) for an enquiry into human rights abuse and the Commission is looking into the petition.\textsuperscript{258} Recently, the differences between the government and NICE Company with regard to acquisition of land for the project has once again caused a number of controversies with regard to the feasibility of the project.

\textbf{Save the Cubbon Park Movement:}

The Cubbon Park is one of the important and historic parks, which is located in the heart of Bangalore city. The existence of the park has enhanced the beauty of this garden city. According to one estimate, Bangalore is considered as one of the tenth fastest growing cities in the world. This rapid urbanisation process has given rise to a variety of environmental problems such as pollution and waste management, urban planning, traffic management, water-supply problems, etc. In addition to these problems, the landmark Cubbon Park is also facing threats of encroachment. Therefore, the very survival of the park is in danger.

Environmental Support Group (ESG), the Bangalore based NGO initiated the sensational Save Cubbon Park Campaign during September 1998 in collaboration with Sanmathi Women’s group, fighting against encroachment aided by the legislators and the Government.\textsuperscript{259} The ESG has appealed various organisations of Bangalore to extend their support for the success of the movement. Accordingly, the movement witnessed rallies by involving students, professional organisations, community organisations etc. Due to growing public pressure, the Karnataka High Court intervened into the

\textsuperscript{258} Supra no.84.  
\textsuperscript{259} Ibid.
matter and issued a stay order which prevented the government order of converting a major portion of the park for construction of buildings. The judiciary, whilst staying the operation of the government notification, had also called for a ban on protests against the government action and this resulted in a civil rights debate in the national Press with human rights activist Justice H. Suresh criticising the court for curtailing civil rights as well. The ESG criticised the court order by organising Symbolic Protest and made it clear that the ruling of the High Court is against the Article 19 of the Indian Constitution. The High Court has dismissed this petition during August 2001, and ESG proposes to question this decision in the Supreme Court.

This movement was well supported by noted personalities of the state like Justice H. Suresh, Jnanpith awardee Girish Karnad, Nittor Srinivasa Rao and academicians, artists, students, community organisation, etc. The Save Cubbon Park Movement Campaign was widely reported across the country and inspired a wave of protests and alliances against the encroachment of public spaces by predatory businesses, politicians and communal forces.

**Environmental Movements in North Karnataka:**

The North Karnataka region also witnessed a number of environmental movements. But the intensity of these movements is low compared to the movements of coastal districts and southern part of the state. This does not mean that the region has never experienced any environmental degradation. The establishment of mega industries,
and cement factories, activities like mining and granite quarrying and the construction of dams have caused acute environmental damage. Unfortunately, all these environmental problems have not been translated into powerful movements. The presence of less number of environmental NGOs, lack of environmental awareness among the people and the absence of effective leadership are the main causes for lowering the intensity of the movements. Inspite of this, there have been some localised protest movements taking place against mega industries, pollution and dams. One such agitation was the Kolar Industrial area struggle in Bidar district against the air and water pollution caused by the discharge of chemical industries. In fact warehouse one of the chemical companies, was attacked as a protest against the pollution. Nonetheless, similar agitations are discernible in Raichur in North Karnataka.263

The Upper Krishna Project (UKP):

The UKP is a huge multipurpose project of the drought prone area of North Karnataka region. The project envisages building of two dams, viz., Almatti Dam and Narayanpur Dam across the river Krishna. It would benefit over six lakh farmers. The project has also facilitated power generation of 290 MW at Almatti Dam site. The foundation stone for Almatti and Narayanpur Dams was laid by the then Union Minister Sri Lal Bahadur Shastry on 22nd May 1964.264 The latest estimated cost of the project is Rs.9,479 crores and expenditure already incurred is about Rs.8,750 crores.265

263 Muzaffar Assadi, Supra no.238, p.76.
264 The Hindu, August 20, 2006, p.2.
265 Ibid., p.2.
However, the project has displaced as many as 80,000 families.\footnote{The Hindu, August 21, 2006, p.1.} Obviously, this has increased the magnitude of the problem of providing rehabilitation and resettlement to the displaced families. Bagalkot in the erstwhile district of Bijapur was the most affected town—three fourths of the town would get submerged in the backwaters when the dam reaches its full reservoir level of 524 m and a total of 57,782 people will be displaced in Bagalkot alone. The dam has already reached more than 509 m.\footnote{Anil Agarwal, Sunita Narain and Srabani Sen (eds.) in Supra no.57, p.159.}

The New Bagalkot township (Navanagar) is being constructed to rehabilitate the oustees of Bagalkot town. However, the affected people are not quite happy with the process of rehabilitation work undertaken by the government. They have also formed a forum called the Bagalkot Nagarabhivriddi Horata Samithi and demanding better compensation.

Another front of the movement has been launched by the Krishna Meldande Yojana Hitarakshana Samiti. The Samiti consists of religious leaders, senior citizens of Bagalkot and some senior legislators who have put pressure on the government for better rehabilitation package for the displaced. The Samiti also has the backing of many farmers who have lost their lands in the backwaters of the dam. About 10,000 farmers from Bagalkot, Bilagi and Jamakhandi talukas took out a procession on April 15, 1998, demanding adequate compensation for the farmers. The procession was led by Members of Parliament and
State Legislators of the region. The Samiti has drawn a list of demands, which include issues like higher compensation for the evacuees, 10 percent job reservation and a better rehabilitation package.268 In this case, the Karnataka Government responded positively to the demands of the Samiti and agreed to provide enhanced compensation to the displaced people.

268 Ibid, p.159.