

Chapter VII

Conclusion

Anti-POSCO movement and Tipaimukh anti-dam movement have been highlighted in this study. The study designates these movements as movements for environmental rights. In the study of Indian environmental politics, these two cases would be a relevant inclusion. In both cases, issues of environmental rights were prominent and the movements were organized to pose a serious challenge to the state sponsored developmental paradigm; like setting up of industrialization and installation of multi-purpose dam. Like Chipko and Narmada struggles of the last century, concern about the plausible damage and overexploitation of natural resources, anxiety about the probable crisis in the sphere of survival economy of the poor and apprehensions about the loss of biodiversity were reflected through the movements against POSCO and Tipaimukh project. In this sense, these movements were ecology and environmental rights movements that constitute the theoretical base of 'environmentalism'

In Western Europe and in many industrially developed countries, environmental and ecology movements are viewed as new social movements which are primarily social and cultural in nature rather than economic and political. But, contemporary social and political movements including environmental movements in India are not devoid of economic interests; rather economic issues are addressed with greater importance. The issues of ecological justice and people's rights over nature or democratization of natural resources have been projected through the protests against POSCO and Tipaimukh projects emphasizing upon the survival strategies and economic interests of the tribals and other marginalized people. The chapters in this study highlight the nature of local politics through which the protestors vehemently assert their natural resource based economic rights during social and cultural protest. The study has been developed with partial rejection of Western

theorization. According to the theory of NSM in Western perspective, environmental movement is considered as a 'new' movement and it is the product of post-industrial society; moreover, the new-middle class people are the main participants of the movement. But, in India, it is explored that, the traditional communities and other marginalized people, who are mostly dependent on natural resources for their livelihood, are the actual participants of Indian environmental movement and the movements emerged when the process of industrialization and modernization start. Western theory of NSM purports that civil society organizations play a significant role for the emergence of ecology movement, but it is observed that, green politics or ecology movement emanates through the state actions like specific policy formulation and its implementation process for the management of natural resources and for the safeguard of environmental rights. Such actions can also be denominated as movement that would ensure environmental justice and grassroots democracy.

Theories of social movement envisage environmentalism as a social movement but the present study has deconstructed the notion of 'movement'. Therefore, deconstruction is another significant part of this study. Generally, environmentalism is justified as environmental rights movement and a social resistance, but environmentalism can also be designated as science or a science based movement both by civil society and state particularly when the issue of biodiversity conservation becomes important; even environmentalism takes the form of politics when the question of social justice gets priority; in matters of developmental paradigm, environmentalism acts as hegemonic or a counter-hegemonic globalization and finally when the people synthesize the religious sentiments with the laws of natural environment, environmentalism as myth or a cultural protest. Therefore, environmentalism is not only an ideology but a social movement for environmental rights.

Chapter II categorically states that there is a difference between the nature of environmental movement organized by civil society and state. Civil Society Organization (CSOs) or micro-movement organizations organize environmental movements concerning the economic requirements of the people, whereas the state

institutions deeply concentrate on the environmental governance executed through policy formulation, implementation and amendment of the environment related acts and regulations. CSOs during protest argue that, initiatives for the developmental planning by the state disrupt the economic life of the poor who always seek free access to natural resources for the earning of livelihood. Responsive environmental movements in India by the poor peasants and tribals, for example – *Chipko*, *Appiko* and save *Narmada* movement, at the first moment were movements for survival but the issues of environmental sustainability has been added afterwards by the social elite and the Indian middle-class people. In case of movement against POSCO and Tipaimukh projects, the primary issue was sheer survival and livelihood of the rural poor. Gradually, the issues of environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation were merged. It was observed that, in anti-POSCO movement, the anti-POSCO people were mobilizing financial and intellectual supports from various segments of society and in Tipaimukh anti-dam movement, violent actions and nationalist sentiments of the tribals were virulent in nature.

Chapter III illustrates Gandhian, Socialist, Feminist, Radical, Developmentalist, Conservationist and Pragmatist approaches of Indian environmentalism incorporating diversified philosophical thought and ideological positions of environmental rights movements in India. The *Gandhian approach* deeply relies on the village based agrarian society as the resources may not be managed sustainably in the urban industrial society; the *socialist approach* advocates proper planning and the use of appropriate technology for the sustainability of production and the livelihood of the poor; the *feminist approach* urges the ecologically sound environment to perform the traditional role of rural women; the *radical approach* recommends such a form environmental governance in which the poor will have free access to natural resources; the *developmentalist approach* initiates a particular model of development concerning the population and availability of the resources of a particular region; *the conservationist approach* suggests biodiversity conservation as man cannot recreate the lost or likely to be vanished species; detecting the existing or plausible environmental problems, the *pragmatist approach* suggests suitable policy measures to prevent any kind of

environmental problem including livelihood crisis of the poor. The holistic approach is another addition in chapter II. Movement participants of both anti-POSCO and Tipaimukh anti-dam movement criticized the proposed model of economic development. They expressed their own opinion on development choices. Issues of the protection of natural resource based livelihood system, conservation of biodiversity, preservation of traditional culture and indigenous knowledge system and maintenance of ecological harmony have been raised by the protestors. All these issues are inseparable part of their development choices. The protestors were not ready to pursue economic development at the cost of the destruction of natural resource based livelihood system, loss of biodiversity and eradication of nature based traditional culture.

