

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

4.1. INTRODUCTION

India has the heritage of ecological consciousness endowed and endeared by its religion and culture. Classical India testified a cosmological worldview through the religio-philosophical outlook of the Vedic, Upanishadic, Epic and Puranic traditions (Singh: 1986, Dwivedi and Tiwari: 1987, Mathew: 1996, Dua: 1996, Seth: 1997, James: 1999; Chandrasekhar: 1999; Dwivedi: 2001). Literary imagination in India too portrays a harmonious man-nature relationship. From Kalidasa to Rabindranath Tagore, literary genres in India succinctly delineate harmony between human beings and nature (Mishra: 1992, Seth: 1997, Ray: 1999; Sen Gupta: 2001). Thus, one of the chief characteristics of the Indian civilization has been a marked sensitivity to natural ecosystems. However, this is not to suggest that the heritage of eco-spirituality has prevented the Indians to harm their environment. Environmental deterioration took place in India despite Indian civilization having a tradition of a marked sensitivity towards the environment for a couple of reasons which are tied to the socio-historical contextualities that India passed through. India historically was a collective of numerous principalities ruled by petty kings and emperors. Firstly, game-hunting culture was integral to the palace lifestyles, which led to the extinction of some rare animals like some species of cheetah and tigers. Secondly, construction of large palatial edifices demanded a supply of huge amount of timber and fuel-wood, which was extracted luxuriously from the rich tropical forests. Thirdly, Indian history is a history of internecine warfare between kings and feudal lords. Moreover, India also witnessed a series of external aggressions. This tradition of warfare had an adverse impact on India's environment. For instance, flooding of enemy's route to prevent them from advancing, destruction of cultivated environment such as crop fields and orchards with the intent to effect habitat-denial to its human occupants, digging of trenches and construction of bridges and roads to facilitate military operations, clearing of forests and exploitation of wetlands to increase food production to feed the fighting soldiers--all these war strategies could have impacted on the human and natural environment adversely.

Fourthly, the development of urban centers might also have had its negative impacts on the environment. Hence, environmental destruction has taken place in India despite her rich ecological sensitivity as manifest in the rich civilizational, cultural, social, and literary traditions. Thus, probably for these and such like reasons some non-Indian scholars have expressed doubts over the contributions of Indian tradition to environmental problem solving. For example, Following Said's orientalist path as reconceptualized by Larson (1989), in the context of environmental conservation, Callicott and Ames (1989) made a dichotomous categorization of the rational approach to environmentalism of the West and the irrational other of the East as represented by the Indian and Chinese traditions and expressed doubts over the contributions of Eastern traditions to environmental problem solving. However, in his later work, Callicott (1995) revised the earlier position in the context of his discussion on the Chipko movement.

The New Social Movements in India emerged because of the failure of the established oppositional forces in India's national politics, especially the left, and more particularly after the smashing of the Naxal movement, in giving direction and providing organization to the activity of the subaltern, marginal groups in the period characterized by the failure of the National Project and one-party dominance. Thus the failure engendered a space for new political agents to articulate their grievances, leading to the emergence of the '*new left*', new social movements and a host of grass-root organizations. The new social movements, including the environmental movements in India are studied in at least two different ways in India (this as been discussed in some detail in the foregoing chapter). First, the leftist perspective (Omvedt: 1988; Frank and Fuentes: 1987; Dhanagare and John: 1988), which looks at the environmental movement as a displaced form of class struggle, and having its roots in the class-divided Indian society. The second perspective looks at the new social movements as struggles against the centralized state (Kothari: 1982; Guha: 1982). This perspective although acknowledges the movement as a byproduct of class exploitation, yet it focuses on particular, issue-specific nature of the new social movements. Hence, as represented by the two perspectives, the environmental movement as a form

of new social movement has two aspects: general, universal aspect, and uniquely specific or particularistic aspect.

The new social movements are constructed around various forms of antiauthoritarian politics, identity politics and ecological politics as well as traditional class struggle politics. In the cultural rebound against universalism after the 1960s, new social movements continuously sought to create autonomous space for the particularity of youth, queers, women and people of color as well as for the general ecology of the planet. On the other hand, the traditional class-oriented movements have been in continual decline due to the rise of a global neoliberal economy since the 1980s. Faced with such circumstances, labor unions have often opted to merely *'protect their own'* leaving most low-income women, people of color, immigrants, tribals, marginalized communities and students to fend for themselves. Thus, new social movements are seen as both displaced form of class politics as well as movement against the authoritarian nature of the modern state. Thus, a new social movement including the environmental movement has a dual aspect: — 'general' aspect in the sense that predominantly it represents a movement against omnipotent nature of the modern state to which the certain class of people fall a prey; and a 'particularistic' aspect of addressing a specific, localized issue concerning a particular social category like the women's issue, an environmental issue, issue of displacement of a tribal population from its natural habitation, etc. While there have been enormous strides made in the study of new social movements, the downside has been that in general, they have not successfully articulated the intersectionalities of these various oppressions and resistances. This failure has resulted in focusing on rather fragmented, *'single-issue politics'* or an analysis of only the *'general aspect'* of the movement politics with no visible option other than reformist - rather than transformational - political activity. This is because the studies have failed to take into account both these aspects, or have overlooked the interrelationship between these two aspects of a new social movement in general the environmental movement in particular. However, a proper dialectical comprehension of the environmental movement necessitates an understanding of the dialectical interrelationships between the *'generalistic'* and *'particularistic'* aspects of the environmental movement. This interrelationship can be understood only through the study of the dynamic and transformative aspects of the movement.

