ENVIRONMENTALISM AND THE RISE OF NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH ASIA: A CASE STUDY OF NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN (INDIA) AND ANTI –ARUN III MOVEMENT (NEPAL)

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

DAVID BUHRIL

SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES DIVISION
CENTRE FOR SOUTH, CENTRAL, SOUTH EAST ASIAN AND SOUTH WEST PACIFIC STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI- 110067, INDIA

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CENTRE FOR SOUTH, CENTRAL, SOUTH EAST ASIAN & SOUTH WEST PACIFIC STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110 067

Phone : 26704350
Fax : 91-11-2671 7586
91-11-2671 7603

Dated: 28th July 2004.

CERTIFICATE

This is certify that the dissertation entitled "**Environmentalism and the Rise of New Social Movements in South Asia: A Case Study of Narmada Bachao Andolan (India) and Anti –Arun III Movement (Nepal)**" submitted by **David Buhril** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university and is my own work.

David Buhril

I recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Prof.Uma Singh
Chairperson

CHAIRPERSON
Centre for South, Central, South East
Asian and South West Pacific Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

Prof.Uma Singh
Supervisor

SUPERVISOR
Centre for South, Central, South East
Asian and South West Pacific Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

To Lungdithai
Who live with me,
A painted veil called Life.

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Introduction

Social movements have been part of political life challenging abuses by authorities spearheading social reforms and protesting discrimination. In the recent years however, there has been an increase in new social movements that have not only led to significant political and social reforms but have challenged governments and forced them to change the very nature and character of its numerous activities in the pursuit of development. In the twentieth century, new social movements became more of a deliberate tool for social change, moving from being largely an *ad hoc* strategy growing naturally out of the need to protect and promote rights of the peoples, by resorting to non-violent actions and methods, to a reflective, and in many ways institutionalized methods of struggle.

Indeed, the past five decades has witnessed a remarkable upsurge in the new social movements against states and donor agencies. The new social movements have always been undermined and negated by the state and its allies where development and modernisation is seen as the only path before their agenda. However, this concept of the state has been immensely challenged and contradicted by the new social movements.

Many of the new social movements seem to be distinctly human rights oriented. It is, at first sight, difficult to grasp outside the frameworks of contemporary human rights normativity or movements contesting environmental degradation. These movements are not just human rights reinforcing, in the sense that they revitalize through social action the texts of human rights norms and standards. They are also human rights creating. Many a development of new human rights is simply inconceivable outside the dynamic of 'new' social movements. And yet, the literature on 'new' social movements is not concerned with ways in which these relate to the practices of human rights. Rather, it is more centrally concerned with , inter alia, the social base of the new social movements, ways in which identities shaping collective

behaviour are formed, the use of dramatic and disruptive modes of direct action and the emergence of agenda of radically pluralist identity politics.[1]

In the following chapters, the new social movements are distinguished from the traditional social movements in that they are movements of popular resistance to government authority which either consciously or by necessity eschew the use of non- violence in the face of recent developments and problems generated by industrialisation in the name of development. The new social movements seek to address the increasingly global issues whereby activists share their wisdom to challenge a system of political control that is increasingly global in nature. Therefore, the study of new social movements is a recent mode of inquiry. However, issues pertaining to the study of new social movements do not rest in the domain of temporality, but in the substantive process of historical specifities that are germane to them. At this juncture, it is important to recognise that the political and social crises, issues and problems of one society, at one point of time, may emerge with an assertion; they may fail or succeed and fade away in history only to reappear again, in another society, in another period of history. It is our contention that collective social action and movements emerge from and get dissolved in society, and that society validates its existence only by the expressions of such movements. The late 1980s and the first half of the 1990s were to undergo a new wave of grassroots mobilisation which at times seem to hark back to the heady days of the early 1970s. The inspirational values of the new social movements, therefore, are a mixture of libertarianism and environmentalism.

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[1] Touraine,Alain(1981) *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements*,Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.

