CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This thesis has made an attempt to understand the peasant movement that has taken place in Hassan district of Karnataka. This movement is well known in public sphere as Bagur-Navile peasant movement. Peasant movement we studied is a response to the consequences of developmental project by state. We made it clear in previous chapters that state constructed an irrigation tunnel to take Hemavathy water to drought prone Tumkur district for irrigation and drinking water purpose.

Tunnel is considered as second biggest irrigation tunnel in Asia. The tunnel is 9.7 Kms in length, with a capacity of accommodating 2500 cusecs of water and maximum depth of 82 meters. Foundation stone was laid to this project in November 1979 and completed in March, 1990. Tunnel begins at Dyavenahally; a village with close proximity to Bagur, a hobli headquarters in Channarayapattna taluk of Hassan district and ends at Navile, a village, which is also located in Channarayapattna taluk of Hassan district. Around 42 villages come in region of tunnel. We used, therefore, term 'Bagur-Navile' or 'Bagur-Navile region' to denote the villages. We are consistent in using the term 'State' instead of government, ruling party except in situations which demanded specific nomenclature to denote the reality. We will amply make it clear in the coming pages.

This study began with an intention to explore the peasant movement with the theme of development and environment. As the voyage of exploration continued, we started finding our study enmeshed in an intricate macro web of development discourse mediated and monopolized by state and consequences manifested at two levels: a). Environmental and ecological; b) societal.

If responses from people towards both the consequences in any society are organized, it gives rise to social movements which again vary from in terms of their methods and ultimate goals and visions. Post colonial India, in fact has
been undergoing such tumultuous responses across its length and breadth. They range from Chipko movement with Gandhian methods to in erstwhile Uttar Pradesh to recent Maoists armed struggle with state in Jharkhand and West Bengal unveil the dynamics. We shall sum up the problems of Bagur Navile peasants—a empirical reality on the following premises.

Premise One: Development and Project of Colonial Modernity

Development as alluring discourse has its epistemological origin in European enlightenment. Development discourse is projected as immanent and inevitable and universally defined as natural, beneficial, and inevitable (Chew, Sing C and Denemark, Robert A. opt.cit, italics are added). Modernity has roots located in ‘time, place and circumstance’ and modernity also has epistemological roots; ‘what forms of knowledge and ways of knowing do they represent?’(Rudolph, Lloyd I and Susanne Rudolph, 2008:4, italics are added). Modernity’s epistemological commitment universal truths, objective knowledge and master narratives evolved from Newtonian Physics, Descartean y and Hobbesian philosophy (Ibid). In fact Newtonian physics had far reaching implications in terms of truth and reality (Turner, Jonathan, et.al, 1998) and started spreading to other forms of knowledge with a claim ‘it was the only valid way of knowing the reality (Rudolph, Lloyd I and Susanne Rudolph, opt.cit)

Bagur-Navile tunnel project is a part of independent India’s dominant and official policy of favouring large dams to develop agrarian sector. The roots of vision that large dams are instrumental in an achievement of nation’s development have to be traced to colonial modernity embedded in European enlightenment and modernity. David Gilmartin’s shows how the development of engineering principles is an expression rooted in man’s quest for conquering nature. The changing vision of man’s relationship to nature was leading aspect in professionalization of irrigation engineering in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was made clear in the metaphorical language that came to define the foundations of irrigation science. The term ‘duty’, a word that
assumed functional significance in the nineteenth century development of mathematical irrigation science'. If duty refers to the relation between the volume of water and the area of crop which it matures', Waste refers to the moral imperative of irrigation engineering to counter the natural tendency of water, like energy, to run waste (Gilmartin, David 2008:15-16, italics are added). Therefore, duty and waste started guiding the language of engineering control. Consequences were fully blown up; that is the official promotion of Large Dams in Independent India.