Indian experience with the environmental issues also, as has been pointed out above, an experience of environmental degradation and therefore, the political experience is marked by the emergence of the environmental social movement. The environmental degradation in India gained momentum with the exploitation of natural resources by the colonial rulers. The colonial scientific discourse borne out of the demands of self-interests on the part of the colonial state (Sangwan: 1998), game hunting by the colonial masters to assert their superiority over the natives (Pandian: 1998), unscientific and unadapted British colonial forest policy which served only the British colonial and commercial interests, and the consequent denial of the forest rights to indigenous communities and the tribal groups not only led to the ruthless exploitation of Indian environment but also invited environmental resistances from different quarters. Some prominent ones among them include the Deccan Land Rights Movement (1815) in Turia village of Seoni District of Madhya Pradesh in which people revolted when their right over their grazing land was denied by the British Forest Department (Sudarsan and Sinha: 1996, Karnik: 2005), the Indigo Movement of 1860 (ibid), the tribal resistances against British colonial forest policy in Thana District of Maharashtra in the early nineteenth century (Saldanha: 1998), and in Kumaon, the Upar and Forest Movements of 1921, and the Kisan Andolan of 1944-48 in the Garhwal Himalayas (Guha:1989). These apart, protests against the native king Ajit Singh of Jodhpur and his soldiers' attempt to take away the trees from the forest of Khejarli, a Bisnoi village, led by Amrita Devi in which around 363 people sacrificed their lives for the protection of their forests (Guha: 1989; Dangwal: 1998; Karnik: 2005) is yet another environmental protest movement witnessed in pre-independent India. These speak of a sharpening man-nature conflict in the course of the Indian civilization.

The rise and development of environmental movements in India with a renewed vigour in the post independent India, especially since the later half of the 1960s owe to several factors and forces. But the primary cause to this end is undoubtedly the nature of the development model India adopted in the said period by the authoritarian developmental state on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the exploitative nature of the Indian society characterized by caste and class based exploitation of the poor and the democracy from above.

Therefore, from one standpoint, the post-independent period in India witnessed the emergence of the Indian 'nation-state' crafted by following the modular concept of western nationhood. Thus, the modern Indian nation state favoured the western development strategies based on the growth model shelving aside the eco-friendly development strategies advocated by renaissance and pre-independent thinkers like Rabindranath Tagore (Ray: 1999; Sen Gupta: 2001) and Mahatma Gandhi (Nanda: 1980; Khoshoo: 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999; Sharma: 2003). The growth model is the capitalist paradigm which identifies development with heavy industrialization and market oriented high productivity. The compulsion for India to adopt this model of development was dictated by the fact that India was economically exploited and drained for over three centuries by colonial administration, and hence, it was necessary for India to accelerate the process of economic development to accomplish in a generation, which had taken the affluent centuries to achieve. Thus mammoth and pharaonic projects like the establishment of steel mills, big dams, and nuclear power plants with a hope to generate wealth and subsequently, chemical intensive agricultural practices to ensure self-sufficiency in food grains were taken up. Those projects had their costs: thousands of people were displaced, millions of hectares of forests cleared and dozens of rivers fouled. Both public and private sectors of economy were allowed free access to nature, and hence the right to freely pollute air and water (Guha: 2000). Thus, by the late 1960s failures of this model of development was exposed by magnifying poverty, unbalanced development, depletion of natural resources and the displacement of indigenous communities from their land, destruction of the livelihood resources of the poor people who rely on the forests for their subsistence, all posing a threat to the future generation. From a different standpoint, the exploitation of the marginal communities by the dominant caste and class perpetuated owing to the failure of the left in the wake of neoliberal wave, paving way for the emergence of the new agents of social transformation with new issue-specific agenda like gender issues, environment etc under the leadership of the new left. This perspective perceives the environmental movements in India as a displaced form of class struggle.

This context provided a fertile ground for the eruption of environmental movement in the form of new social movements and a subsequent body of

literature on Indian environmentalism broadly manifested in two dominant strands or analytical frameworks: Vandana Shiva's 'Spiritual Ecology' and Gadgil and Guha's 'Political Ecology'. Shiva's spiritual ecology views Indian environmentalism as a critique of the Judaeo-Christian values such as the desire for mastery over nature-an approach, which has a strong feminist dimension arguing for a rediscovery of the 'feminine principle' in human relations with nature (Shiva: 1988). Political Ecology of Ramachandra Guha and Madhav Gadgil on the other hand see environmental conflict as a confrontation between the developmentalist state and the working poor whose livelihood depends on access to natural resources. Environmentalism under this framework is interpreted as resistance to state sponsored development and gives priority to subsistence needs of the poor (Gadgil and Guha: 1995). Although, both versions of environmentalisms focus on the adoption of western growth model of development and the consumerist lifestyle associated with it as the source of environmental conflicts and contradictions, yet these two frameworks of analysis have failed to accommodate the dualist nature of the environmental movements, and therefore, have rendered themselves as inadequate in explaining the dynamic nature of the environmental movements, the comprehension of which constitutes the core of the environmental policy making process.

Thus, the development path that Indian developmental nation- state followed which promoted the desire to harness nature beyond limits and destroyed the livelihoods of the people and which failed to create alternative livelihood opportunities on the one hand, and the continuous exploitation of the weaker sections of the populace on the other set the stage for the emergence of the environment related protest movements in India in the form of people's rights movements, with the Chipko movement taking the lead.