The newness of environmental concerns is more apparent than real in that thinking about the environment, its meaning, significance and value is as old as human society itself .However , it is clear that the present human generation is faced with a series of unique environmental dilemmas, largely unprecedented in human history. The present human generation is the first one, for example, to have the capacity to destroy the planet many times over, while at the same time, it is also the first generation for which the natural environment cannot be taken for granted. So while the environment has been a perennial theme in human thought, its use has become an increasingly central and important aspect of recent social theory and political practice.

The environmentalism we are dealing with is concerned to the "retreat of the state"[2] from practising certain regulatory functions with regard to multinational enterprises, particularly in relation to the environment.[3] It can be argued that this 'retreat' creates a crisis of governance, in that while traditional methods of regulation and oversight of companies' activities fall apart, new forms of government intervention are incapable of replacing them. In the vacuum left by this gradual retreat of governmental control of the environmental impact of companies' activities, environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), through a wide spectrum of co-operative and confrontational strategies, have been targeting companies themselves. This has produced a new and interesting set of relationships; the dynamics and its progress of which are dealt with in this work as 'The Rise of New Social Movements in South Asia.'

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[2] Strange,S.(1996) *The Retreat of the State*,Cambridge:Cambridge University Press,pp.10-43.
[3] Clapp,J.(1997) 'Threats to environment in an era of globalisation: an end to state sovereignty?' in T.Schrecker(ed.) *Surviving Globalism:The Social and Environmental Challenges*,Basingstoke:Macmillan.

In this pursuit, we also understand the development of theory. There is an enormous body of literature dedicated to the theoretical study of movements. Since the 1960s, movement theory has been dominated by two schools of thought – resource mobilization and new social movement theory – with a variety of other approaches orbiting around them. More recently, there have been attempts to synthesise the various approaches along with the two main schools. However, the vast majority of previous and current theory has been developed with reference to movements in America and Continental Europe. There has been no concerted attempt to assess how applicable such theories are to the South Asian experience of the new social movements. Therefore, this work must be undertaken to enhance our understanding of the new social movements in South Asia and to test the validity of the theories themselves. Moreover, the 'new' movement theory is necessarily concerned, at least at the level of submerged networks, with social interactions, at a face-to-face level, that translate histories of embodied experiences of social harm into collective injustices .More generally, these processes entail conversion of individual biographies into social texts. The socialization of 'grievances' into causes of social praxis is a staple theme of the 'new' social movement theory.[4]

The study of new social movements in South Asia has been the study of current developments by analysing very recent new social movements in India (Narmada Bachao Andolan) and Nepal (Anti-Arun III movement).This imperative does not arise out of simple interest, but rather, from the fact that we may well be about to enter one of the most exciting periods in the history of new social

[4] Baxi,Upendra.(2000) 'Human Rights:Suffering Between Movements and Markets' in Cohen,Robin and Rai,Shirin,M(eds.) *Global Social Movements*,London: The Athlone Press,pp.33-45.

movements. In order to make our treatment more coherent, we have chosen to discuss the theoretical concepts and issues of environmentalism from the first chapter by focussing our attention to analyse them as new social movements.

Chapter one proceeds with analysing various theories and concepts within environmentalism. The focus is primarily on the question of what is 'new' in the new social movements by relating it to environmentalism. In doing so, environmentalism and its commonalities with postmodernism are discussed in terms of a shared rejection of modernity. The chapter also explores the structural bases of the new social movements by which new social groups and new interests take shape. We are compelled to devote scattered attention to many perspectives which nevertheless contained indicatory of considerable interest to environmentalism and new social movements, which comprises the subject matter of the study. We also look at the ways in which Realist theory has viewed, valued and conceptualized new social movement in the context of environmentalism. They reflect the heterogeneity of the conceptual instruments with which new social movements have been analysed up to now. In our study of environmentalism as a new social movements, we hope to contribute to the growing understanding of the new social movements, of its nature, its methods and strategy, its issues and problems, its actors and the forces behind the movements, its network and the new social movements as representing the peoples movement in the face of the growing power of the State and various funding agencies.