Premise Two: Development of Agriculture through Large Dams: Tradition of Engineering Bias

It is said that Pundit Nehru was reported to have advised people:

"If you are to suffer, you should suffer in the interest of the country." 1

It is known fact that developmental path adopted in post colonial India promoted large dams and big scale industries. Problem of Bagur-Navile peasants is a legacy of large dams. Large dams are promoted in Indian on the premises of multiple uses; development of agriculture is central. As our nation was severely affected by abject poverty and inflation at the threshold of independence, large dams was perceived to be instrumental. Large dams involves essentially impounding huge amount of water, storing and transfer of water to drought prone areas to increase the productivity, augment the production was, no doubt, not only one of the chief goals of large dams, but also incremental from social transformation point of view. Large Dams represented symbol of modernity and development for Independent India. Large dams and heavy energy oriented industries served as hegemonic ideas of development policy.

Though the goals and intentions are worthy, the process of implementation involves several issues and concerns; particularly environment and people. The way state responded to consequences emanating from acquisition of land to
rehabilitation has invited sharp criticisms and reactions from people in the form of social movements. In many instances, people had mutely surrendered their land, their material base of lively hood, and their identity was submerged. Though some have registered protest, their voices were feeble and state was able to contain such dissenting voices to its own sponsored development projects. Bagur Navile peasants’ problem was one such classic instance where the way state acted in getting rid of feeble dissenting voices buttress our argument. In spite of these, large dams have been actively pursued and promoted in India for the reasons of increasing the productivity and production in agricultural sector and power generation which are thought to be having developmental imperatives.

Large dams involve several serious issues that range from displacement-physical and cultural, secondary displacement, relocation, rehabilitation and alienation of people from their community and network of relations and many more issues, where in violation of human rights have repeatedly reported. But in terms of potential created and actual utilization, large dams are lagging behind minor irrigation projects which are more eco friendly. Table 2.5 amply illustrates this. As the number of large dams increased, the number of transnational non-governmental organizations has also been increasing. Table 2.6 and figure 2.5 provide testimony to it. Physical and financial performance of Major and medium irrigation projects over the years is not adequate. Table 2.4 and figure 2.4 buttress this point. Despite this the number of large dams pursued has been escalating. Table 2.2 and Fig 2.2 as provided by Central Water Commission (CWC).

Nehru was disappointed by the actual consequences of large dams at later years of his tenure. One would be surprised that how Nehru changed his mind. It is really surprising as there were no anti-dam struggles or movements launched by peasants. Ramachandra Guha observes, as Nehru grew older, Gandhi started becoming more close to him and his thoughts: as he was always
reminded by latter to think on 'the rights of last man. It is worth to quote Ramachandra Guha,

More likely, it was the evidence of the suffering accumulated over a decade of commissioning and building big dams. Too many people had made too large a sacrifice for what was, in the end, not too great a benefit. Besides, these massive schemes were already generating huge amounts of corruption. As a democrat, Nehru was attentive to the rights of the lowly and vulnerable. As a scientist, he was open to changing his mind in the face of new evidence. Thus it was that, in the evening of his life, this once-great proponent of large dams started contemplating more democratic and more scientific alternatives. (Guha, Ramachandra, 2005, Hindu, italics are added)

But state did not retreat from its own embarked way. State is speaking today about interlinking of rivers between North India and South India. Though large dams are referred to as 'new temples of India', what really subaltern classes, peasants and tribals, needed was missing in our development planning. In the absence of which, all development projects, be it large dams or industries, become externally imposed. People are agitated and protest against state as dams axe the very roots of their material base of livelihood.

Premise Three: Development ideology, State and Problems of Bagur-Navile peasants

Though Bagur-Navile peasants' problem appears to be an isolated empirical problem, we have to trace the roots of the problem by uncovering the enmeshed nature of such problems in macro holistic phenomena that is functioning of modern state and its relationship with society. State has been a recurring concept in our study. State and society relation through the lens of environment and social movements has been a central theme of our study. Peasant problems of Bagur-Navile demands to be located in macro situation of development. There is voluminous literature on state and society relations. Consequences of French revolution translated Rousseau's concept of general will into a claim that the person, not the king, was sovereign. Therefore, 'popular sovereignty displaced the monarchical sovereignty by embedding the sovereignty in
nation. The modern state became a nation state and the era of high stateness began'. The idea of modern state has gained currency only after the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. (Rudolph I Lloyd and Jacobsen Kurt, John, op.cit: viii-ix)

Kaviraj argued that outside the Europe modern state succeeded in two senses: first, as an instrument and second as an idea:

"Here the state functioned 'as an immense and unprecedented enhancement of European societies' capacity for collective action-in raising military resources, producing the economic resources which undergirded its military success, focusing on clearly defined strategies of control and conquest" (Kaviraj, Sudipta op.cit:210, italics are added).