4.2. AN OVERVIEW OF SOME ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

The literature on Indian environmental movements both as a form of social movement (Omvedt: 1993; Kothari: 1984) or in themselves (Gadgil and Guha: 1995; Shiva and Bandyopadhyay: 1989), reflect the disenchantment with the state-led development paradigm and their undaunted proliferation. Some of the

prominent environmental movements have been briefly discussed below to facilitate our understanding of the origin, issues, actors and strategies and ideological orientations of the Indian environmental movements. However, the two most important environmental movements in the Indian context, that is, the Chipko Movement and the Narmada Bachao Andolan, have not been dealt with in the present section. This is because since these two movements are the oldest environmental movements in India, these have been taken for the in-depth study of the dynamics and transformations of the environmental movements in India, and hence, we have discussed each of them separately in the subsequent chapters. Some other environmental movements of significance have been discussed in the present section based on which we have attempted our preliminary and common sense understanding of the environmental movements in India and studied their origin and nature, actors, objectives, strategies and typology.

4.2.1. Appiko Movement

Appiko Movement is one of the forests based environmental movements of India, often looked at as a continuation of the Chipko Movement (Alvares: 1984). The movement took place in the Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka in the Western Ghats.

The story of the movement is that for several decades the forest department had been promoting monoculture plantations of teak after clear-felling the existing mixed semi-evergreen forests. In August 1983, the villagers of the Sirsi Taluk of Uttara Kannada requested the forest department not to continue the felling operations in the Bilegal forest under the Hulekal range. The forest department, however, did not pay any heed to the request of the villagers and the clear felling of the natural forests by the contractors continued. The villagers felt the ill effect of this arrogance on the part of the forest department. There was severe soil erosion and drying up of the perennial water resources. In the Salkani village of Sirsi Taluk, people were deprived of the only patch of forest left near this and surrounding villages to obtain biomass for fuel wood, fodder, and honey (Shiva: 1991). Moreover, the spice-garden farmers of Uttara Kannada who were critically dependent on leaf manure from the forests (Gadgil et al: 1986) were also badly hit. This situation led the youth and women of the Salkani

village and the surrounding villages to march in to the forest and launch a Chipko-type movement. The youths and women hugged the trees ('Appiko' means to 'Hug' in Kannada), and hence, physically prevented the axe-man from felling the trees pursuing the orders of the forest department. The protestors demanded an immediate ban on the felling of green trees. The Appiko Movement within the forest continued for thirty-eight days after which the government finally withdrew the felling orders. The activists also extracted an oath from the loggers to the effect that they would not destroy trees in the forest (Mani: 1984). However, the felling began again and consequently, the people renewed their Appiko movement in October 1983. Thus, the second phase of the movement took place in the deciduous forests of Husri, with approximately one hundred activists participating in the movement. In November of the same year, the movement reached Nidgod in Siddapan Taluka with over three hundred men and women participating in it.

The Appiko movement had a three-fold objective. They are: firstly, protecting the existing forest cover; secondly, the regeneration of trees in denuded land; and thirdly, the utilization of the forest wealth with proper consideration to the conservation of natural resources. The activists with the help of a local popular organization called the Parisar Samrakshana Kendra carried out these objectives of the movement. Appiko is one of the successful environmental movements in India. The study of the movement shows that the movement emerged, evolved, developed and transformed during its course.

4.2.2. The Silent Valley Movement

The Silent Valley Movement is one of the most important ecological movements in India. Avijit Gupta (1988) is of the opinion that Silent valley has become a landmark in the ecological movements where a third world group of conservationists prevented the state government from destroying a valuable rainforest. Thus Darryl D' Monte (1985) describes it as the most fiercely contested environmental disputes in the country that quickly symbolized the quest for a new paradigm of development without destruction. Sumi Krishna (1996) also emphasizes the significance of the Silent Valley movement when she

states that environment-development trade-offs are rarely as clear-cut as in the case of the Silent Valley.

Silent Valley is the narrow valley of the Kunthipuzha River in the state of Kerala in the Malabar region at the southern end of the Western Ghats. It stands at an elevation between 2400 and 1000 meters (Sudarsan and Sinha: 1996). It has 8950 hectares of rainforest, one of the few remaining rainforests in India, with valuable flora and fauna. In 1973, the then state government of Kerala decided to build a dam across a gorge in the Kunthipuzha River, which flows through the Silent Valley. The proposed project would generate 200 MW of electricity, and form the basis for regional economic development. However, the proposed project was not ecologically viable, as it would drown a chunk of the valuable rainforest of the valley and threaten the life of a host of endangered species of both flora and fauna. Hence, by 1979, students, rural schoolteachers, science forums, journalists, citizens, and voluntary organizations made a well-reasoned case against the project. As a result, an organization called Save Silent Valley Committee emerged which spearheaded the protest against the construction of the dam across the Kunthi River in the Silent Valley.

The central issues of the Silent Valley protests included the protection of the tropical rainforest, maintenance of the ecological balance, and an opposition to destructive development. The campaigns and petitions were the main strategies adopted by the activists in the movement, basing it on the non-violent, Gandhian ideological orientation. The movement also portrays as to how the coalition was formed of the people belonging to different professions came together to fight against the project. It has also enmeshed several themes within it such as of the protest against the destruction of forest, an opposition to ecologically unsustainable development, and above all, maintenance of the ecological balance. This diversity of the theme of the movement could attract people belonging to the different walks of life, thereby giving energy and vigour to the movement to move and to transform.

