

Abstract

CIVIL SOCIETY BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS: A STUDY OF SELECT CIVIL SOCIETY COLLECTIVE ACTIONS IN NORTH BENGAL

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Urbanization is the process of population growth and industrial development within a settlement. This phenomenon encompasses the expansion in both the quantity and size of cities, signifying the migration of individuals from rural to urban regions. The occurrence of urbanization is a result of the expansion and concentration of urban areas. However, in India, unregulated urbanization has led to a swift deterioration of the environment, giving rise to numerous issues such as land insecurity, deteriorating water quality, heightened air pollution, noise pollution, and challenges related to waste management.

Rapid and unbridled urbanization is causing tremendous harm to environment. Environment is the most precious thing to human. It is the environment which gives human to live, to breath and to do his all his activities. But human activities such as reducing the vegetation area in the urban area by making apartments, shopping malls, factories, Deeping is the issue of urban environment degradation. There is a big difference between the urbanization in the developed countries and the urbanization process in the developing countries. The urban environment degradation is mush severe in the third world countries compare to the developed nations. The cities of third world countries are facing serious challenges like rapid population influx, high unemployment, less job opportunities, corruption, proper urban planning and lack of sufficient capital to build sustainable urban infrastructure. But it is also true that the urban areas of developed countries are also facing serious environmental challenges.

The urban environmental challenges are more severe in India. From last few decades India is exercising rise of rapid urbanization. India is the fifth largest economies in the world. India needs to sustain its economic growth. Urban areas are the engines for the economic growth of any country son in India too. But this increase of urban environment haphazard. This situation of urban environmental degradation is happening across the country. The urban areas of North Bengal also could not get abstain from this situation. North Bengal region is the northern region of West Bengal state. North Bengal is mainly famous for its natural beauty and beautiful

environment. Many urban centers of North Bengal are popular tourist destination in the country. From last couple decades the urban centers are experiencing rapid population growth due to rapid migration from rural areas to urban areas for better living standard, more job opportunities. But most of the urban centers are severely suffering with urban environmental health challenges.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are one of the key actors in environmental protection in the world. CSOs such as Non-Governmental Organizations, voluntary organizations, Non-profit organizations, trusts etc. have been playing crucial role in protection the environment in the world and in India too. Many prominent environmental movements, campaigns have been carried out by the CSOs. They have been a voice of the vulnerable.

Thus the study intends to:

- To find out the current urban environmental issues of North Bengal region
- To review of the role of Civil society organizations (CSOs) in the protection of urban environment in the north Bengal regions
- To provide comprehensive assessment of the role of administration to address the environmental challenges in North Bengal
- To analyze the success and failures of environmental protest movements, campaigns in the region
- To find out the people participation and CSOs involvement in the environmental protest movements in the select region.

Considering the nature of the research problem we have used both qualitative and quantitative method in the study. To understand the real ground problems of the research study, we have collected the data from primary sources. The primary data collected through several interviews with respondents from common people, CSOs and administrators. The secondary data has been collected through government reports, newspapers articles, journals, books.

The research study has following research questions:

- How do civil society-led environmental movements manifest in North Bengal?
- How do Civil Society Organizations contribute to and play various roles in facilitating these movements?

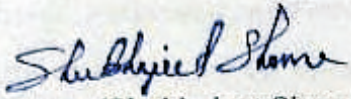
- What factors contribute to the success of certain collective actions that emerge as movements?
- What factors contribute to the failure of certain collective actions for environmental justice?
- How do organizations, mobilizations, structures, and strategies differ in collective actions for environmental justice?

During the field work we have closely examined the ongoing urban environmental protest movements and campaigns in the select area of North Bengal. We have communicated with the respondents from the protesters of different movements. They have been interviewed personally and many others were communicated via phone calls. The role of the CSOs in environmental movements is very important. Members of several CSOs have been interviewed and communicated to gain data in this regard. Administrators are also communicated and interviewed to understand the urban environmental aspect of the North Bengal region.

We have closely evaluated the origins and evolution of the urban environmental movements. During field study it is found that many urban environmental campaigns and movements are not being conducted effectively and their presence is not visible. The intensity of many

movements is low. The environmental problems that are going on in the urban areas of the selected districts of North Bengal are increasing gradually. The survey conducted in the field also discovered that the urban environmental problems are negatively impacting the lives of people residing in urban areas. Over time, there have been several protest movements and campaigns organized to address these environmental issues in the region, each in their own unique way. Our research revealed that different Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are tackling these environmental concerns, but their efforts have not been sufficient in effectively resolving the urban environmental issues and protest movements. It is of utmost importance to give higher level of effort by CSOs in tackling the issues of urban environmental problems and to encourage impactful leadership in urban environmental protest movements within the urban hubs of the area. The thesis has made an attempt to find out the reasons of the environmental movements in the urban areas along with the success and failures of the movements. The nature of activities of CSOs are crucial in this regard. The present study attempts to understand the overall

aspects of urban environmental situation of the select urban centers of North Bengal region.



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