State, was not omnipresent in pre-colonial time. State in pre-colonial India was qualitatively different from what we understand today. It enjoyed ceremonial eminence but it had a limited sphere to touch or interference with inner social structure of society. Politics and state formation as we understand dates back to colonial era in India. According to him, the caricature of oriental despotism ignored the dynamism of mobility of peasantry and vibrant community institutions which shaped medieval Indian social, economic and political structure with its own autonomy to resources and system of rights (Bardhan, Pranab 2008:185). Modern state started making its presence throughout the nuke and corner of Indian society in the form of bureaucracy during colonial period for the first time.

Transition to independent and post colonial situation was not a radical departure from colonial set up. Post colonial or independent India inherited the legacies of colonialism in significant sense.

'State after independence had a double and in someway contradictory inheritance. It was a successor both to the British colonial state and to the movement of Indian nationalism' (Kaviraj, Sudipta, opt.cit:222, italics are added).

If bureaucracy spread in colonial rule under the rhetoric of state efficiency, rhetoric of development replaced the premise for expansion under national
leadership. State was imbued with the task of ‘developmentalist and mild ‘redistributivist ideology’. Accordingly, state was seen as primarily an instrument of development and led to its rapid expansion without change in its operating culture.

Partha Chatterjee sheds light that developmental ideology was the crucial underpinning of post-colonial state. State was connected to people-nation through two ways: a. procedural forms of representative government; b. acquiring representativeness by directing a programme of economic development on behalf of the nation. Therefore, base set for contradictions between representativeness and legitimacy: what people were able to express through representative mechanism as their will was not necessarily what was good for their economic well being and what the state thought as important for economically well being of people may not be political ratified (Chatterjee Partha, 2000:120-121). But we would disagree with Chatterjee’s observation of last few lines.

We would like to mention that situation diametrically opposite of what Chatterjee can also exist and we reverse the premises of the statement: what people were able to express through representative mechanism can be good for their economic well being and under circumstances, state can even get politically ratified in the name of economic well being of people ostensibly, actually they may not be necessarily so.

With this altered premise and above macro situation we discussed, let us examine our empirical study at micro level. Bagur Navile tunnel was constructed to carry Hemavathy water from Cauvery ridge to Shimsha ridge of Tumkur district. The Tunnel project was a part of Hemavathy reservoir project. The roots of the problem have to be traced to green revolution, policy of large dams and Inter-State Water Sharing Agreement. Karnataka, then state of Mysore, started quite late in using its water resources for irrigation of agriculture and
other purpose compared to Tamilnadu, erstwhile state of Madras which had a head start.

We have to note that Krishnaraja Reservoir was completed by 1924 after several litigations and correspondences. Karnataka, i.e. erstwhile state of Mysore, and Tamilnadu agreements in 1892 and 1924; both were during colonial times. There has been a widespread opinion prevailing in Karnataka that both the agreements were unfavorable to state. By 1924, as per this clause and with the existing irrigation in other sub basins (of main Cauvery basin), with the reorganization of state, state of Mysore had 1,40,043 acres of irrigated land. Clause 10(xiii) of 1924 agreement permitted development of new irrigation on tributaries of the Cauvery in Mysore (The Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, op.cit). Hemavathy reservoir project was, therefore, a state's response to utilize its share. But problem of delay in completing the project both physically and financially in stipulated time was always a problem for state.

Using this Tamilnadu took an objection that 1924 agreement stipulated that provision for extension of irrigation should be within the fifty years of agreement and not being able to 'develop before 1974 the new irrigation over 1, 10,000 acres permitted to Karnataka under Clause 10(iv), it shall be deemed that the said area when developed should receive a lower Priority No.III. But tribunal rejected Tamilnadu's claim. It noted that the State of Mysore/Karnataka had started construction of Hemavathy project from the year 1968 and even marked this was a firm action for utilization of Cauvery waters for extension of irrigation as provided under Clause 10(iv) read with Clause 10(vii)... (The Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, op.cit, 125).