The second chapter deals with the rise of new social movements in South Asia, its nature, ideologies, and the base of grassroots network of the movement. This chapter focuses on the issues and challenges before the grassroots network, by exhuming issues fundamental to the existence of the affected people. The

chapter deals with the indigenous peoples as representing the new social movements who acted for themselves rather than delegating their issues and concerns through elected representatives. As human rights are a key issue in dealing with the indigenous peoples, the chapter looks at the insights of the affected rights of the indigenous peoples which is one of the primary causes of the rise of new social movements in South Asia.

Chapter Three, 'Narmada Bachao Andolan as a New Social Movement', explores the emerging trend of the new social movements towards the informal regulation of the environmental impact of the activities of the State and foreign funding agencies, particularly the World Bank. It seeks to account for the significance of the new social movements represented by the Narmada Bachao Andolan in India. An assessment is also made on how the NBA seeks to address broader questions of accountability and representation which arise in the process and progress of the movement. The chapter also explore the dimensions of NBA and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) relations through inference to a broad and expanding range of cooperative ventures which illustrate the increasing global support it has garnered in the movement.

Chapter Four deals with the Anti-Arun III in movement in Nepal as a new social movement where the environmental concern and local participation becomes part of a global discourse. The chapter explores how the 'locals' invert the terms and categories of State authorities and structure them to assert their rights, and also to make their voice heard beyond the reaches of local community. By using local environmentalism as a metaphor of resistance we shall discuss how the 'locals' redefine and readjust the concept of 'development' to

legitimate their opposition to the government's pursuit of constructing the Arun III hydro-power project in Nepal.

Our conclusions are based on inferences derived from a detailed analysis of the historical and theoretical aspects of environmentalism. By relating them to the new social movements, and in the context of South Asia, we understand that they represent the underlying dynamics of societal forces. Such forces, while addressing environmental issues, asserts diverse human rights issues which were in the past, deliberately ignored by the state and its allies in the name of 'development'.

CHAPTER ONE

ENVIRONMENTALISM AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Defining Environmentalism

Environmentalism[1] is and has been a contested issue at an ideological as well as material level by going beyond the literary appreciation of landscapes and the scientific analysis of species. It is defined as the promotion of values, attitudes and policies aimed at reaching an accommodation between human needs and the limits of natural environment. The politics of environmentalism, therefore, are to re-establish the social and cultural control of man over nature, which has been undermined by western economic and industrial development. Environmentalism is a part of longer established political, economic, social and cultural debates: debates which arose particularly during the nineteenth century and were essentially about the problems of modernism. The salience of contextual issues in environmentalism and debates is one product of the increasing globalization of our society.

The debates revolve around different groups of people in different social positions and with different ideologies for which there are different truths about society – nature / environment relationships. One 'truth', for instance, has nature as capable of quick recovery from human interference, especially if aided by wise

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[1] While recognizing that the roots of environmentalist thought have been growing over the centuries, most commentators attribute the rise of popular contemporary environmentalism to the publication of key texts during the 1960s (Carson 1962),Commoner 1963, Hardin 1968) and 1970s (Ehrlich 1970, Meadows et al. 1972,Goldsmith et al.1972).Comprehensive accounts of the history of environmentalism can be found in O'Riordan (1981[1976], Nicholson(1987), McCormick(1989), Paehlke (1989) and Norton(1991).However, in this work, we intend to study environmentalism as a new social movement in reaction to 'modernism' and the state paradigm of 'development.' and not merely due to the publications of abundant literature based on the subject. In this work, we also try to relate the theoretical understanding of environmentalism to the harsh reality of environmental degradation, rampant in South Asia.

management policies. Schwarz and Thompson call this the 'myth' of 'nature benign', which believers in free market economics often favour.[2] Contrastingly, radical environmentalists, who often express egalitarian and communal values, embrace the 'truth' of nature as very vulnerable and potentially damaged by any human activity. Hence it is wise to be cautious about development. This is the 'myth' of 'nature ephemeral.' A third 'truth' – the 'myth' of 'nature perverse / tolerant' – holds that development is acceptable as long as it observes laws and limits of nature. 'Hierarchists' believe in this: those who put their faith in the authority of scientific experts as those most suited to tell us about the laws and limits.

