CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

During the twentieth century, the seeds of the present world order have been sowed through the social movements of the common mass and the continues uprisings of them, for gaining social justice in global political and economic platforms, which produced crucial dialogues and controversies between the believers of two different ideologies namely Capitalism and Communism. Every country and its federal bodies, in the present globalized context, are part of the international community. Since the second half of 20th century, on one hand, most of the insurgencies and revolutions in regional and national level of the world societies took place towards of attaining democracy with the contributions or stimulations of NGOs. Simultaneously, apart from that, there were any other significant people revolutions of the world took place to identify for any other cause or causes. In day to day life, the countries who have opted the principles democracy or communism are also facing several oppositions and confrontations for the shake strengthening the representational idea of common mass.

Since 2009, Tamil Nadu has become an unrest state in India. Thanks to the continuous mass uprisings, series of resistances against of the state and central government and corporate companies have made it somewhat defunct. In Tamil Nadu, most of such mass resistances have been emerged randomly which too took place against on biased developmental policies of the state. Such policies have also been proposed to introduce, in favor of neo-liberal setup of the country, under the structural adjustment policies of Union government of India. Besides of that few other mass uprisings have also happened in the state for the causes of Tamil Eelam issue in Sri Lanka and river water disputes on Mullai Periyaru reservoir with upcountry Kerala. In
fact, the above mentioned all struggles have been directly interlinked with the global geopolitics which were developed over the centuries in the following order:

- Colonization
- Ideological conflicts
- Revolutions
- Great wars
- Decolonization
- Democratization
- Cold war
- Bi-polarization
- Neo-liberalization
- New social movements
- Decline of Soviet
- New world order

During the colonial era, the dialectical theory of Hegel created a base for the discussion and direct conflicts with rightists (Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini) and leftists (Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and others) fundamentalists of the world for the cause of seizing the political powers and empires. Those revolutions led the world towards great wars and mass human destructions. The industrial revolution facilitated new social conflicts in the society which had favored the Young Hegelians to develop new ideologies based on the triadic dialectic model of Hegel. Based on the ideology Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels created their idea of Communism in opposite to Capitalism in which Lenin, Stalin, Mao were successfully established their communist governments on mass revolutions. Because of the injuries of the imperial operations and the competitions of the great powers of Europe, the rightist Hegelian Adolf Hitler successfully established an ethnic nationalism against to the model of Capitalist and Communist internationalism. However, the newly emerged German ethnic
nationalism was defeated while in the World War II by the aforementioned Capitalist and Communist internationalism.

Since the World War II, several diplomacies were made by the great powers of Soviet Russia and United States of America to keep their influence and indirect domination over the continental countries of the world. Decolonization strategy of the capital empires has created a favorable situation to keep their influences on the pre-structured decolonized nations. During the colonial regime, the British India was structured as a sub-continent of Asia with high population and landscape that integrated with several ethnic-based separate territorial kingdoms. Of course, even today after gaining sovereignty and independence from British colonialism and dominance, contemporary India is keep up their gratitude and loyalty towards of British government. However, even after the unification of various nationalities under one nation as India, a country of multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic, has been facing several oppositions including the armed insurgent operations of sectarianism which reflects the sense of people that India is country according to the government and not by the people of few.

During the first quarter of 20th century, through the provincial elections, democratization process has been initiated in India to make it as a sovereign state. In Tamil Nadu, Justice Party won the election because of its anti-Brahminical, anti-Hindi and anti-Sanskritization campaigns. The imbibed socialist and communist principals of the Justice Party had inspired many of the members of the province. The victory of the Justice Party had reflected that the existing capitalist and reactionary communist ideologies were not only influenced the European societies, but also the colonies of European countries like British India. Since 1920 to 1937 the Justice party possessed
the Premiership of Madras Presidency and the Indian National Congress took over it in 1937 and which lost that in 1967. In 1947 India gained her independence. After that in 1956, while of the Premiership of K. Kamaraj for the administrative convenience, the boundaries of the states were redrawn on the bases of linguistic contour.

During this time to materialize the ideology of Dravidianism, a non-electoral social reformation movement was initiated by E. V. Ramasamy, a leader of Justice party. The Dravidian activists of the province attempted to imitate like their counterparts of communist fundamentalists in Europe and Russia, in which who accepted black as their identity to deny the ideas of existences God and religious rituals. The movement was initiated and operated in the middle of Dalits and women which addressed the frequent issues of discrimination as based on class politics and worked to achieve an egalitarian society.