It becomes evident from the above that Karnataka had to proceed under immense pressure to use to make use of its share under Cauvery basin. But what should strike of our sense of discrimination is the fact that though the judgment of tribunal dispute brushes aside Tamilnadu's contention against Hemavathy reservoir, judgment came only in the year of 2007. Proceedings of
tribunal itself took more than one and a half decade. Given the high volatility and dynamics of polity in Indian federal system, one can imagine the amount of pressure that could have been exerted on Karnataka state decades back. In fact, some learned respondents of our study who have good amount of knowledge on irrigation politics, shared that Tamilnadu exerted enormous pressure on central government. As a consequence, Karnataka state did not get a rupee in construction of Hemavathy reservoir. It compelled then Chief Minister, Shri. Veerendra Patil to sell lottery tickets through Mysore Sales International Limited, Karnataka state's marketing organization. Karnataka government had to construct reservoir out of the revenue generated from selling revenue tickets. This can probably explain the troubled and fissured water and politics behind them. Hence, Karnataka was under enormous pressure to implement Hemavathy project as early as possible. This amply buttresses our argument that Hemavathi reservoir has to be understood in the framework of inter-state water sharing 'Agreement of 1924' and dispute, irrigational aspiration of state of Karnataka and federal politics.

As stressed by Kesari Harvoo, noted documentary film maker and researcher on development and environment, highlights that Cauvery basin is basically a deficit basin, characterized by riparian states in constant struggle to fetch as maximum as possible its share. This, according to him, has exerted pressure in creeping of irrational elements in lieu of rationally planned aspects in projects. He further adds that in a competition and contention to make use of water, chances of making unreliable estimates without rational planning and in absence of which they will end up in unviable projects.

The problem of Bagur-Navile tunnel, praised as Asia's second largest tunnel has to be seen in this framework. We shall examine the following issues in support of the above views.

a. The whole Hemavathi reservoir is mired in controversy in terms of inter-state water problem and design of planning. Respondents for in depth
interviews conducted, 'which focuses on origin of project, politics of water and development, project,' included bureaucrats, journalists, political leaders and from engineering background. All of them repeatedly stress the manipulation of left bank canal alignment of Hemavathy reservoir. Hemavathy reservoir, as noted in chapter 6, has three divisions of canal a). Left Bank Canal, b). Right Bank Canal and C). Right high Bank canal. Left bank canal near Vaddarahally is separated into two branches: a. Tumkur branch b. Nagamangala branch.

According to learned respondents, master plan was prepared by Sir. M. Vishwesharaiah, Deewan, princely state of Mysore. According to which left bank canal should have passed through towards North-East instead of east direction. As per the basic plan, it should have gone Baragur hand post, Moodanahally, and should have turned towards east at Gandasi where water should have been drawn. The rationality of the argument is that alignment passes through area which are low in meter from sea level (MSL) and towards east lie the Bagur region and Tumkur district at comparatively downward slope. Therefore, water could flow smoothly. This serves two purposes. a). it would have irrigates the entire Bagur region of Channarayapatna taluk and Gandasi region of Arasikere taluk and b). also benefited Tumkur district.

They attributed the manipulation and imposition of present alignment, which necessitated the construction of tunnel, to the decisions of powerful political leaders of Hassan district to protect and benefit their own region that is Holenarasipur and Hirisave. Though the argument appears to be plausible regarding the alignment issue, we could not access data which would prove the above supposition.

Though, we visited Karnataka Engineering Research station, Mysore, office of Hemavathy project, Gorur, we could not access such documents related to above claim. But one respondent who was from engineering background and also worked in several large scale public projects firmly said that he himself had gone through the master plan.

But in the absence of documents arriving at any firm conclusion would be not possible. But we can take a line of caution that given, the extent of such opinion
and belief widely prevalent even among well educated with engineering background people, chances of manipulation of alignment of left bank canal might have happened, though it may not be confirmed.