Chapter IV demonstrates that environmentalism is a counter ideology against globalism, industrialism and technological hegemonism. Being a part of socio-political and cultural movement, environmentalism appeared as a counter revolutionary force against globalization. As a *political movement*, at the global sphere, environmentalism demands international cooperation among the nation states, implementation of environmental laws and regulations which would be applicable at any space of the entire globe and a strong global environmental monitoring system. As a *social movement*, global environmentalism explicates people's struggle against globalization for survival and security and the protection of the rights of marginalized and deprived section of society. As a *cultural movement*, global environmentalism highlights the principle of 'Small is Beautiful'. On the contrary, a great concern has been observed from the part of wilderness enthusiasts who are worried about the animal rights, welfare and express measurable compassion towards the non-human species. A considerable number of the nature lovers and intellectuals of the world are apprehensive about the effects of global warming on the life of polar bear, snow leopard and other vulnerable species of the Antarctic zone. The environmentalists are concerned about the adverse consequence of globalization on the life and culture of the traditional communities. Protestors of anti-POSCO movement once raised a slogan – '*POSCO hatao*'. The movement took the shape of an anti-globalization and anti-SEZ movement. Micro-movement

organizations of anti-POSCO movement, drew attention to the process that how POSCO, a multinational company, will produce commodities through overexploitation of natural resources from India and export the goods outside India. The movement organizations have opposed the forces of neo-liberal globalization and asserted local people's rights over natural resources for their survival and sustenance. On the contrary, the Tipaimukh anti-dam movement became a global social resistance as people of Bangladesh raised their dissatisfaction against the construction of dam over the International River Barak. Even the voices of protests and reactions came from London, New York and Canada.

Chapter V explores that the poor tribals and other marginalized people are dependent on natural resources of the country due to their economic and other material requirements. This dependency is a part of their culture and it is never ending dependence. Rich natural resource based livelihood system itself has created many indigenous myths, knowledge and culture among the poor tribals. Hence, many poor tribal societies wish to consume the natural resources through conservation. Although religious sentiment has persuaded to develop the conservationist ideology among the tribals but, in reality, the usefulness attribute of nature taught the tribals for the sustainable use of natural resources. Since the last century, a number of tribal unrests emerged in many part of India against the authoritarian role played by the state or central government asserting democratic rights over natural resources. In the discourses of political ecology, act of such tribal mobilization is designated as the cultural politics of natural resources. The cultural politics was seen in both contexts. Anti-POSCO movement was also a movement for forest rights for the tribals and other marginalized people whose socio-economic life revolves around the nature. Civil society organization, constituted by social and human rights activists, lawyers, professors, film makers, journalists, women social activists and others wrote letters several times to the ministers and other government officials referring to the subject of the gross violation of forest rights of the tribals and other traditional forest dwellers identified in POSCO project site. But, as the evidences show, the state authority has forwarded official documents of endorsement to POSCO for its mining rights over the tribal land. Tipaimukh anti-dam movement

in Manipur was basically a tribal revolt against the diversion of tribal land. Hmars and Zeliangrong Nagas were the main the participants who believe that Tipaimukh River contains some spiritual value for their life; therefore, they vigorously stated – ‘let the Barak river flow free’, ‘no to Tipaimukh dam’.

Chapter VI critically examines the nature of environmental governance in India. Environmental governance can be defined as the progressive change or reformation at the state structures for the effective management of natural resources of the country and development of legal framework for the achievement of ecological sustainability. The Government of India, followed several policy measures and legal actions to ensure environmental justice and sustainability but the state many times faced several criticisms from civil society organizations in terms of the implementation process and satisfactoriness. The chapter draws the dimension of ‘state environmentalism’ highlighting the state action, i. e. efforts of the Government of India for the management of natural resources and the chapter also focuses on the environmental stewardship that emerges through social movements by civil society organizations against the state. Both state and civil society organizations, more or less, pay attention to the issues of environmental governance. Here an important role of the state is to check the process of implementation regularly and the role of civil society is to follow the order of policies formulated by the state. Smooth environmental governance is required to achieve ecological sustainability and environmental science, environmental education and environmental management are vital to environmental governance. At the proposed site for POSCO and Tipaimukh projects, it is seen that, the local people are aware about the laws of nature and they possess a degree of ecological knowledge that can help them to survive and knowledge motivates the people to follow sustainable practices. Management procedure in the betel vine field in many parts of POSCO project area has been developed centering round the scientific knowledge that helps to understand the environment. In Barak valley, through ethnic politics, the local tribals have highlighted the interrelated problems lie in the process of dam construction over Barak. During protest, they have cleared their moral stance that it is the responsibility of the local people to maintain ecological harmony which is required

for the 'quality of life issues' of the locality. Thus they have developed environmental ethics that would fulfill the economic and cultural needs of the tribals.