In pre and post-independence India, Tamil racists and think tanks of Dravidian Movement proposed a demand of separate country in alienated from the existing Indian federal setup. By opposing the Brahminical dominance of Indianization the Dravidian fundamentalists have proposed an idea of sectarian politics in which forwarded a demand of separate Dravida Nadu. Simultaneously by refuting the proposal of the Dravidian ideologue certain fundamental groups of Tamil racists have also forwarded a sectarian plan of separate Tamil Nadu to appraise the identity of Tamils alone. The legal restrictions forwarded by the Congress government on secessionist demand had made the Dravidian fundamentalists defunct and forced them to switch over from non-electoral politics to electoral politics. By abandoning the secessionist idea the Dravidian Party contested in the Tamil Nadu state legislative
elections and seized the political power in which developed their socio-political image among the common mass through the propagation of anti-Brahminical campaigns and anti-Hindi agitation. Over the time, the Dravidian parties split into many parties and competed for seizing the political power. Since their first victory in 1967 the two Dravidian parties, DMK and AIADMK, rules the state respectively.

In the history of contemporary Tamil Nadu, the anti-Dravidian ideologies have also emerged and imprinted sporadic impacts. However, after the Elam issue (2009) the anti-Dravidian ideology is penetrated into the hardcore beneath of the minds of Tamils in the state. In other words, the Tamil identity has been mounted a real jolt to the continuous existences of the Dravidian ideology in Tamilnadu. The current study identifies that the last fifty years of Dravidian Parties rules in the state are, as outcome, responsible for the present unrest in the Tamil society, which is also reflects that the diplomacies, political policies and the interlinked pre-independence diplomacies of British capitalists which were developed towards of attaining the present geopolitics of the state has also been failed in every sense.

1.1 Perspectives on the Issues

1.1.1 Eelam Issue and the Students Uprising in Tamil Nadu

In Sri Lanka, the freedom struggle for free Tamil Eelam has rooted from discrimination and domination of Sinhalese government against the Tamil people. In fact, the frequent interventions and diplomacy of India have significantly escalated the conflict between the Tamils and Sinhalese. Such acts of India have especially traced from the Nehru’s (Congress) regime and such acts have continued to the Eelam war IV occurred in 2009.
Since the independence of Sri Lanka from the British, the Eelam Tamils have demanded equal rights including two official languages (Tamil and Sinhala) and regional autonomy for Tamil people. The demand of Tamils was ignored by the Sinhalese dominated Sri Lanka government and subsequently, the atrocities against the Tamil people have increased. The Sinhalese government has abrogated all the power-sharing promises by abandoning the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam and Senanayake-Chelvanayakam Pacts made in 1957 and 1965 respectively aiming to solve the communal conflicts between the Tamils and Sinhalese.

In the 1970s, the Sinhalese dominated Sri Lankan government has started its discriminatory operations against the Tamils in all state institution, especially in the academic sector. In 1972, the Sinhalese dominated Sri Lankan government has introduced a new constitution. The new constitution has completely ignored the rights of Tamils and it exacerbated the conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils. It is resulted in the emergence of separate Tamil Eelam demand among the Tamils. In 1976 at Vaddukoddai, a unanimous resolution adopted by a federation (Tamil United Liberation Front) consisted of several Tamil political parties. The Accordingly, the federation has proposed a sovereign and secured socialist state for Eelam Tamils (Free Tamil Eelam). In 1977, TULF became the opposite power in the Sri Lankan parliament through the separate Tamil Nadu campaign among the Tamils.

During the democratic attempt of TULF for free Tamil Eelam, several armed militant organizations were emerged aiming to attain the free Tamil Eelam. On May 1981, Jaffna library (Yarl library) combustion by the Sinhalese extremists has created an aggression among the Tamils and it has widely sowed the separate Tamil Eelam sentiment among them. Some militant groups have initiated the armed struggle
through some assassinations of the Sinhalese officials. In July 1983, at the outside of Thirunelveli in Eelam, a deadly Four-Four-Bravo ambush attack was carried out by the LTTE against the Sri Lankan army and it sparked the Black July riots. Moreover, it is considered as the beginning of the civil war in Sri Lanka. In the continuation of the civil war, the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE have performed numbers of mass attacks and massacres such as Kent and Dollar Farm massacres in 1984, Anuradhapura massacre in 1985, Kumudini boat massacre in 1985 and others. Several non-militant Tamil splinter groups, movements and parties have denounced the operations of LTTE. However, LTTE is identified as the only militant organization supported by the majority of the domestic and Diaspora Tamils.