4.2.3. The Fisherfolk Movement

Kerala occupies the foremost position in marine fish productions and export earnings in India. The famous Wadge Bank is situated within the exploitable limits of Kerala. The presence of shallow mud banks that result in the surfacing of particular species of fishes is a unique feature of the coast. Despite the existence of such opulent resources, traditional fishing communities have remained socio-économically marginalized. Traditional fishing was carried out by small-unpowered craft confined to shallow waters. Mechanization began with an Indo-Norwegian Project in 1953 to meet the rising demands for shrimps from countries like Japan and the USA. This led not only to the dwindling of fish stocks but also to the livelihood problems of the traditional fisherman who could not afford the mechanization of their fishing equipments. The Fisherfolk, therefore, felt the need to strengthen themselves to check this trend. Hence the Fisherfolk Movement emerged with the formation of cooperatives and networks as revealed in studies made by a host of scholars (Mathur: 1977; Abraham: 1995; Murickan Mathew: 1998; Chakraborty: 1999; Aerthayil: 2000).

In the 1960s, voluntary organizations working under the leadership of Catholic priests took the first initiative to organize the fisherfolk in to welfare cooperatives. This was followed by a consolidation of fishermen's groups in to labour unions in places like Kollam, Alleppey and Trivandrum. Parallel to this, Hindu fishermen also organized a Dheevera Sabha which took up the livelihood security of the fisherfolk. Muslim fishermen, however, did not indulge in such organization building measures. In 1977, fishermen's organizations from southern districts of Kerala decided to form a network organization. Thus the first unified organization of the fisherfolk was formed under the leadership of Fr. Paul Arrakkal of Allapuzha union and Fr. Albert Parisavila of the Kollam union. This network was initially named as *Kerala Lateen Catholica Malsya Thozhilali Federation* (KLCNTF). The KLCNTF intensified the struggle against mechanized fishing through various modes of protests like hunger strikes, picketing, *dharnas*, and public meetings, and through memorandums, involving the fisherfolk. The movement leadership was soon secularized for reasons of the movement and the organization was renamed as *Kerala Swathantra Malsya Thozhilali Federation* (KSMTF). Following this, the fishermen's campaign became a regular feature in

the state, and later in 1979, National Forum for Catamaran and Country Boat Fishermen's Rights and Marine Wealth was constituted by the representatives of thirteen major regional fishermen's unions. The National Forum coordinated and carried out national level campaigns by lobbying legislators and pressurizing the government against the exploitation by the mechanized fishing firms.

The Fisherfolk movement although originated in Kerala, yet the distribution of the movement was not even in the state. The Fisherfolk Movement was strongly felt in the southern districts of Kerala but the traditional fishermen along the Malabar Coast did not participate actively in the movement as trawling, one of the major issues of the movement, was not significant in that area. Rather, they formed unions and purchased mechanized boats for better fishing. Yet another section of the traditional fishermen did not participate in the movement because some of their family members owned mechanized boats to which the movement was opposed. In the northern part of Kerala, there was confusion that the movement was an attempt to convert people to Christianity, and as such, the movement did not gain much momentum in the area. This was a serious limitation of the movement.

Despite these limitations, the movement was successful in pressurizing both the union and the state governments to institute policy reforms safeguarding the livelihood of the traditional fisherfolk community. It began as a grassroots movement and today it stands as a strong mass movement of the Indian fish workers with strong international ties. It is today a focal point of many social movement studies both at home and abroad.

4.2.4. The Chilika Bachao Andolan

Chilika Bachao Andolan is one of the most discussed environmental movements in India. The movement began as a grassroots movement and in the subsequent years it evolved in to an organized mass movement. Although the movement has achieved the initial objective of preventing the entry of big business houses like the Tatas into the commercial aquaculture of prawns, thereby threatening the livelihood of the poor, yet the movement continues with greater environmental and ecological objectives. It has been a movement that has

attracted a wide academic interest (Bogaert: 1992; Dogra: 1992; Shankar: 1992), a movement that highlighted the importance of local communities in the protection and preservation of the natural environment.

Chilika, located in the Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Orissa, is the largest brackish water lake in India, and a home to a large variety of fish and plants that thrive in brackish water. The lake is separated from the Bay of Bengal by a long sandy ridge varying between 100 to 300 yards in width one natural opening near Arakkuda that permits the flow of water and migration of fish from the sea to the lake. The lake contains sweet-saline ecosystem during the year. Chilika has been identified as a wetland of international importance at the Ramsar Convention held in Iran in 1971 (Das: 1996) to which India is a signatory. Government of India has also declared Chilika as a bird sanctuary for facilitating the migration of about one hundred and thirty two species of birds from Siberia every winter.

A heterogeneous population comprising of both fishermen and farmer belonging to different caste groups inhabits the surrounding area of Chilika. To be more precise, Brahamagiri, Kanasa, and Krishnaprasad Blocks of Puri District, Tangi and Chilika Blocks of Khurda District and Khalikot and Ganjam Blocks of Ganjam District with an approximately 12, 363 fisherfolk households inhabiting it surround the Chilika area. Fishing and agriculture are the two primary sources of livelihood of the populace. The fishermen belong mostly to the lower castes and most of them are either landless or possess tiny landholdings. Hence, over a lakh of fisherfolk are completely dependent on the ecosystem for fishing to earn their livelihood (Abassi and Mishra: 1997). Recently, the upper castes also have taken to fishing because of steadily lucrative nature of the prawn market.

In 1986, the then Congress government of Orissa entered into a deal with the Tata Aquatic Farms Ltd to lease 1400 hectares of land in Chilika for prawn cultivation called the Integrated Shrimp Farm Project for a period of 15 years in which the government had a 10% share. The Janata Dal opposed the project then but when it came to power immediately in 1989, it changed the name of the farm into Chilika Aquatic Farms Ltd and increased the share of the government to

49%. The project envisaged the creation of an artificial lake inside Chilika by enclosing the landmass with a 13.7 kilometers long ring embankment. The artificial lake was to be divided into a number of ponds to facilitate the commercial rearing of prawns. The government policy and the consequent execution of the project was a direct threat to people's livelihood in Chilika.