Problems with Environmentalism

The emergence of 'environmentalism' during 1960s and 1970s was a new phenomenon but, today, at the twenty-first century both in Western and non-Western world, ideological plurality within the framework of environmentalism is very sharp. The dominant political ideologies such as socialism, anarchism, feminism and conservatism have enriched environmentalism. Many old political ideologies are surviving along with the so called 'new' ideologies. Extracts of liberalism, Marxism or socialism, anarchism, feminism and conservatism can be found at the centre of polemics on environmentalism.

Long run environment-development debate throughout the world since 1970s constructed the broad base of environmentalism. Environment-development debate resounded also through the world summits between the state actors and by the participants of social movements in different parts of the global North and South. Basically, the controversies brought forward the ideological conflicts and variations in respect of different time and space. On environmentalism, democrats, liberals, socialists and other traditional ideologues have different views and inevitably sharp contradictions are visible. Advocates of the traditional conservatism and the revolutionary socialists are the radical groups; on the other hand, market liberals, welfare liberals and democratic socialists are reformists in nature. From the radical perspective, the advocates of traditional conservatism try to protect traditional landscapes, buildings as part of the heritage thus they take initiatives to protect nature and environment from the over-exploitation. The revolutionary socialists argue that the capitalism is responsible for poverty, social injustice and squalid urban environments; hence they oppose capitalism, want revolutionary change and emphasize on the collective political action. Opposed to the radicals, the market liberals rely on the free market, plus science and technology. They view that the science and technology would diminish the resource shortage and overpopulation is not a burden rather people are the resource of the country. The welfare liberals,

another reformist group, believe in managed market economy with private ownership. They suggest reforming the laws, planning and taxation for environmental protection. Lastly, the democratic socialists view that the state will play a significant role for the development and the well being of the nation. They believe in mixture of private and common ownership of resources and production for social needs. They view that the state would offer subsidies for environmental protection.¹ In Indian context, state and the people are the two major contestants. One is relying on 'reformism' and another group is supporting 'radicalism'. Through economic reforms, the state authority is welcoming the capitalist groups for industrial development using available natural resources of the country and on the other hand, adhering to radicalism, people or the protestors against the state institution are desiring revolutionary changes at the social, economic and political sphere for all round holistic development.

The enduring value of 'environmentalism' is visible in last three decades of the twentieth century India because of environmental and ecology movements and state aided repression and exploitation of the management of natural resources. The emerging social movements for survival and livelihood security have raised several questions against a number of developmental projects sponsored by the Government of India and dominant political parties. Environmentalism as 'new social movement' emerged as a politics of autonomy that originated at the beginning of material and industrial development in India. Broadly, environmentalism is a socio-political activism to protect environment from the possible harm that would come as an adverse impact of the advanced technology and extreme modernity. Most importantly environmentalism is a socio-political movement emphasizing upon human needs and their entire satisfaction. On the contrary, conventionally, ecologism is considered as an ideology which claims that, since the living non-human creatures are the part of nature or environment or the ecosystem, they are equally valuable like the human beings and it is the duty of the existing social, economic and political system to take necessary steps for the conservation and protection of non-human

¹ Pepper, David, 1993, *Eco-Socialism: From Deep Ecology to Social Justice*, Routledge, New York, p. 47.

beings. Clear distinction between environmentalism and ecologism can be discovered if we compare these two with liberalism. Environmentalism and liberalism are compatible with each other, because environmentalism like liberalism stresses on the individual freedom but ecologism emphasizes on the limits and suggests for curtailing freedom in the realm of production, consumption and mobility.² Here it is also relevant to show the similarity between liberal democratic and ecological or green democratic constitution. The liberal democratic constitution presupposes and seeks to maintain a liberal notion of public reason that recognizes, protects and rewards rational, autonomous and freely choosing individuals in both the economic and political realms. Similarly, a green democratic constitution would require the flourishing of its own kind of public reason, may be critical ecological reason, that recognizes, protects and rewards ecologically responsible social, economic and political interactions individuals, firms and communities.³ However, Robyn Eckersley defined ‘green state’ as not simply a liberal democratic state that is managed by a green party government with a set of programmatic environmental goals, although one might anticipate that such a state is most likely to evolve from liberal or social democratic states. Rather, a green state means, a democratic state whose regulatory ideals and democratic procedures are informed by ecological democracy rather than liberal democracy. Such a state may be understood as a post-liberal state insofar as it emerges from an immanent (ecological) critique, rather than from an outright rejection of liberal democracy.⁴ A post-liberal state deeply concentrates on the duty of individual rather than the rights, particularly at the time when a state takes initiative to develop the quality of country’s environment. India’s *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* (Clean India Mission) is a notable example. It is nothing but a campaign to specify the duty of individuals for cleanliness. Even a post-liberal state, like India, adopted specific policies on environment and ecology critically scrutinizing the value of social resistance against the state. Many of the formulated

² Dobson, Andrew, 2000, *Green Political Thought*, Third Edition, Routledge, New York, p. 165.