In addition, in the years of in 1983-1987, 1991-1993 and 1994-2000, the temporary interim Eelam governments were formed under the leadership of LTTE leader Prabhakaran through the three successful Eelam wars. During this war periods, many peace efforts between Sri Lankan government and the LTTE were voluntarily undertaken by several domestic and international organizations. In 2002, because of the peacemaking effort of Norway, a ceasefire between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government was adopted by both sides and several peace agreements were signed between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. In 2002, a Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM) was formed aiming to make a peaceful political situation in Sri Lanka. Through their declaration of Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) in 2003 October, the LTTE has formed an well structured interim government in Eelam consisting of some majority Tamil speaking eastern and northern parts of Sri Lanka which identified as Tamil Kingdom before the colonization. Moreover, the interim government has established with five wing army, well prepared criminal justice institutions, health and educational boards, human rights organizations, a radio station
(Voice of Tigers) and a television station (National Television of Tamil Eelam). Kilinochchi became an administrative capital of de-facto LTTE controlled areas (Tamil Eelam).

On 19th November 2005, Mahinda Rajapakse has become the president of Sri Lanka. On 26th July 2006, the Sri Lankan government initiated the Eelam War IV by its areal attack on the LTTE camps located nearly at Mavil Aru dam. From 2006 to 2008, the Sri Lankan and the LTTE militant troops have carried out numbers of offensive and defensive attacks respectively. In 2008, the Sinhalese government has terminated the peace deal and the SLMM has left Sri Lanka.

From the beginning of 2009, the Sri Lankan forces have carried out their attacks targeting the civilians in Eelam and it resulted in high-level casualties and grievous injuries. After the fall of Kilinochchi, the Sri Lankan military carried out an ethnic destruction in Eelam. Sri Lankan troops have used some banned cluster bombs to destruct the innocent Tamil civilians and the forces perpetrated numerous brutal rapes and murders against the Tamil civilians. The Sri Lankan troops have destructed the Hospitals and the No-Fire-Zone areas by bombing and more than 1.5 lakhs Tamil civilians were killed in the ethnic destruction.

In Tamil Nadu, during the last phase of the ethnic destruction, the statewide oppositions erupted against the Sri Lankan government, Indian government and the international society. Several life sacrifices and self-immolations have stirred up the ethnic feelings among Tamil people. In order to control the surge among the student communities, the DMK government announced indefinite close to all the academic institutions. However, the upsurges among the Tamils have diplomatically diverted and diluted by the DMK government.
In 2013, the statewide students’ oppositions spontaneously surged against the USA’s drafted resolution tabled in front of the UNO’s human rights session at Geneva. The students severely criticized the resolution as it will try to cover the violations and the genocidal operations of Sri Lanka and the resolution is trying to deny the justice for the victims of the war crime. In the television interviews, the students openly accused that the resolution was made in favor of Sri Lanka and many countries including India have assisted to prepare the resolution to keep Sri Lanka away from the punishment.

In many higher education institutions across Tamil Nadu, thousands of students continued their hunger strike for over a week and thousands of students involved in the train and bus blockings. In addition, several central and state government offices were besieged by the students. Many thousands of students rallied in several districts insisting to the Indian government to boycott the US resolution and propose a new resolution against Sri Lanka. It is notable that the students uprising got support from the worldwide Diaspora Tamils. Despite the uprising has shaken the political climate of Tamil Nadu as well as India, the uprising is unable to achieve its goal. However, after the anti-Hindi agitation of 1965, it is considered as the second significant student uprising in Tamil Nadu and the uprising of the students became as the turning point of the subsequent ethnic-based conflicts and debates between the Tamils and non-Tamils.

1.1.2 Struggle for Mullai Periyar Water Dispute

In connection with the water retention in the Mullai Periyaru dam, a long-term conflict has been existed between the Tamils and Malayalees. The Mullai Periyaru Dam is located at Idukki district of Kerala constructed in the British regime. People
living in the Theni, Madurai, Dindigul, Sivagankai and Ramanathapuram districts of Tamil Nadu have benefited from the dam. Using this water, farmers in Theni, Dindigul, Madurai, Sivagangai, Ramanathapuram districts carry out agriculture in 2,08,00 acres. Due to this, Rs. 400 crore/ year worth of food production is carried out by 10 Lakh farmers and this is the drinking water source for 60 lakh people in Madurai, Theni, Dindigul and Sivagangai.