The anthropocentrists, again, see human values as the source of all value and wanting to manipulate, exploit and destroy nature to satisfy human material desires. This view revives ideas of Philosophers such as Baruch Spinoza (1632 – 77) and Martin Heidegger (1889 -1976). They proposed that every being has the right to express its own nature, while the ultimate goal of humans is to contemplate nature. Deep ecology, on the other hand, fundamentally rejects the 'dualistic' view adopted by the anthropocentrist who regards humans and nature as separate and different. Deep ecology holds that humans are intimately a part of the natural environment: they and nature are one. Deep ecologists propose humble acquiescence to nature's ways: trying to 'live with' and not against natural rhythms. While deep ecologists may be relativist about social values , they do advocate that 'although humans have unique characteristics as a species, they are still subject to the same ecological laws and restraints as other organisms,' implying dependency on 'finite' natural resources and a need to press less heavily on earth's carrying capacity.

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[2] M. Schwarz and M. Thompson, *Divided we Stand: redefining politics, technology and social choice* (London, 1990).

A post-modern mistrust of the high science and technology which Enlightenment (eighteenth century) thinkers championed is, therefore, central to environmentalism.[3] The Enlightenment promise to control and manipulate nature to improve everyone's lot seems now to have produced war, violence, and repression, nuclear and environmental threats, and technologies that ordinary people feel they cannot explain or control. These talked of changing underlying social, political, and economic realities to benefit society, but many now think that they have done more harm than good.

This reaction against modernism has caused many of us to hark back to pre-modern ideas about nature, our relationship to it and our place in the cosmos.[4] Holism, Gainism, and nature worship, for instance, which have resurfaced in deep ecology, have reiterated medieval and older traditions. This is not to say that ideas as old as this constitute exactly the roots of modern environmentalism, since there are traceable lines from them to Friends of the Earth. But these ancient perspectives never died out completely during the modern period, they persisted as minor, counter cultural strands into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and formed the basis of movements and ideas that can be directly traced into modern environmentalism.

Environmentalism is also set against the backdrop of a public penchant for millenialist, doom-laden thinking. Rosalind Coward does not deny the seriousness of environmental concerns, but she point out that they may be a part of bigger late

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[3] David Pepper, *Modern Environmentalism-An Introduction* (London: 1996), pp.3-30.
[4] D.Cosgrove, 'Environmentalism thought and action: pre-modern and post-modern,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 15(3), 1990, pp.344-58.

twentieth-century insecurities.[5] These insecurities refer to the apprehension behind the limited and finite state of the environment which is central to environmentalism.

On the other hand, there is a need to look at "environmentalism as a social program, a charter of action which seeks to protect cherished habitats, protest against their degradation, and prescribe less destructive technologies and lifestyles."[6] Environmentalism, therefore, is activism aimed at improving the environment, particularly nature. This activism is usually based on the ideology of an environmental movement and takes the form of non-violent protest, advocacy, legislation and treatise.

Environmentalism is also seen 'as a trans-cultural discourse.' Kay Milton employs the notion of discourse to imply both a process and a substance. As a process it refers to how social reality is constituted by the organization of knowledge in communication. As a substance, environmentalism is a discourse about the environment.[7] Milton emphasizes diversity and complexity of ideas and values constituting the discourse about the environment. Environmentalism as a discourse, then, is the field of communication through which environmental responsibilities are constituted. Of the myriad ways in which human activity and the natural world impinge upon each other, some are identified as problems. Groups crystallize around the search for solutions, messages are articulated, and responsibilities are defined, and

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[5] R.Coward,*The Whole Truth: the myth of alternative medicine*(London:1989).

[6] Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism: A Global History* (New Delhi: 2000), p.3.