³ Eckersley, Robyn, 2004, *The Green State: Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Press, London, pp. 139-140.

⁴ *ibid*, p. 2.

India's environment policies are the products of the radical social movements against the state.

The difference between environmentalism and ecologism is an important issue when dealing with contemporary environmental thinking with special reference to India. Typically environmentalism is presented as a reformist strategy and its principle focus is 'greening' of contemporary liberal democracies, whereas ecologism seeks widespread socio-economic change to create a particular vision or blueprint of the 'sustainable society'.⁵ Environmentalism is ecologism but of shallow type and it deals with social or human ecology. 'Shallow ecologists' consider that the humans and the nature are separated from each other but the 'deep ecologists' deny any separation.⁶ Thus environmentalism and ecologism have been developed separately with vivid theoretical vision. In twenty-first century, the theoretical juxtaposition of both environmentalism and ecologism can be explored through social protest event analysis. It is observed that, the basic tenets of ecologism are being merged with the core themes of modern environmentalism or contemporary social resistance for the development and prosperity of natural environment and its components. In India, environmentalism and ecologism became very popular after save Narmada movement and Silent Valley movement. Both the ideologies emerged through the popular resistance against the process of modern economic development that would destroy the ecological harmony. Today environmentalism deals with both the protection of human society as well as conservation of the non-humans by the humans. Environmentalism, as social resistance, tries to protect the human society from the negative consequences of the state sponsored developmental projects over livelihood strategies of the humans and simultaneously, as an academic discipline, ideology and developmental paradigm, it also highlights the nature of adverse impact of modern economic developmental projects on wildlife habitat and other non-living creatures.

⁵ Barry, John, 1999, *Rethinking Green Politics*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, p. 78.

⁶ Pepper, David, 1996, *Modern Environmentalism: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York, p. 22.

Environmental ethics and the principles of non-violence, grassroots democracy and social justice have fertilized environmentalism in the studies of political theory and social science. Environmental sustainability and ‘quality of life issues’ or the post-materialist values are central to environmentalism and it always helps to formulate policies for development. Environmentalism is facing serious challenges particularly from the supporters of neo-liberal globalism and the advocates of modernization. As stated earlier, the core tenets of environmentalism is supported by – socialism, as it criticizes the capitalist or material development; feminism, as it endeavours to ensure the right to natural resources for the women; anarchism, as it slurs the state authoritarianism over the individual; conservatism, as environmentalism seeks to preserve traditional values and culture. Being aware about the capacity of ‘Mother Earth’ and being conscious about the environmental rights, a considerable part of world’s masses are opposing huge economic development projects, like setting up of industry and creation of mega dam etc. In India, popular environmental rights movements would call for a total transformation of individuals from industrial to pre-industrial romantic rural life.

Modern developmentalists would argue that, the economic growth is essential for any nation state. In many contexts, especially in the postcolonial Third world countries proper economic development is possible keeping in view the use of available natural resources of the country. But, nodoubt, apprehension on environmental degradation would disappoint the spirit of industrial development. However, the question of proper use and limited use of natural resources are vital to any economic developmental process. When preparing the future plan for economic development, from holistic point of view we must determine the definition of ‘proper use’ and ‘limited use’.

Environmentalism is purely based on ‘green values’. ‘Green values’ considers specific attributes or human behaviour, such as self-sacrifice, altruism, frugal sentiment etc. are to be developed for the environmental protection and purity. According to Mahatma Gandhi, these attributes can only be developed amidst rural life where economic development will be based on rural traditional environment

friendly technologies. But we cannot deny, as Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes and others have argued, that the humans are aggressive, self-centered, egoistic and competitive.