On 29th October 1886, a lease agreement was made between the Travancore Maharaja and the British Secretary of state. According to the agreement, the construction work of the dam was started. During the construction of the dam, the work was affected by flooding and some infectious diseases. Hence, the British government stopped its funding for the subsequent construction work of the dam. In his own initiative to complete the dam construction, officer Pennycuick has raised the funds by selling his properties and wife’s jewel and he has continued the construction work. Finally, the dam was constructed and came to the use of people. After the independence of India, the lease was renewed between the Tamil Nadu and Kerala state.

In 1976, with the aim of producing hydroelectricity, the Kerala government constructed a new dam at Idukki locating 50 kilometers downstream of Mullai Periyaru dam. In addition, the capacity level of the newly constructed dam is seven times more than the Mullai Periyaru dam. Due to the lack of water source, the Kerala government could not produce the expected level electric energy from the hydroelectricity plant. Hence, the Kerala government decided to transmit the water source from the Mullai Periyaru dam to the newly constructed dam by reducing the water capacity of the Mullai Periyaru dam. Meanwhile, a big hoax created by a news
published on 16th October 1979 in a famous daily newspaper of Kerala, Malayala Manorama, saying tremors felt in the surroundings of Mullai Periyaru dam and the dam is in danger. It created a kind of panic among the people living in the nearest districts of the dam and it resulted in the long-term conflict between the Tamils and the Keralities.

In 2011, the conflict reached the peak. Against Tamil Nadu, several movements from the different parts of Kerala have gathered and protested in the main border areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, especially in the Devikulam and Peermedu and the roads were blocked by the protesters. Several movements, parties and the parliament representatives of Kerala have stood with the protesters.

In order to react such acts of Keralities, series mass protests of Tamils taken place in the borders of Kerala, especially in Theni, Kumuli and Cumbum areas. Few Tamil activists immolated themselves insisting the state and central governments to protect the right of Tamils on the dam. In addition, the Madurai Bar Association has demanded that the Idukki and other nearest villages should be annexed with Tamil Nadu. Such incidents escalated the agitations in Tamil Nadu. In Theni, the protesters spontaneously besieged the borders of Kerala and chanted against the Keralities. Several political parties and movements in Tamil Nadu supported the protesters and their blocked all the borders of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Regarding the dispute, the Supreme Court of India ordered in favor of Tamils. According to the verdict, the struggle temporarily came to an end.
1.1.3 Anti-Nuclear Struggle

In 1988, India and Soviet had signed a Memorandum of Understanding for constructing a nuclear power plant in India. Prior to the signing such venture had created strong resentments among the fishing communities, agrarians and social activists of the Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu. Later the resentment was turned into strong oppositions. From the year 1986 onwards tiny level of anti-nuclear resistance began in the form of discussions, stage campaigns, street dramas, public meetings and rallies. In 1988, Vaiyapuri Gopalsamy (@ VaiGo), Member of Indian Parliament and a Dravidian ideology-based political party’s leader in Tamil Nadu, delivered a speech against of the nuclear project in the Parliament. During that time the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran had also refused to accept and implement the project in the state.

In 1997, once again the establishment of the nuclear project at Kanyakumari was invoked by the then Indian Prime Minister Deve Gowda for which the Russian President Boris Yeltsin extended his support. Based on this action a commission was appointed to enquire into check the viability of establishment of a nuclear plant at a coastal village Koodankulam in the Tirunelveli district which too exists much adjacent to the Kanyakumari. After their field visit, the commission forwarded a detailed report to the government in which two high-pressure VVER-1000 water-cooled and water-moderated reactors have agreed to supply by Russia to India. The established relationship forwarded India to proceed ahead with Russia for some other defense deal with the cash-strapped nuclear industry in Russia like that T-90 tanks, Admiral Gorshkov submarine and SU-30 planes.
During this time the activists were also seriously started to address all the problematic issues of the districts like displacement of the Koodan Kulam village settlement, radiation hazards, Pechiparai dam water usage and radiation contamination on human food chains, particularly with the seafoods like fishes. In 2004 the Tsunami partially affected the establishment of nuclear reactors. Besides of that fewer damages had also occurred in the installations process by tremors in two times in 2006 and in 2011. After some time provocatively against to the will of the common mass, the Indian government decided to install four more nuclear reactors at the same site.