b. Strong sense of deprivation works among our respondents that though Hemavathy reservoir is located just 5 kilometers away from Hassan city, Hassan district is not able to make use of Hemavathy water compared to Mandya and Tumkur district. This issue is again embedded in first issue. Engineers from Hemavathy project gave different version. Hassan, Channarayapattna and Arsikere could not be completely brought under irrigation due to technical aspects as alignment towards east is high in MSL which demands the elevation of crest gate further. This means more number of area would be submerged leaving repercussions on Alur and Sakleshpur taluks of Hassan district which are malenadu areas enshrouded by western Ghats. Though this argument seems plausible, examination of topography of Hassan district, particularly Channarayapattna and Arsikere taluks, (keeping in view the probable path of supposed alignment) rejects the explanation, of bureaucrats. As toposheet makes it clear Meter from Sea level varies from 800 to 920, whereas from west to east via present alignment elevates starts elevating from Bagur.

c. We cannot unequivocally arrive at changes in alignment and accurate technical reasons as explanation for comparatively less amount of land brought under the ambit of Hemavathi project. But we can without any uncertainties, say that political leaders and bureaucrats of Tumkur district played an active role as a pressure group in taking Hemavathi water to their region. This does not mean that providing Hemavathy water to Tumkur was not in original plan or taking water to Tumkur as an aberration from basic plan. In fact, it was one of the objectives of Hemavathi reservoir. But there are every reasons to us to conclude that there might have been pressure from them i) to take Hemavathy water to Tumkur via as nearer as possible alignment; ii) hurriedness to avoid
giving water to Hassan district as it would affect the amount of water that would available to Tumkur. A politics of water and region within the state itself! This aspect coupled with lack of powerful leadership in Bagur –Navile region compared to other regions of Channarayapattna taluk and Hassan district might have led to imposition of present alignment on Bagur region. As political elites of Bagur-Navile were always dependent. Even today this hold true!

d. First, though there were protesting voices to tunnel and for acquisition of their land, they were muted by powerful state level leaders hailing from Channarayapattna taluk. We noted above that this was because of their dependence and patronage from powerful leaders. This prevented even few elites who approached the doors of High court and were said to have brought stay order. Second, as was the case in all developmental projects, people’s material base of livelihood was acquired by Land acquisition act that and by creating fear in the minds of revolting people by local leaders and bureaucrats.

e. Project proposal, project assessment of tunnel, in terms of probable environmental consequences, are not maintained by authorities. Though we repeatedly visited Hemavathy Left Bank Canal office, Channarayapattna, sub division office, Bagur, we returned with empty hand. Documents provide details of the tunnel and lift irrigation schemes but lacks information from administrative approval and their number-date to assessment. This raises serious doubts about the rationality of planned projects and transparency in mechanisms of approving and execution. Thanks to peasant leaders who provided us many number of precious documents collected during movement.

f. The peasantry in Bagur-Navile region is the characterized by small land holding peasants and depending upon rainfall for source of water. They also work as labourers' on other fields though they possess. We, therefore, deliberately call them peasants instead of farmers. As the latter denotes the percolation of capitalist system and its supporting component in India i.e.
'Green Revolution'. When a region itself was not brought under the ambit of one of the important components of green revolution that is irrigation, no question of growing cash crops in extensive scale, use of pesticides and agriculture based on volatile of market

g. The main contention of peasants is depletion of ground water due to construction of tunnel and this finally led to peasant movements. As per the experience of respondents, it is clear that Bagur-Navile region was once a gift of nature, though a river did not flow. Coconut trees were healthy. Land had good amount of moisture, ground water could be accessed within 50-60 feet plus a normal rainfall in a year used to fill the big tanks and ponds. All these conditions kept peasants free from any severe problems; it does not mean that peasants were free from problems. They had contentment in life.

Though we are not competent enough to assess the environmental consequences of tunnel, observations from one Hydro Geologist and a retired World Bank engineer endorses the depletion of ground water. We as social researchers are interested in peasants' perceive effects of tunnel on their environment, lands and life. Peasants experienced several experiences which hitherto had not undergone: violent drop in the coconut yield after the construction of tunnel; reduction in the size of coconut, failed tubewells, and increase in the depth of feet of tubewells to be drilled to fetch water. Peasants were affected chiefly by reduced income and its impact on their life style. Consequence conspicuous is the marginalization of peasantry.