[7] Kay Milton, "Introduction: environmentalism and anthropology", in K. Milton,ed., *Environmentalism: The View of Anthropology* (London:1993), pp.1-17.

allocated. Depending on the perceived scope of the problem, this may happen within a local community or on the international stage. [8]

Environmentalism aims to reinstate what has been undermined by modernism.[9] This is an interpretation particularly where environmentalism strives to regain that social and cultural control over nature which has been ignored by the imported paradigm of 'development.' Environmentalism is an integral part of the general critique of the present industrial society. However, the cultural and ideological premises on which the respective civilizations base their critiques definitely differ. For instance, in the West, environmental ideas and discourses are derived from a concept of nature that refers to those aspects of the physical environment that are not directly created or influenced by humans. There is a clear nature/culture dichotomy. However recently in the West, the concept of nature has become a positive, morally loaded word with environmentalism taking the form of new social movements and addressing issues of human rights as well as about the 'finite' nature. As a matter of fact, present- day environmentalism has developed on two interrelated organisms in which the species fit both by taxonomic coherence and functional interdependency within an integrated system.[10] The other is that of nature as a system vulnerable to damage and extinction. The early awareness of Western natural scientists that man-made actions may cause destruction of species and depletion of abundant resources are the basic themes out of which conservationist

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[8] Ibid., p. 9

[9] Samir Amin, "Can environmental problems be subject to economic calculations?", *World Development* 20(4)1992, pp.523-530.

[10] Ole Bruun and Kalland Arne,eds.,*Asian Perceptions of Nature-A Critical Approach*(London:1995).

ideas emerged.[11] Following this, a call is made to humans to change their ecological practices and adopt a strategy that allows a sustainable culture-nature relationship.[12]

Environmentalists think that industrial society is founded on the too narrow objective of profit maximisation, encouraging over-consumption. Blindly pursuing profit, industries externalise their waste by-products to society at large rather than paying to make themselves clean. Given today's large-scale industrialisation, pollution becomes unacceptably great, while materials recycling and pollution control are limited in the interests of cost cutting and competition. Resources are treated as limitless, though clearly, environmentalists maintain, they are finite - a fact never appreciated in the short time perspective of conventional economics. Giantism, profit maximisation, division of labour, the production line, and mechanisation combine to produce uncreative, unfulfilling and alienating work, and drab, uniform living environments. Cities and suburbs are huge and impersonal, while the countryside is dominated by ecologically monotonous agribusiness-produced landscapes that give us poisoned and low-value food and water.

The search to expand markets and command resources and cheap labour has extended the industrial-consumer society across the globe, destroying rainforest and changing climate. The overpopulated Third World is polluted and materially and culturally impoverished by this international trade system, which most people as well as the states still see as essential to development. The states are themselves, through generating certain practices in its systems, prime environmental destroyers. It produces a political system dominated by both narrow nationalism and uncontrollable

[11] P.Hagget, *Geography: A Modern Synthesis* (New York: 1975), p.116.
[12] Johan Galtung, *Development, Environment and Technology* (New York: 1979), p.5.

multinational corporations. Each country needs a centralising state to make its economic and political arrangements work. But this state interferes with individual and community rights, inhibiting freedoms, self-determination and self responsibility thereby producing undemocratic politics which in turn give rise to environmental movements as environmental degradation and social injustice are inextricably linked.[13]

Environmentalism is more than just a protest against the immediate effects of a polluted, overpopulated world where natural resources are running out. It is a discontent at the gross violations of human rights resulting in large internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the name of development. Moreover, it is a discontent at the alienation of urban-industrial capitalism and some of its central institutions such as the nuclear family, or hierarchical power relationships. The critique has affinities with most of the dissenting voice that accompanied the rise of modern capitalism, with its political philosophy of laissez-faire liberalism, over the past three hundred years; ranging from romanticism, traditional conservatism and anarchism to many varieties of socialism. Its most immediate ancestors are probably the members of countercultural movement of the1960s,which was intellectually sustained by, among others, neo-Marxists concerned with social and spiritual alienation in society as distinct from traditional orthodox Marxism's preoccupation with economic alienation.[14]

Gudrun Dahl believed that 'Western environmental ethic has its own historical roots in the Middle Ages, when populist environmentalist and restrictionist views

[13] Ghanshyam Shah,ed., *Social Movements and the State*(New Delhi2002),pp.13-30.
[14] David Pepper, *Modern Environmentalism –An Introduction* (London: 1996), pp. 10-45.