As a response to this Integrated Shrimp Farm Project, people, mostly fishermen of Chilika launched the Chilika Bachao Andolan (Save the Chilika Movement). Non-fishermen farmers, students especially from Utkal University, intellectuals, and human rights activists supported the fishermen in their struggle, that is, the Chilika resistance. Subsequently the *Orissa Krushak Mahasangha* (OKM) entered the fray to protect the livelihood rights of the fisherfolk. Rallies, demonstrations and meetings were held, and the Chilika Lake reverberated with voices of protests opposing the Tata business house, the government and the developmental idiom that gave priority to the commercial use of resources as against the local use for subsistence. The entry of OKM gave a new dimension to the movement since 1992 by raising the question of ecological health of the Chilika Lake, which was hitherto left out, along with the issue of the impairment of the livelihood opportunities of the indigenous communities. The movement was intense, involving moving of judicial institutions to rallying and demonstrating, even leading to bloodshed on May 29, 1999 in Sorana police firing, an incident after the departure of the Tatas from the site.

However, the movement was episodic in nature and uneven in speed. Although there were internal conflicts and contestations within the movement, yet the movement succeeded in raising certain critical and pertinent issues like the ownership of Chilika, destruction of the livelihood opportunities and the consequent fate of the fishing community, and also questioned the role of the state during the instances of conflict of commercial use of resources by the business houses with the livelihood pursuit of the poor people. The struggle of the Chilika Bachao Andolan exhibited the might of the fishermen as well as the role played by the fisherwomen. This Andolan amplified the local struggle into a larger movement and has focused its attention on the nature of development. The movement has attracted international attention due to several issues such as

environmental degradation through intensive prawn aquaculture, deprivation of the main support base for the livelihood of the poor fishing communities, pollution of the lake environment, etc. In other words, it successfully questioned the existing paradigm of resource use and the encroachment of people's rights over their livelihood resources. Thus, the movement has evolved through different stages, with internal conflicts and contradictions and moved on to address the issues confronting the fisherfolk and exposed the inability of the current development paradigm to address the local livelihood needs of the people.

4.2.5. The Baliapal Movement

The popularly known Baliapal movement is a struggle against the establishment of the National Testing Range (NTR), India's first missile testing project in the Baliapal and Bhograi blocks of Orissa's Balasore district. The Baliapal Movement is also regarded as an environmental movement on the ground that it concerns the appropriation of land previously used by the people by the NTR in the recent years.

Baliapal is located in the north of the state of Orissa in its Balasore district on the Bay of Bengal coast. It is inhabited by a population majority of who are landless and poor and middle peasants with a landholding ranging between one to five acres. In October 1984, the government announced that Baliapal had been chosen as the appropriate site for the National Testing Range (NTR)- a base for testing and launching of rockets, satellites and ballistic missiles with a range of up to 5000 kilometers. The base would cost an estimated Rupees 3000 crores as initially calculated, however, it was slashed to 1600 crores to soften the peoples' resistance (Ravi: 1988), and cover 100 square kilometers of land, necessitating the eviction of approximately 100000 people from 130 villages.

As a response to this plan and its perceived threats to the livelihoods of the people, the resistance movement emerged, popularly called the Baliapal Movement, under the leadership of Gadhagar Giri and Gannanath Patra. The movement began in December 1985 with the formation of the *Uttara Balasore Khepanastra Ghati Protirodh Samiti* (KGPS), which did not allow the government to

evict people from the site of the National Testing Range (NTR). They successfully mobilized all sections of the population in to the movement and formed the Resistance Committee to lead the movement, comprising of people from all strata of social and economic hierarchy. At the peak of the movement, around 50,000 people participated in the movement. However, it is worth noting at this point that the Baliapal movement was a localized movement because it remained restricted to the Baliapal Block, and it did not spread to Bhogra Block where over thirteen villages were to be acquired by the project.

Like most other environmental movements in India, the Baliapal movement also followed a non-violent path of resistance. Intervention, non-cooperation, protest and persuasion are the various methods used by the movement. For instance, the people of Baliapal erected barricades along the approach roads to prevent the entry of government agents into the village; as non-cooperation with the government, the villagers have refused to pay taxes and loans to the government since 1985; they have demonstrated, written and performed songs, music and plays detailing the struggle. While the movement is defensive in its goal to prevent people's eviction from the area and maintain the status quo, it is apparently offensive in its challenge to the national security decision-making process of the Indian state and the underlying premise that the national security interests must always take precedence over the local concerns. However, the question still arises: national security at what cost? The ideology of the movement draws upon the cultural and economic dimensions of the peasants' everyday reality, and hence, more Gandhian in its appearance.

4.2.6. The Movement against Tehri Dam

One of the most protracted and a celebrated environmental movement in the recent years is the movement against the Tehri Dam, which is being built on the Bhagirathi River in Garhwal, Uttaranchal. The Tehri Dam, partly funded by Russia, is a major hydroelectric project that was conceived long back in 1949 by the Geological Survey of India. However, it was only in 1963 that detailed investigations to this end were made. After the visit of the then Minister for Power and Irrigation Shri K. L. Rao, in 1965, the site was finally confirmed. By 1967, several experts both at home and abroad visited the site and recorded their

opinions. The cost of the project as initially prepared in 1967 was estimated at Rs. 126.8 crores. However, the figure moved up to Rs. 3000 crores in 1989 and in March 1990, it went up to Rs. 4142 crores. The Projected Dam Height is 260.5 meters, impounding 3.22-million cubic meter of water.