Premise Six: Peasant Movements and States

As we have noted above peasantry in Bagur-Navile comprised largely holders of small size land. Table 5.5 in chapter confirms this aspect. Peasant movement of Bagur-Navile is an organized response to draw state’s attention and to demand for rectification of its damaged material base of livelihood. Its dominant idiom was holding the state responsible for its developmental project which has reduced the peasants to marginal status. Peasants in India started
feeling the presence and impact of state in their day-to-day life with the dawn of colonialism through its bureaucracy and people. To invoke, representatively, Pranab Bardhan's view:

till seventeenth century the nature of state was characterized by ceremonial eminence and weak bureaucracy. Hence it was not able to interfere in the internal organizations of various groups and structural units. But the process of dismantling the autonomy of vibrant community institutions and depriving them from political and economic functions started from seventeenth century and culminated under colonial administration. [Bardhan, Pranab, op.cit:184-185, italics are added].

Post colonial independent regime, talked much about socialist pattern of development and ending unequal structures -equality in distribution of income and wealth particularly in rural areas. There was a heated debate and exchange of perspectives, comments and counter comments between Gandhi and Nehru about the developmental path and nature of state in independent India. Nehru believed in the efficacy of high modernist development and state through city, big dams and large industries, whereas Gandhi firmly believed in village, civil society, craft production, and simple living (Rudolph I Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph opt.cit :21-23, italics are added).

In fact, problem between Karnataka and Tamilnadu regarding Cauvery basin, Tamilnadu's opposition to Hemavathy reservoir, construction of Hemavathy reservoir and Bagur-Navile tunnel as a part of reservoir has to be viewed as emanating from high modernist development which stresses big dams and large industries. It does not mean to suggest that they are void of uses. But critical scanner of state actively pursuing big dams reveals that large projects have been promoted without consideration for consequences on environment, people and alternative small and minor projects which are more eco and people
friendly. We shall sum up peasant movements of Bagur-Navile on following premises

a. Peasant movement of Bagur-Navile cannot be understood as new social movement. As new social movements of farmers are focused on 'price stabilization', demanding cheap prices of inputs such as seeds, pesticides and market support. New social movements of farmers are embedded in capitalist system of relations mediated by green revolution, an official strategy of government to bring transformation in rural areas. Bagur-Navile peasant movement was a response to state's development project which troubled the material base of livelihood of peasants. Its dominant idiom was not revolving around Bharat Vs India or 'rural and urban contradictions keenly pursued by new social movements.

b. Peasantry in Bagur-Navile is composed of small and marginal peasants. We are clear and consistent in using the term 'peasants' in lieu of 'farmers'; as latter indicates penetration of capitalist system of relations. We shall keep in our mind that irrigation through large dams was one of the strategies of green revolution. Bagur Navile peasantry has not reaped yet such advantages. But they are in fact demanding for irrigation. If region once come under the ambit of canal irrigation substantially may be then category what we call as new social movements may emerge. Bagur Navile peasantry is marked by semi-feudal system of relations.

c. It was a a leftist mobilization of peasants by All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), a peasant wing of CPI. AIKS has been actively involved in mobilizing and organizing peasants since colonial period. But the method and techniques of mobilization and movement have substantially undergone changes. During colonial time, it had often used violent methods or force against state and zamindars. But with dawn of independence, CPI accepted parliamentary democracy and are referred to as 'parliamentary communists'. In fact this was the principal component of contradictions within communist party and led to split after split in party. Naxalbari movement is a classic instance. Bagur Navile
peasant movement was a mobilization by leftist force created and hitherto neglected by centrist parties.

d. Methods and techniques of AIKS were innovative and effective in a political sphere hitherto dominated by centrist parties. AIKS held drumming, Paadayaathras, Jaathas, with the help of IPTA to awaken, dissent, organize people. Way of protest against Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Hassan in 1996 is a good example to illustrate. DC did not come out from her chamber to receive the memorandum from peasants who were protesting in DC office premise since several hours. When she came outside, peasants protested and informed DC that they would not give representation now as she humiliated peasants and would post letter about their demands.

e. Organizational structure of movement display an excellent hierarchy included at top the president designed to mobilize peasant from each village. Organizational structure which included at macro level CPI and AIKS, followed by president or general secretary of AIKS, 'District level Struggle committee, 'Taluk level struggle committee, followed by Village level struggle committee with president, secretary and treasurer of these committees.