prevailed .These views were reactions to large-scale extraction of resources and mere dressed up by nature-friendly rhetoric and by nostalgia for the 'old' village communities where attachment to the landscape, closeness to one's roots, the sharing of common values and experience were emphasized. They were finally replaced by the ideology of industrialism, which is more consistent with the expanding extraction of natural resources'.[15] Anthony Giddens argues that the site of struggle of ecological movements within which category countercultural movement can also be subsumed is the created environment. Antecedent forms of today's green movements can also be discerned in the nineteenth century. The earliest of these tended to be strongly influenced by romanticism and basically sought to counter the impact of modern industry upon traditional modest of production and upon the landscape.[16] The period of anti-capitalism paradoxically waned, however, and the 'paradigm of stable growth and industrial progress' was a winner until the 1960s, 'when certain intellectuals raised the issue of environmental hazards.' [17]

The consequences, therefore, of the contemporary form of social transformation of societies from the modernist- capitalist to the post-modernist-post-capitalist formation of social order is the emergence of the new crisis - core and conflictual processes. These new conflictual processes relates to the phenomenon of rising global collective actions of the humans irrespective of their varying social, cultural and political identities in defence of nature. Such a process signifies a growing consciousness of a collective defeat of the human race in the face of its

[15] Gudrun Dahl, 'Environmentalism, nature and "Otherness": Some perspectives of our relations with small scale producers in the Third World', in G. Dahl,ed., *Green Arguments and Local Subsistence*(Stockholm:1993),pp.2-3.
[16] Anthony Giddens,*The Consequences of Modernity* (London: 1990),p.161.
[17] Gudrun Dahl, (1993), Op. Cit. pp. 2-3.

success and science and technology. There is diminishing faith in the role of reason and rationality, for the human race has come to realise that new efforts are required to redeem itself of the banes of its destructive uses for technological expansion at the cost of nature. The global concern for the defence of ecology and environment is a homophilic act of seeking redemption from the nature that the humans have damaged and destroyed. The mounting volume of industrial and nuclear waste, air and water pollution, diminishing forests, flora and fauna, degradation of soil, and increase in the incidences of flood, and earthquakes, construction of dams and the displacement of communities by violating their fundamental rights, and as a consequence, increasing imbalance in the biospheric system, all pose a warning.[18] Environmentalism, as new social movements, emerged to assert the diverse issues and formidable problems of the finite environment that human beings dominate.

Environmentalism and Realism

Environmentalism, today, emerged against the state(s) concept of 'development', thereby seeing the state(s) as the prime environmental destroyer. From the basic ontology of interstate anarchy, realists in International Relations generate a rather different research agenda. From a number of subtle, but important and fundamentally different assumptions, realists generate a research agenda which focuses on the potential of environmentalism to produce interstate conflict. Baldwin suggests that the nature and consequences of anarchy, with realists suggesting that anarchy requires state(s) to be concerned primarily with their survival.[19]

[18] Rajendra Singh, *Social Movements, Old and New-A Post-Modern Critique*(Delhi:2001).
[19] D.A.Baldwin, *Neorealism and neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: 1993), pp.3-25.

Environmentalism, therefore, is immensely concerned about the domination of policy making by the state in its quest for survival which ultimately results in destroying the environment or nature. Therefore, the prospects for saving the environment, as the realists suggest would be harder to achieve, more difficult to maintain, and more dependent on state's anarchic power. As the state's quest for survival motivates the relative-absolute gains, realists tend to suggest that states are concerned primarily with the gains they make by exploiting the environment. It is the relative-absolute gains debate which is crucial in accounting for the realists concept of environmentalism.[20] As a consequence of the nature of international anarchy, realists argue that states must always be concerned primarily with their own security which goes to the extent of achieving security at the cost of exploiting the environment. So, the possibilities of cooperation to save the environment in the face of the priority given to security for survival in state goals derived from the assumption concerning the implications of anarchy. Whereby a preoccupation with relative gain makes it more difficult to get cooperation, securing the environment tends to fail as the instrument of security.