Theorists of new social movements viewed ecology or environmental movement or environmentalism as non-class movement. But following H. Enzensberger and D. Satterthwaite, Tim Forsyth argued that the 'mainstream environmentalism has reflected middle-class interests and failed to acknowledge the widespread risks affecting poorer people or people undergoing industrialization'.⁷ In other words, it is the middle class activists who took the remote control of the environmental movement mainly and kept aside the subaltern people for fulfilling their vested interests. W. Tucker in 'Environmentalism and Leisure Class' (1977) argued that environmentalism is a selfish action by a privileged class seeking to suppress the aspirations of those not so privileged. But Lester Milbrath replied that this portrait is not accurate because empirical studies evidently show the working class people, who have little interest in beautiful nature, also expect clean environment like the middle class people who are active in environmental organizations. Therefore socio-economic status is thinly related to the expressions of environmental concern and of support for the environmental protection.⁸ It is true that, in many places environmentalism emerged through the organized protests and critique by the middle class people, while modern practices are not supporting the traditional theoretical construction of new social movement. But it is a fact that in many movements, the middle class people organized the poor working class people for clean environment. Protest movement after Bhopal gas leak is an illustration. In case of Narmada struggle, the middle class activists took a radical stand for the social justice of the subaltern masses against massive displacement. Besides specific professional group also took initiative for the creation of environmental rights movements; for example during Chipko movement, tribal peasants mobilized themselves for the protection of forest covers at the Central Himalaya.

⁷ Forsyth, Tim, 2003, *Critical Political Ecology: The Politics of Environmental Science*, Routledge, New York, pp. 177-178.

⁸ Milbrath, Lester W., 1984, *Environmentalists: Vanguard for a New Society*, State University of New York Press, New York, p. 76.

Contradiction between science and politics created another problem with environmentalism. In the hands of middle class activists, environmental rights movements became radical left politics for serving vested interest. At the initial stage, environmentalism arose and developed in the hands of ecologists, climatologists, geophysicists and scientists who were concerned about the depletion and abuse of resources. Gross and Levitt criticized radical environmentalism viewing that ‘environmentalism in its modern form, including the radical wing of it, is a reaction, occasionally appropriate, to specific discoveries of orthodox science. The problem with radical environmentalism is therefore, that its relations with science, upon which it must be based, have become so ridiculously acidulous and so dishonest’. Radicals are, even eagerly, willing to accept work with alarmist or apocalyptic implication and they are unwilling or bitterly reluctant to accept scientific work that confutes or modifies alarmist theories.⁹

Environmentalism deeply relies upon localism than nationalism. However, ethnic nationalism would fuel environmental rights movement. Article 31 of the Indian constitution provides legitimate power to the state to have full control over the natural resources of country and even over the property of individual for the interest of national economy. Due to this constitutional provision, the state authority can take steps for land acquisition for the public interest providing proper compensation to the land property holders. But the fact is that, most of the people care for local interest rather than the national interest. Whenever the state authority raises the proposal for economic development and takes steps for land acquisition, people mobilize themselves under protest movement organizations to resist land acquisition and for saving local interest. Opposition groups, that support huge economic developmental processes, always exist everywhere. For example – in Kujang and Erasama block of Jagatsingpur district, Odisha, pro-POSCO and anti-POSCO people were identified, in Singur block of Hooghly district, West Bengal, two opponent groups were observed viz., ‘Nano Bachao Committee’ [Committee for Save Nano (industrialization)] and ‘Krishijami Raksha Committee’ (Committee for Save

⁹ Gross, Paul R. and Norman Levitt, 1998, *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and its Quarrel with Science*, John Hopkins University Press, London, p. 158.

Agricultural Land). In both contexts, conflicts observed between the local interest and the national interest. Movement against land acquisition in Jagatsingpur and Singur were the movements for local interest. Mobilizing the local sentiments, the tribal masses organize social protest to spare local natural resources from the 'invisible hand' of neo-liberal globalization and state authoritarianism. Tribals are the true participants of the anti-industrialization movement, livelihood centric movement, anti-displacement movement and movement for the democratization of natural resources.

Modern Environmentalism, POSCO and Tipaimukh Dam Controversies

Due to the prolonged social resistance for environmental rights against POSCO and Tipaimukh project, the process of industrialization and modernization of the economy have been stunted. In both cases, social resistance against POSCO and Tipaimukh, environmental resistance emanated as science based movement, politics or radical environmental activism, hegemony or popular developmental paradigm and a myth or cultural protest. The civil society organizations, in both contexts, disdained the models of economic development at the cost of forest depletion and destruction of wildlife habitat. Most importantly, local marginalized communities and indigenous people are not willing to diminish their dependence over nature for their economic needs as they are very much accustomed with the livelihood system based on the available natural resources of the locality. Local people of the proposed sites of POSCO and Tipaimukh dam are not satisfied with the developmental paradigm adopted by the state; even the people are not prepared to sacrifice their traditional values and belief system for the development like mining and dam projects.