f. Organizational structure also imply resource mobilization. Financial discipline was adopted. Separate records for expenditure and donations for movement was maintained by treasurer. Leaders were accountable to treasurer for the resource mobilized and spent. Treasurer in turn accountable to entire organization. A sort of socialist pattern was adopted in mobilizing resources such as collecting Rupees 10, coconut, rationing items from each home and weekly fairs of Channarayapattana taluk. To quote our respondent:

"Whatever the financial funds we received from donors for the movement we gave it to treasurer. He was an honest man and maintained accountability till the end of the movement. Any financial transaction was taking place through treasurer. Even if Gopal or Manjunath received funds from public, it was handed over to treasurer and through him only all financial transaction were taking place. Some may comment that Gopal or Manjunath made money by making movement, but we want to admit very firmly that we never gave a single paisa to either of them or some one else."
g. Identity of movement principally centered on the principle of deprivation people of Bagur Navile experiencing tunnel project as a part of Hemavathy reservoir which is solely benefiting Tumkur and Mandya district; and disadvantage to Hassan district from Hemavathy project though the reservoir is located in Hassan district.

h. Decision of the state government to constitute two committees (to headed by department of Horticulture and Geology respectively) to study and submit report to government indicates the intensity of pressure created by movement. When committee headed by department of Horticulture submitted its report recommending to award 25 crores as compensation for loss of coconut yield and crops in last twenty years, it acted as a testimony to validity of issues pursued by movement. Though horticulture department was not competent authority to solely judge the deleterious consequences of tunnel on ground water, but what it said about the condition of coconut trees confirmed the plight of peasants.

i. Though another committee, headed by Geologists, rejected the peasants’ claim, in its report, about the depletion of ground water through seepage, one has rooms to suspect the working of pressure from the state on contents of report to brush aside and gloss over the matter.

j. In fact, movement gained momentum and acceleration after Horticulture department recommended for monetary compensation. It is true that this has created a new wave of hope among peasants of this region and new purpose for them to participate in movement. Huge amount of money might have created in them new hopes and imaginations to get rid of the problems; both due to tunnel and personal. Also it turned out into a strong weapon in the hands of peasant leaders particularly to make the government bow before peasants and invited them to talks. This created a new legitimacy for movement and empathy from public sphere, particularly media and the progressive organizations.

k. Movement was successful in insulating itself from influences of political parties and their intrusion till since 1996 to June of 1998. But when water denial
or blockade movement reached 50 days, movement leaders accepted the
support from political parties and other progressive associations signaling
mobilization of sympathetic factors in favour of the movement that is from civil
society. In fact civil society responded very well to problem of peasants, during
peak of the movement and when police inflicted violence on innocent peasants,
women and children. But role of political parties immediately did not affect the
autonomy of movement, particularly AIKS.

l. When water denial movement, an intensified phase of movement,
reached deadlock on 96th day. State mobilized police force and deployed in
Sangraamanagara. It threatened to use force for dispersing the peasants to
remove the blockade constricted across canal. State asked peasants to withdraw
their agitation and accept its compensatory measures minus monetary
compensation. When peasants did not budge, an atmosphere of confrontation
was impending. When movement leaders under the leadership of Gopal
decided to court voluntary arrest as a part of Jail Bharo struggle to avoid
bloodshed from confrontation with armed police, they did not leave second
level leaders of the organization, except Suryanath, to sustain the movement in
absence of top level leaders and to avoid people from becoming emotionally
charged. The decision to end water denial movement was a watershed which
spoiled the prospectus of movement, we would like add firmly. It was also
surprising and till today an anomaly. Chances of undergoing fear about police
force, anxiety and uncertainty cannot be ruled out, though the movement
leaders rationalize their decisions. We argue that it was a critical litmus test of
leadership in highly uncertain situation. It is such situations which test one
leadership.

We think it was a crit This gave fatal blow to movement leaving leadership
to masses. State awaiting such situation suppressed peasants indiscriminately
without sparing women, children and aged. Leaders decision to offer voluntary
arrest and leaving the leadership to masses according to us, was the chief factor
in the cessation of movement. This created vacuum. Void in the situation
created was fully utilized by centrist political parties such as Congress, Janatha Dal and BJP.