Hence, to intensify the struggle a committee was formed with a name PMANE. The struggle committee started to spearhead the fresh non-violent protests. The committee has been chosen Udayakumar, one of the co-coordinators of the struggle committee, as chief organizer of the struggle who was a former Lecturer and a school correspondent at Kanyakumari. During this time a retired school teacher named Muthukumaraswamy has filed suit in Tirunelveli district court against to the government acquisition of land in the village.

Accidentally, in 2011, Japan’s Fukushima nuclear experience exacerbated the villagers of Koodan Kulam to intensify the protest which led to cruel police action in which many of the protesters were arrested in the subsequent struggles. In 2012, fifteen protesters were initiated hunger strike against of the establishment of the nuclear plant. The protestors had also another intention for this arrangement of hunger strike in which forwarded a demand to the government for the release of 200 arrested people and protesters. To avoid the police detention and be in united with the protestors to show the solidarity on the issue for which nearly ten thousand people had
congregated in front of the St. Lourdes church at Idinthakarai. The protestors started to prepare their food within the protest venue itself, in other words, to intensify the protest and to make other people to join them they eat and slept there with their family. On September 2012 a massive siege was planned with ten thousand people, including women and children, and which took place within a radius of 500 meters from the nuclear plant. To control the protesting mass the government allowed a brutal repression which perpetrated against of the protesters especially the vulnerable targets of women and children. By using the struggle as an opportunity the police force attempted to enter into the Idinthakarai village which ended in failure. Despite as the effect of the police action many of the protesting people were attacked viciously and arrested.

To provide a legal viability to nullify the nuclear reactor establishment at Koodan Kulam and to provide safety to the protestors an environmental based Nongovernmental Organization Poovulagin Nanbargal filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court of India. Meanwhile, in May 2013, against to the concept of the protest the Supreme Court of India forwarded a verdict in which allowed the Government of India to proceed with their nuclear plant work which actually diluted the protesting spirit of the struggling committee in which to sort out the issue politically two of the members of the struggle committee decided to enter into politics. During the Indian Parliament Election of 2014, PMANE struggle committee member Udhayakumar and Pusparayan contested the election as the candidate of Aam Adhmi Party and met a defeat.
1.1.4 Anti-Methane Struggle

Coal Bed Methane (CBM) is an unconventional source of natural gas using as an alternative source for energy requirements. In the coal reserves, India is the largest country in the world. In 1997, the united front government has formulated a CBM Policy under the patronage of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas intended to utilize the potential resources throughout the country. Accordingly, the Methane exploration projects have been started in the various places around India. Following UPA and BJP governments have given more importance to this project. More than ten multinational companies of both foreign and domestic have presently involved in the exploration projects. In order to explore the CBM, a London-based company, Essar acquired 2700 sq km in the States of Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. For the commercial purpose, the Great Eastern Energy Corporation Limited (GEECL) is the first company in India explored and extracted the natural gas from the cold bed of West Bengal. Subsequently, GEECL was permitted to implement the CBM project at Mannargudi block in Tiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu.

During the UPA regime in 2009, based on the approval of the Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs, the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) implemented its hydrocarbon exploration and extraction project in the Delta regions of Tamil Nadu. By using hydraulic fracturing technology, initially, ONGC sunk two 4000-feet wells at Neduvasal village in Pudukottai and subsequently, it sunk 31 places at Pudukotai. In 2010, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas made a production sharing agreement with the GEECL regarding the CBM extraction in Mannargudi block. In 2011, the DMK state government in Tamil Nadu made a MoU with the GEECL and granted permission, licenses and necessary infrastructures to
GEECL for pursuing the project. Accordingly, the GEECL got permission to explore and extract the methane from Thanjavur, Nagapattinam and Thiruvarur districts which are considering as the major rice cultivating area of Tamil Nadu. In addition, the GEECL got environmental clearance from the Union Ministry for Environment and Forests. When the news came through the media about this project, the agrarians, environmentalists, the petrochemical experts and the common people of the concerned regions started their series protests against the project.