During survey, it was observed that, many of pro-POSCO people was arguing that the proposed land for POSCO is unfertile and no community cultivate the land for crop as the sandy soil does not contain much nutrient elements for agricultural production. But it was found that the local people are using many parts of the

proposed land for betel cultivation for generations. The local people practice betel cultivation under a controlled environment, i. e. they make several mounds by sand and situate small water reservoirs of sweet water in the sandy land near every *paan kheti* (betel vine).¹⁰ Thus they developed technology and the processes of water harvesting keeping in mind the quality of land. On the other hand, the submerged area and the entire catchment area of the proposed Tipaimukh dam project are predominantly used for shifting cultivation. However, vegetation along with steep slopes and certain pockets on both sides of the river banks, which appear to be reserved forests or protected forests are disturbed less. Settled cultivation at certain places along with gentle slope of the river bank and human settlement were also observed. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) reported that, the entire area is dominated by bamboo, though tree vegetation occurs intermittently. The area does not appear to be significant from diversity point of view due to its disturbance by shifting cultivation. The area however could recover if left undisturbed or aided natural regeneration can be facilitated.¹¹ It was estimated that, a total of 66.6 square kilometer area (45.6 sq. km. area is for current *jhum* and 21.0 sq. km. is for abandoned *jhum*) of the proposed site is used for *jhum* cultivation.¹² Action Committee against Tipaimukh Project (ACTIP), Citizens Concern for Dams and Development (CCDD) and Committee on Protection of Natural Resources in Manipur (CPNRM) wrote a letter to Director General of Forests & Special Secretary on 8th July 2013 indicating that, ‘The aerial survey team makes conclusions with a preconceived understanding of Shifting Cultivation as inimical and contributing to biodiversity loss of Manipur and this is just insensitivity to the importance of traditional agricultural practices and

¹⁰ *Iron and Steel: The POSCO-India Story*, Mining Zone People’s Solidarity Group, October 20, 2010, pp. 37-38.

¹¹ Agenda – 3, File No. 8-63/2005-FC, p. 15, available at <http://forestsclearance.nic.in/writereaddata/AdditionalInformation/AddInfoReceived/7115124112111Agenda632005Chaudhary.pdf>, accessed on 5th November, 2015.

¹² *Comprehensive Environmental Studies on Tipaimukh Hydro-electric (Multi-purpose) Project*, Executive Summary for Environmental Management Plan (Vol – II), Submitted for North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited, Shilong, Meghalaya by Agricultural Finance Corporation Limited, Mumbai, August 2007, p. 2, available at http://www.moef.nic.in/sites/default/files/EMP_Exe_Summary_Aug_07.pdf, accessed on 4th November, 2015.

indigenous communities' role in sustainable management of the rich biodiversity in Manipur. The generation and regeneration of the biodiversity of Manipur over generations is proof of the sustenance and sustainability of the practice. The survey team can never understand the forest of Manipur and as to how communities relate to it intrinsically without detailed site visit and assessment'.¹³ For selecting the shifting cultivation area, local indigenous communities follow few basic criteria: a) the old farm used by their own forefathers of the family, b) the mild slope with proper sunshine, c) the soil which could be conserved and controlled at the depth of 4" to 6", d) area about 1 ha and not less than 2 acres. Through forest cutting, burning and clearance of forest growth, formation of drains at the gap 30 to 35 ft. of slopes of 2ft. wide, formation of soil guard with the use of woods and bamboos (3 rows across the slope), plantation of bamboo, mango, banana, pine apple, papaya, tree beans, citrus fruits etc., construction of farm house and farmstead they prepare the land for shifting cultivation. They produce rice, pulses, vegetables, spices (chilly, ginger and turmeric), tapioca, yam, sweet potato, oilseeds (mustard and ground nuts), maize and millets, medicinal plants and herbal species etc. In the second year they prepare the land for next year cultivation and follow certain measures for soil management like dibbling, weeding, threshing, repairing of drains, planting etc. In spite of the governmental regulations the people of Manipur are practicing shifting cultivation because of the following:

- a) There is no ownership right of land for a family farm,
- b) It is an ecological friendly system of farming,
- c) There is no risks and uncertainty of the farming,
- d) There is full employment of the family members,

¹³ Letter to Mr. Jude Sekhar, Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, on the subject of 'Appeal to desist from according "Forest Clearance" for proposed 1500 MW Tipaimukh Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project' on 8th July 2013, *Joint Submission of the Committee on the Protection Natural Resources in Manipur (CPNRM), The Citizens' Concern for Dams and Development (CCDD) and The Action Committee Against Tipaimukh Dam Project (ACTIP) to the Forest Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India to desist according "Forest Clearance" for the proposed 1500 MW Tipaimukh Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project in Manipur*, available at http://e-paolive.net/download/education/2013/07/ccdd_actip_cpnrm_FAC_MoEF_Tipaimukh_Dam_8_July_13.pdf, accessed on 8th November, 2015.