If Janatha Dal, being a ruling party crushed movement by suppressing people through its police force. Congress reaped full benefit of void and politicized the entire movement from electoral point of view. It used the situation to humiliate and embarrass the government, though ostensibly it tried to fight for the issues. Though the movement sustained under the leadership of AIKS after violence and release of leaders from jail on bail, stakeholders to movement included other organization also. Jaatha from Bagur to Bangalore was one of the chief events in post violent phase, but it was carried out by HDFISC, KRRS and other political parties along with AIKS.

Though it was a leftist mobilization of peasants. Centrist parties ultimately reaped the benefit. Embedded problem of movement ever since it had begun was some of the peasant leaders were having affiliation with congress party. When movement gained momentum, Janatha dal was in power, they had no problem in obeying the movement intentions. In 1999 assembly and lokasabha elections were held, Janatha dal was completely wiped out from district. Bagur-Navile problem was the major anti-incumbency wave against Janatha dal leaders. But congress which came into power by promising leaders that it would implement all the measures forgot to implement except the removal of attempt to murder case against peasants. Let alone monetary compensation, it could not complete in time scale the lift irrigation projects. This signaled full circle of events. When congress came to powers, the same party leaders who earlier showed huge enthusiasm and support to movement leaders started humiliating them whenever they tried to approach leaders especially Vishakantaiah. Movement leaders who had congress affiliation started obeying the orders of their party bosses and were leaking significant information of movement to leaders. This weakened the movement. This aspect coupled with violence inflicted on people and betrayal of next government which was elected in 1999 created a deep illusion, disappointment for people
and humiliation for committed leaders. This rendered the movement cease to exist.

Movement lost its existence except its smouldering form. Even at present lift irrigation schemes are not completely operational. Though government documents show the operation of two lift irrigation schemes – Bagur and Navile-out of four. Except Navile lift irrigation, other three are not working. Though Bagur lift irrigation dumps water to Bagur tank, it often undergoes repair in terms of motor problem, problem in power supply and quality of power supply made unreliable. Hemavathy Left Bank Canal irrigation has been giving since more than a decade, that is since 1998, the problem of land acquisition. There are also complaints about the planning of Navile lift irrigation scheme as it is cutting the source of water supply to a century old tank in Kamanayakanahally. When visited the field recently canals of all lift irrigation projects are not lined up well. Progress in Obalapura and Kallesomanahally lift irrigation schemes is literally pessimistic. Situation at present is not qualitatively different from what was existing before 1996 that is before the emergence of movement.
Suggestions

We would like to express the following limitations of our study:

First, the problem of Bagur-Navile provides a space to be approached from different perspectives within sociology and social sciences and also from natural sciences. It involves economic, politics, structural and hydrological geology and environmental sciences. Hence, it is an inter-disciplinary in nature. Present study is substantively sociological in nature traversing across the areas of state and society relations expressed via development and environment and its dynamics manifested via social movements. Though, the present study echoes the premise and critique of Indian development saga, it has not attempted to analyze the different models, theories and definitions of development in the light of research problem.

Second, we feel that besides the method and approach of our study, an intensive ethnographic study by being a part of the area for longer duration will shed some more insights on the origin, nature and mechanism of the problem.

Third, as we have already mentioned in our study several theoretical and conceptual areas interact with each other. As analysis of all the areas with perfection may be not be possible.

Fourth, Present study demands extensive collection of both primary and secondary data. Though there there is no dearth of quality primary data. Lot of constraints involved in collecting secondary data - in terms of time, resource and bureaucracy. Bureaucracy has come in the way of exhaustive collection of secondary data as it exhibited a tendency to conceal, uncooperation, delaying, and offering technical
pretexts which all came in the way as constraints. Secondary data is, though not exhaustive, but representative in nature.

Fifth, primary data of our study is a blend of both qualitative and quantitative in nature with a tilt over the former. Present study has not attempted to quantify the qualitative data through such methods as content analysis.

Sixth, we are not competent authority to examine and judge the environmental consequences of tunnel. Rather this dimension has to be dealt with by the students of Geology and environmental sciences objectively which will shed valuable lights on problem of environmental depletion and in resolving the contention.

End Notes

1 (http://www.narmada.org/gcg/gcg.html, italics are in original)

2 Malenadu, Kannada word, refers to an area enshrouded by forest.
References


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