The construction of the Tehri Dam is opposed on the ground of seismic data projecting earthquake disaster and displacement of the people of old Tehri town and the neighbouring villages. The anti-Tehri Dam movement is spearheaded by Tehri Baandh Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti (Committee for the Struggle against the Tehri Dam) founded by the prominent leaders like V. D. Saklani, Sunderlal Bahuguna and other leaders active in the movement. The movement still continues.

4.2.7. The Koel Karo Movement

The Koel Karo Movement is a movement against the Koel Karo Hydel Power Project. This project was formed with the help of the Bihar government and the National Hydel Power Corporation (NHPC). The project was designed to benefit the states of Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh, Bihar and Orissa by producing 710 MW of power in the first phase and another 12 MW in the second phase (Ansari: 2003). This project was first conceived of in 1954 to promote lift irrigation, rural electrification and industrialization in Ranchi, Gumla and Singhbhum districts. The project was to be built on the river Koel and North Karo in Ranchi, Gumla and Singhbhum districts of Bihar. For the project, as according to the official estimate, 55 thousand acres of land was to be acquired of which 40 thousand acres was the Rayati Land (Ansari: 2003); it was to submerge approximately 10,522 hectares of cultivable land, 5666 hectares of barren land and 364 hectares of government land. It was estimated to displace 3282 families in 26 villages of Gumla district, and 1157 families in 16 villages of Ranchi district of which 90 percent are tribals. The dam would also submerge 150 *sarnas* (Places of worships), and 300 *samsan diris* (Places of burial of the bones of the ancestors). The prospect of losing these two sites of cultural heritage amounted to a direct attack on the tribal culture, which was simply outrageous to the tribals (Agarwal and Narain: 1999).

Thus, the project was opposed and a movement against the project was launched. However, in the initial years, the movement formed its organization against the project in Koel and Karo separately. However, under the leadership of Moses Gudia, the two organizations were merged in to one called the *Koel Karo Jan Sangathan* (KKJS). KKJS launched its movement to stop the work in the project by 1977-78. The main issues of the movement included the social, cultural and economic rehabilitation of the displaced; necessity to involve the affected people in the decision making process of the project; etc. The movement was supported by Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU). The agitation continued even after the formation of the new state of Jharkhand. Finally, Arjun Munda's government on 28 August 2003 decided to shelve the Koel Karo Project. Thus, the *Koel Karo Jan Sangathan* successfully stalled the project after a long drawn struggle of 49 years.

4.2.8. Others

Apart from the movements discussed above, there are other movements, which also have strong environmental themes. They include Jharkhand Bastar Belt Movement, Zahirili Gas Morcha in Bhopal, movement against Harihar Polyfibre Factory in Karnataka, movement against the poisoning of Cheliyar river in Kerala, movement against Vishnuprayag Dam, Koyna Project Affected Committee's struggle, Jan Andolan in Dabhol against Enron, Anti-Balco Project Movement in Orissa, Amravati Bachao Abhiyan, Shramik Mukti Andolan in Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Himachal Bachao Andolan, Save Western Ghats Movement, Save Bombay Committee, Save Pune Citizen's Committee, Clean Baroda Movement, and the Rahmeria Movement in Assam, among many more. Thus, it goes beyond the scope of the present work to present a detailed analysis of these movements.

4.3. GENESIS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA

The discussion presented above on the various environmental movements in India reveal some premises on which the environmental movements emerge in countries like India. These premises have been outlined in the form of views pertaining to the genesis of the environmental protest movements. There are two dominant views on the genesis of the environmental

movements in the Third World. They are the Mainstream Standpoint which believes that the environmental struggles and movements may be seen to have their origin to the opportunistic instigation for movements and struggles by an organized group of urban environmentalists who are swayed by romantic ideologies, and who end up being instruments a the hands of the international non-governmental organizations; and the Livelihood Standpoint which believes that the encroachment and/or destruction of the livelihoods of the people lead to the emergence of an environmental movement (Wagle: 1999).

As revealed from the review of the vast body of literature on the environmental movements in the Third World in general and in India in particular (Peritore: 1993; Sethi: 1993; Karan: 1994; Swain: 1997; Reddy: 1998; Andharia and Sengupta: 1998; Gadgil and Guha: 1998; Wagle: 1999), the root of their appearance in the post independent period can not simply be attributed to the threat to people's livelihoods. This is because, although apparently the movements reveal as protests against the real livelihoods encroachments, quite often the people also have been mobilized to protest against a perceived threat to their livelihoods opportunities by the urban middleclass environmentalists in one form or another. Moreover, beyond the livelihoods issues, the environmental movements in India also have been addressing 'green' and 'brown' issues as in the case of the Clean Baroda Movement and elsewhere.

The one reason as to why the environmental movements origin is traced to the threats to people's livelihoods is because the development strategy in post-independent India failed to secure guarantee of dignified and secured livelihoods to the people because the strategy was not environmentally enriching, socially just and politically empowering. Rather, it was sort of an intrusion, which generated negative impact on the 'Natural Resources- Livelihoods People.' The local people perceived that such an intrusion is likely to destroy their livelihoods without creating new livelihood opportunities that would compensate their current loss of livelihoods. As a result, the discontent of the livelihoods people escalated into environmental protest movements in India. Hence, says Vandana Shiva (1991), that the intensity and range of the ecology movements in independent India have continuously widened as predatory exploitation of natural resources to feed the

process of development has increased in extent and intensity. However, development of such a perception of the current development strategy in the minds of the natural resources livelihoods people is again facilitated by the middle class urban intellectuals who have been leading these movements. Hence, some elements of the conventional standpoints on the genesis of the environmental movements also hold good in the Indian context.