- e) High possibility of diversified farming,
- f) It is an occupation with a blend of culture and romance,
- g) It supplies feed and fodders for wild, semi-domestic and domestic animals,
- h) It enriches the fertility of the foothill areas,
- i) It preserves medicinal plants, herbal spices and indigenous plants, etc.,
- j) It is a gainful occupation with the use of the low-cost traditional technology of the poor people,
- k) It is harmless to the quality of soils and water resources of the hills,
- l) It preserves the traditional tribal institution as indigenous education technologies and other rural activities.¹⁴

For generations, people are using land, water and forest resources of the proposed site for their survival and sustenance. Therefore, that practice cannot be changed suddenly and proposal for huge developmental project like industrialization and dam construction would be illogical offerings for the people who are dependent on the agro-based economy. They would represent themselves as the members of pre-industrial society in which they assert community rights over natural resources and appeal for biodiversity conservation and management for sustainable resource use.

Strong opposition to POSCO came from three separate groups mainly. The most prominent of them was POSCO *Pratirodh Sangarsh Samiti* (PPSS), led by Abhay Sahoo of the Communist Party of India (CPI), originated in Dhinkia Panchayat with most households who opposed the project. The other group with a political affiliation was *Bhita Mati Bachao Andolan*, dominated by the Congress which has been more or less inactive. The third group was *Nav Nirman Samiti*, a voluntary effort spearheaded by the *Rashtriya Yuva Sangathan*, the youth wing of the *Sarvodaya* movement that follows Gandhian principles. This group used to be active around Nuagaon Panchayat. The opinion of the opposition groups differed several

¹⁴ Singh, N. Ram, 2001, "Shifting Cultivation Practices in Manipur" in B. C. Barah edited *Prioritization of Strategies for Agricultural Development in Northeastern India* (Proceedings 9), National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (ICAR), New Delhi, pp. 94-100.

times on different issues. *Rashtriya Seva Dal* (RSD) activists felt that the CPI, which dominates the PPSS, is politicizing the issue and RSD activists were not comfortable with political parties who were dominating the anti-POSCO struggle. There were also ideological disagreements. For example – the RSD claims that the CPI position on the project is weak because they are not “against industry *per se* but are only asking for a change of site” and “they don’t have a problem if an alternative site is proposed”. Akhay Kumar, one of the active participants of the struggle, “we want a value-based struggle that takes a clear ideological line in opposition to the neo-liberal agenda”. From July 2005 Abhay Sahoo, State Secretary of CPI, came to the area and led the anti-POSCO movement and mobilized the party cadres. Gradually people developed a faith in the consistent and focused leadership provided by him to the anti-POSCO movement. To Sahoo, CPI did not own the anti-POSCO movement; it merely provided the leadership, it was a people’s struggle.¹⁵ Despite the internal conflicts among the opposition groups, the key strategies of protest by different groups were basically non-violent which include: picketing POSCO’s local office, holding rallies and demonstrations, gherao and detention of government and company officials entering the area, blockading the area to prevent the entry of all government and POSCO officials etc. The setting up of check posts in the area by the local communities was an effective strategy. In these check posts, women and children placed for 24 hour vigil which restricted the movement of local officials and POSCO staff at the project site. In August 2007, the Khandadhar Suraksha Samiti under the leadership of BJP All India Vice President and MP from the area, Mr Jual Oram submitted a Memorandum to the Governor of Orissa demanding that the mining lease to POSCO should not be granted considering the impacts on the local environment and life. The Memorandum states that:

“The Khandadhar Water fall a 245 meters cascading side is not only a place of tourist attraction but a natural flow of irrigation system that caters the needs of six to seven Gram Panchayat located in Lahunipara Block under Bonaigarh Sub-Division of Sundergarh district. Any de-mutation of volume of water from Khandadhar River will affect thousands of families whose vocation is agriculture.

¹⁵ Asher, Manshi, 2009, *Striking While the Iron is Hot: A Case Study of the Pohang Steel Company’s (POSCO) proposed Project in Orissa*, National Centre for Advocacy Studies, Pune, pp. 18-19.

There is a proposal of leasing out Khandadhar Hill range to the POSCO for lifting of Iron Ore. Our bitter experience has been that a small mines been operated by OMC in these area has greatly diminished the flow of water. Any large scale excavating and lifting of iron ores will dry up the water fall of Khandadhar".¹⁶