Various political parties and non-political movements came to support the spontaneous people protest and the issue was raised in the parliament debates. In 2011, the ADMK defeated the DMK and caught the ruling power of the state, Tamil Nadu. In order to respect the people’s demonstration, the ADMK government constituted a multi-disciplinary expert committee to explore the adverse impacts of the project. The committee was comprised of the representatives from Anna University and Madras IIT, Tamil Nadu agricultural university, M.S.Swaminathan research foundation and officials from the state Public Works Department, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation. The committee gave its report that the project would affect the people and the environment. Based on the report of the expert committee, the Tamil Nadu government canceled the MoU with GEECL.

However, the Methane exploration projects in the Delta region are being continued by some other companies. In 2014, the people struggle intensified due to a gas leakage accident in an exploration site. As a result of the radical protest, in July 2104, the state and the central governments canceled the license to the ONGC. In the mid of 2014, the Reliance Industries Limited started the Methane exploration project
in Tamil Nadu. Initially, the company discovered hydrocarbons in three wells out of its nine wells. Immediately, colluding with the state-owned natural gas processing and distribution company Gail (India) Limited, the ONGC has restarted the project in a clandestine manner without proper approval from the authorities. The High Court Bench of Madras granted an interim injection against the improper actions of the ONGC and Gail.

Against the CBM projects, series of oppositions and protests are being taken place by the people movements with the support of several political and non-political movements. Various political parties and several movements are standing with the protesting people.

1.1.5 Anti-Gas Pipe Line Struggle

In 2007, the gas pipeline project via Kochi – Koottanad – Bangalore – Mangalore (KKBMPL) has initiated by the Gail (India) Limited formerly known as Gas Authority of India Limited. The project is aimed to connect the Southern states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka with the national gas grid. In 2008, the government of Tamil Nadu has signed an agreement with GAIL for formal gas cooperation. In Tamil Nadu, the gas pipeline is expected to cross 310-kilometers through the seven districts such as Coimbatore, Tirupur, Erode, Namakkal, Salem, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri. According to the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board’s data, the entire pipeline from Kochi to Koottanad, Bangalore and Mangalore is estimated over 1000 kilometers long.

Tamil Nadu Vivasayikal Sangam has initiated protest against the project and the protest was carried out in the major villages which are likely to be affected by the project. During the farmers’ protest, brutal repressions carried out against the
protesters and a number of criminal cases have been filed against the protesters. Regarding the forcible land acquisition and the threat to their farms, the farmer unions brought this issue to the High Court for obtaining a legal remedy. Meanwhile, the state government has conducted a public hearing with the protesters and the farmer unions. The leftist political parties and movements have been strongly supporting the farmers. During the repression, several political parties and movements have also raised their voice against the government. Besides Tamil Nadu, simultaneous oppositions have also emerged in Kerala against this project. The final decision on this issue is not made yet.

1.1.6 Anti-Neutrino Struggle

The India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) project is a multi-institutional collaborative project proposed at the Western Ghats in the Theni region. A Neutrino Collaboration Group was formed with the collaboration of the Department of Atomic Energy of India, universities, various research institutions, scientists and the funding agencies. The prime object of the project is to set up an underground laboratory near than one-kilometer depth from the land surface to conduct a variety of research regarding the neutrino especially to find some unsolved mysteries of the earth. The laboratory was planned to set up with the research and experimental facilities regarding the elementary particles called neutrino.

Previously, a site at the Nilgiri hills was selected for this project. In November 2009, the Ministry of Environment and Forest denied the project claiming that the proposed site is a tiger sanctuary. Moreover, the next proposed site at Suruliyar was also rejected by claiming that the submitted data and the study report about the site
are not sufficient. Accordingly, the project has moved to the foot of the Theni hills. Initially, the activists against nuclear energy have opposed the project.

In order to make a tunnel, the drilling work in the rocks was initially carried out with the heavy power hydraulic equipment and it created a panic sense among the people living in the nearby areas of the site. It has led to the people to start their spontaneous protest against the project and some small levels of oppositions have carried out by the people through their peaceful demonstrations. Some activists criticized the project as a voluntary suicide attempt.

Demanding to stop the project, V. Gopalsamy of M.D.M.K party and Sundar Rajan of Povulakin Nanbarkal Organization have filed suits in the High Court and the Green Tribune. Initially, an interim stay passed by the court against the continuation of the project. Various expert committees have separately appointed by the government, the research team and the judiciary to examine the site and the project. The final decision on this issue is also pending before the legal institutions.