Thus, both conventional/mainstream as well as the livelihood standpoints are useful in understanding the genesis of the environmental movements in India, and hence, a recombination of the two into a third standpoint would be capable of explaining the complex nature of the origin of such movements, at least in the Indian context which is characterized by a mosaic of cultural and social diversity permitting interplay of different forces and factors. The ecology and environmental movements in India, therefore, have originated not simply because of the post-material factors (the concept has been elaborated somewhere in the previous chapters) but owe primarily to the questions of livelihood and survival. These movements, which have originated as people's response to the development strategies threatening their survival, as well as movements bearing clean and green issues, address a wide range of issues and actors with equally diverse strategies and tactics.

4.4. IDEOLOGIES, ACTORS, ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

Ideology is considered to be one of the most important components of any protest movement. Since an ideology is action driven, it legitimizes the goal of the protest and the means to be adopted to achieve the goals so defined. Ramachandra Guha (1988; Gadgil and Guha: 1998) has explored the ideological underpinnings of the environmental movements in India who has classified them into five strands: Crusading Gandhians, Ecological Marxists, Appropriate Technologists, Scientific Conservationists and Wilderness Enthusiasts. According to the crusading Gandhians, eastern society, unlike the west, is primarily non-materialist, and they oppose industrial growth brought about by the colonial rule and its legacy. Ecological Marxists concentrate on organizing the poor for collective action, working towards the larger goal of redistribution of economic and political power. The appropriate technologists believe in synthesis between

eastern and western traditions, decentralized planning and adherence to small-scale non-destructive economic enterprises. Scientific conservationists are concerned with efficiency and management, and, the wilderness enthusiasts focus on their commitment to the protection of biodiversity. Baviskar (1995) talks of yet two more ideologies of the Indian Environmental Movements-the Ideology of Conservation, and, the ideology of Indigenous Ecological Management. Ecofeminism (Mies and Shiva: 1993) is another addition to the list of the ideologies of Indian environmental movements. Although these ideological orientations appear distinct, yet there is an overlapping of and a continuous synthesis of the ideologies in a movement. To cite an example, for instance, the Chipko Movement is apparently Gandhian in its ideological orientation under the influence of Sarvodayee Chandi Prasad Bhatt, but it has espoused tenets of appropriate technology as advocated by Bahuguna. Similarly, interaction of Gandhian ideas, appropriate technology and equitable distribution of politico-economic power in the Marxian frame is discernible in the Narmada campaign.

Actors of the environmental movements in India are diverse. As revealed by our discussion on the environmental movements in India as above, they include local communities, local activists and organizations, affected people, local national and international NGOS, human rights groups, environmentalists and engineers. For instance, whereas the Chipko Movement has involved actors like local community, women, and activists, the Narmada Bachao Andolan on the other hand has involved basically the affected tribal people and the local national and international NGOs. The Fisherfolk, Chilika and the Baliapal movements have mobilized the fisherman and poor peasants respectively.

There are different categories of issues on which different environmental movements adhere. The sites of these environmental struggles and movements are resource intensive industrial activities and major development projects such as exploitation of mineral resources (as in the case of anti-mine agitation in Doon valley, anti-bauxite mine movement in Orissa), large river valley projects (the case of Narmada Bachao Andolan, Silent Valley Movement, movement against Tehri Dam, Koyna Project affected Committee, Dabhol Jan Andolan against Enron, Koel Karo movement in Bihar), mechanized farming (Chilika Bachao Andolan,

Fisherfolk movement in south India), state controlled commercial forestry (Chipko Movement, Appiko Movement), industrial pollution (Ganga Mukti Andolan in Bihar, movement against Harihar Polyfibre Factory in Karnataka, movement against the pollution of Sone river by the Gwalior Rayon Factory), and externalities produced by tourism development (Himachal Bachao Andolan), which have, alongside large scale destruction and transfer of natural resources, involved the displacement of local communities (Shiva and Bandyopadhyay: 1989; Shiva: 1991; Sethi: 1993; Gadgil and Guha: 1995). Thus, the right of access to forest resources for local communities' livelihood, non-commercial use of natural resources, prevention of land degradation and cultural displacement, ecorestoration, human rights and social justice constitute the core themes and issues of the environmental movements in India

As regards strategies, they are as diverse as the issues and actors. Satyagraha, peaceful protest and other Gandhian models of protests at different levels, public litigation, extensive lobbying and campaign and direct action like hugging of trees are used by different movements under different situational contexts. Moreover, employment of music has also been an important strategy of the protest movements in general and environmental movements in particular.

4.5. TAXONOMY OF ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

A careful reading of the environmental movements in India, their actors, issues and strategies reveal that broadly the environmental movements in India have emerged as a wide spectrum of struggles and conflicts over different issues. These movements centering on issues of human rights, social justice, resource use, and appropriate technology broadly call for an alternative development paradigm and have a global significance. However, a study of the individual movement points to the fact that each movement originated over a single immediate issue, and hence, centers around a specific issue such as destruction of forests and denial of forest rights to the people, construction of a dam and the allied problems of displacement, resettlement and rehabilitation, and, cultural changes and social problems resulting from tourism development and so on. Thus, the environmental movements in India are varied in nature following different movement methods and strategies, constructed on diverse issues and

based on diverse ideological orientations. This complex nature of the environmental movements in India renders it difficult to construct a typology of the movements. However, quite a few scholars have made some attempts in this direction. Although broadly in the domain of theory, the environmental movements have for long been classified as violent/non-violent, Gandhian/Marxian, radical/mainstream, deep/shallow, mainstream/grassroots, etc. and various organizations supporting these ideologies are further compartmentalized in these constructed categories, yet the classification in case of the environmental movements in India have been proved less than comprehensive, established by the fact that there is no agreed typology of the environmental movements in India, and that the several attempts of classification have been scattered at different places in the vast body of literature on Indian environmentalism.