The role of middle class political personalities in the protest movement against POSCO was analyzed. They raised the issue of social and environmental justice but multi-coloured political manipulations dominated the scene. Significantly, new social movements are concerned with the non-economic issues of the society but the anti-POSCO movement was organized to secure the sources of the livelihood of the local people. In other words, economic issues were the primary concern of the movement. Even, at one of time, when the a number of *POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samiti* (PPSS) activists were arrested and a number of cases have been filed against the PPSS supporter, the PPSS appealed for the immediate legal and financial support from the people to apply for bailing out the protesters and other innocent villagers, and to prevent further arrests. Representatives from Delhi Solidarity Group (DSG), New Delhi and Alternative Law Forum (ALF), Bangalore went for Fact Finding visit to the POSCO affected Dthinkia Panchayat consisting of the villages of Dthinkia, Govindpur and Patana between 2nd-24th December, 2012 to collect first-hand information in regard to the abuse of the criminal system to implicate villagers as well as to figure out the areas of support needed. It was observed that villagers have been unable to leave their villages for almost 6-8 years in fear that they would be arrested, and have been unable to approach the court for legal remedies due to financial constraints. Even a bank account was also created to collect the financial support.¹⁷ For such political activities, the protest movement organizations naturally became the vanguard of movement which ultimately served the interest of the local cultivators and fishermans and tried to halt environmental deterioration. On the other hand, politics of resistance against Tipaimukh dam got non-violent shape in the hands of a dozen of micro-organizations and NGOs and even took a violent figure in

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁷ A forwarded e-mail on the subject 'Immediate Legal and Financial Support needed! POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samiti (PPSS)', available at https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/alfexternal/n6tFuPB_M5M, accessed on 8th November, 2015.

the hands of the local tribals. Major movement groups, NGOs and professionals joined the protest for countering displacement, environmental hazards and loss of bio-diversity.¹⁸ The major protest organizations like CPNRM, CCDD, ACTIP etc. followed the strategies of appeal, petition and demonstration and many other normative means to resist the dam construction over the Barak River.¹⁹ On the contrary, the armed wings of Hmars and Nagas, putting violent threat, clarified that they will not allow any transfer of their beloved land for the so-called national development.²⁰ Thus the movement took a violent turn and expressed vibrant ethnic assertion for securing local natural resources.

In both cases, the developmental paradigm prescribed by the state institution was not preferable for the local people. May be they were not the development seeker, they were satisfied with the traditional mode of occupation based on the environmental resources; hence they went against the state sponsored developmental project keeping in view the use of available natural resources. POSCO asserted that approximately 2,000 people of 400 households are expected to be relocated as a result of the setting up of the mining project. Simultaneously, POSCO would provide 48,000 jobs in the region. POSCO claimed the construction of the phase alone would create approximately 467,000 man-years of employment for the people in the area.²¹ On the other hand, the partners of Tipaimukh dam project proposed that the dam project would generate regular employment to 826 persons.²² The development givers assured to provide huge number of employment to the local people to satisfy them. For rehabilitation and resettlement of the potential displacees, the development givers presented a list of many affirmative actions including urbanization, high class

¹⁸ Hussain, Monirul, 2008, *Interrogating Development: State, Displacement and Popular Resistance in North East India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, pp. 126-132.

¹⁹ Letter to Mr. Jude Sekhar, Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, on the subject of 'Appeal to desist from according "Forest Clearance" for proposed 1500 MW Tipaimukh Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project' on 8th July 2013.

²⁰ Arora, Vibha and Ngamjahao Kipgen, 2012, "We can live without power, but we can't live without our land: Indigenous Hmar Oppose the Tipaimukh Dam in Manipur" in *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 61, No. 1, p. 125.

²¹ Sahu, Abhay and Kumarchand Marandi, 2011, "Legal Procedure and Local Knowledge" in Gabriella Wass edited *Corporate Activity and Human Rights in India*, Human Rights Law Network, New Delhi, p. 90.

²² Agenda – 3, File No. 8-63/2005-FC, p. 15, p. 13.

tourism, housing, better quality of lifestyle etc. but the local people rejected the models of development. Affected by the politics of oppression and exploitation, they ultimately raised voice in support of environmental protection. The majority of the potential oustees didn't accept the conditions of Rehabilitation and Resettlement package shown by the development givers (state institution and the partners of the project). Thus the social movements for livelihood security and environmental justice have emerged as counter veiling power against industrialism, modernism and globalism.

Field studies, articles and many other written documents have shown up many evidences on the pervasive and perpetual myths related to the forests and water resources of the proposed site for POSCO and Tipaimukh projects. The *Paudi Bhuiyan*, a primitive tribal community of the Khandadhar hill believes that the Goddess Kanteshwari resides in the cave of the Khandadhar hill and to be secured from the wrath of the Goddess Kanteshwari we must not ruin the natural structure and settings of Khandadhar hill.²³ On the contrary, at the Tipaimukh dam project site there is a small river island called *Thiledam* which is considered as holy place for the Hmars, local Chin-Kuki-Mizo group of tribes, as they believe that this island is the first place where the soul of a Hmar goes after a person dies. From this island, the soul move forward either to paradise or to hell or comes back to the earth to be reborn.²⁴ Nodoubt, these myths have been popularized to highlight the importance of natural resources on socio-economic and cultural life of the poor tribals and other marginalized people.

²³ Manshi, Asher, 2009, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

²⁴ Arora, Vibha and Ngamjahao Kipgen, 2012, *op. cit.*, p. 114.