An attempt at classification of the environmental movements in India is made by Harsh Sethi (1993) based on the struggles over the use and control over natural resources. This scheme of classification points out three types of struggles over natural resources. The first type is related to the entitlement of different social groups to environmental resources; the second type of struggles are those seeking to change the public policy pertaining to environmental resource use; and the third, the struggles focusing on the man nature relationships and a critique of the dominant development paradigm. However, this classification leaves out a host of environmental movements, as they do not come directly under the purview of any of the three strands provided by the schemata.

Another attempt in this direction is made by Gadgil and Guha (1994) who analyse the environmental movements in India by classifying them in terms of their material, political and ideological contexts. According to this method of classification, the material basis for the environmental movement is served by the conflicts over natural resources; the political context of the movement relates to the involvement of action groups in the collective mobilization of those affected by environmental degradation; and, the ideological expressions of the movements are analysed by describing different ideological strands of the environmental movements.

Sumi Krishna (1996) has attempted a classification of the environmental movements and discourses based on their approaches to environment. According to Sumi Krishna, different strands of environmental movements and discourses can be classified based on the philosophical approaches they incorporate. To this effect, Krishna identifies three approaches of Indian environmentalism: the Popular Approach deriving its philosophical basis and tactics from Gandhi, and which permeates the general public understanding of the environmental crisis; the Managerial Approach attempting to root itself in scientific understanding of the environmental problems; and the Progressive Approach which embodies a more militant attitude to socio-political activities and does not see environment as a central problem. According to this understanding, all environmental movements in India can, therefore, be classified in to three types on the basis of the approach that they follow towards the environment.

Andharia and Sengupta (1998) have classified the contemporary environmental movements in to eight categories. This classification as identified the thematic issues and sites of environmental struggles, which constitutes the basis of the classification. Hence, they make an eight-fold classification of the Indian environmental movements as forest and land based movements; movements around marine resources, aquaculture and fishing; movements against industrial pollution; movements against large dams, power projects, industrial plants, mining and military bases; wild life sanctuaries and parks related movements; tourism based movements; advocacy and citizen's groups and individual campaigns; and the movements calling for appropriate technology and organic farming. They present this classification on a tabular form and also provide some examples of movements in each case.

Anita Singh (2000) makes a similar classification of the environmental movements in India, but she categorizes the movements in to only three categories: First, the land related protests of the peasants, landless forest nomads and native aborigines; second, the water related protests of the fisherfolk over rivers and seas and disputes over the dams; and thirdly, the Animal Rights

Activism mainly related to the people to liberate the animals from circuses, laboratory, and so on.

However, among these attempts of classification of the environmental movements and discourses in India, the one presented by Andharia and Sengupta (1998) appears to be more comprehensive as it is wide enough to accommodate within the classification all types of movements that have taken place in the Indian subcontinent. However, the limitations of the classification are not to be denied. This classification too fails to situate the environmental movements in India vis-à-vis the broad framework of India's '*democracy from above*' on the one hand and the lack of efficiency on the part of the national opposition, especially the left forces, to address the issues pertaining to the subaltern groups on the other.

4.6. MAKING SENSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS?

Although broadly the environmental movements in India are not beholden to vested interests and are not mired in narrow partisan concerns, thereby offering precisely the qualities that people are looking for in their representative organization, yet our exercise on the study of the environmental movements in India has encountered some fundamental issues pertaining to the very nature of these movements and their eligibility to qualify as wholeheartedly environmental movements. This is because most of the movements labeled as 'environmental' as have been discussed above have dwelt primarily on issues of people's rights and livelihood and the threat perceived by the indigenous communities from the authoritarian developmental state. For instance, Ghanshyam Shah (2004) points out that more often than not the struggles of the people on the issues of their livelihood and access to forest and other natural resources are coined as 'environmental movements'. Chipko movement and Narmada Bachao Andolan are the two renowned and old environmental movements and constitute the reference point of the present study. One important study of the Chipko movement is by Ramachandra Guha (1989) and that of the Narmada Andolan is by Amita Baviskar (1995). It is interesting to note that both the authors do not want their studies to be treated as being mainly on environmental movements. Whereas Guha calls his study on peasant

resistance focusing on the ecological dimension, Baviskar's focus is on the study of tribals in their relationship with nature, and their conflicts over the state sponsored development. Similarly, Kusum Karnik (2005), making references to several movements, denies the use of the terminology of 'environmental movements' on the ground that people did not start these movements as environmental movements, and hence, prefers to call them as 'people's movements for natural resources'. These movements deal not exclusively with the various environmental issues alone, but also with contemporary socio-economic issues associated with the environment.

This creates sufficient confusion and dilemma by challenging the very foundation of the movements for a study on their nature, and not the least on an attempt at their classification, which we do not undertake in the present study. However, this confusion owes its origin to the academic failure in grasping them in totality. Most studies on these movements deal only with one aspect of the movement, say for instance, as against the developmental state, and conspicuously leave aside the particular issues pertaining to the individual movement, leaving sufficient room for confusion on the exact nature and content of these movements. Thus this semantic problem points to the necessity of an immediate academic debate and the development of a comprehensive analytical framework for the analysis of these struggles to explore whether or not they constitute environmental movements, and to arrest their potential to transform the society and polity in their dialogical interaction with it. The present work attempts to address the second part of the problematique through the analysis of the dynamic and transformative dimensions of the movements by arresting their 'general' as well as 'particular' aspects in the sections that follow.

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