The concept of the environmental security debate lies more in attempts by environmentalists to move environmental problems up the political agenda. Yet such attempts have inevitably drawn them into contact with pre-existing notions of security, which derive in great part from realist and geopolitical traditions ingrained in the practices of policy makers. Much of the tale of environmental security discourse has concerned the tensions produced by this engagement. Some traditional policy makers and military elites have tried to use environmental security to bolster their

[20] Matthew Paterson, *Understanding Global Environmental Politics – Domination, Accumulation, Resistance.* (New York:2000),pp.18-25.

power base in a post-Cold War world, while others have suggested that the link dangerously weakens the traditional focus of national security. On the other hand, some environmentalists reject the link as politically dangerous as it would lead to a militarization of environmental policy, while many others, aware of this possibility of cooption and militarization, have nevertheless attempted to extend the traditional conception of security to embrace questions of global environmental change. [21]

In a realist mode, environmentalism which professed environmental security is simply an additional component to pre-existing notions of security. The referent of security - what is to be secured -remains the same -the nation-state - while only the causes of insecurity have changed from military enemies to environmental degradation. Some of these new threats are old ones dressed up as environmental conflicts - the struggle between states for access to strategic resources.

Kaplan suggests that the root of the threat is "nature unchecked". He continues:

> "It is time to understand 'the environment' for what it is: the national security issue of the early twenty-first century. The political and strategic impact of surging populations, spreading disease, deforestation and soil erosion, water depletion, air pollution and possibly, rising sea levels in critical, overcrowded regions such as the Nile Delta and Bangladesh - developments that will prompt mass migrations and, in turn, incite group conflicts - will be the core foreign policy challenge ..."[22]

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[21] Robert O. Keohane, Peter M. Haas and Marc A. Levy, "The Effectiveness of International Environmental Institutions", in P. M. Haas, R. O. Keohane, and M. A. Levy,eds., *Institutions for the Earth: Sources of Effective Environmental Protection* (Cambridge MA:1993),pp.3-24.

[22] Robert Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy", *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994, p.190.

Kaplan goes on to suggest that wars could result from environmental degradation and of the decline in the relevance of borders, what he calls the "lies of map makers". Environmental degradation combined with population growth produces rapid unplanned urbanisation, spreading diseases and the breakdown of social order as states are unable to contain such developments. Homer Dixon suggests that such conflicts are caused either through resource capture, where powerful social groups provoke conflicts by using their power to shift in their favour the regime governing resource access.[23] He cites examples such as the Chiapas uprising in Mexico, conflicts in the Himalayas, the Sahel, Central America, Brazil, Rajasthan, and Indonesia. Alternatively, they are caused by ecological marginalisation, where the poor are driven into ecologically marginal areas, which produce both greater ecological destruction and social conflict. The international power structures, therefore, are, inconsistent with principles of sustainability, in the sense that they provide insuperable obstacles to achieving that goal. This could be because of the spatial mismatch between state sovereignty and the global scale of environmental change or that the commitment to a deregulated globalising economy override attempts to regulate economics to pursue sustainability. [24]

Realism epistemological position on environmentalism posits that environmental-social problems can be known in an objective manner and that these objective phenomena have "real" impacts.[25] Thomason provides useful

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[23] Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcity and Mass Violence", in Gearoid O' Tuathail, Simon Dalby and Paul Routledge,eds., *The Geopolitics Reader* (London: 1998), pp. 204-11.

[24] Matthew Peterson, *Understanding Global Environmental Politics-Domination, Accumulation, Resistance* (New York:2000), p.5.

[25] Jerry Williams and Stephen F.Austin , "Knowledge, Consequences, and Experience: The Social Construction of Environmental Problems", *Social Inquiry,* Vol. 68, No. 4, Fall 1998, pp. 476-97.

characterization of the realist perspective by suggesting that the realist holds the belief that the "world makes its sense to us."[26] In essence, realism is "reification"- a process of masking a product of consciousness "thing-like."[27] Thomason again suggests that to treat social reality as though it were already just there, independent of the sense we make of it is to grant an improper thing-like giveness to the world. This realist or "sense making" approach is implied by what Jonathan Weiner called "a slow eureka about global warming". He states that we have known about this thing [global warming] for a very long time, but we have hardly made any effort to understand it. From Arheniuson, people simply did not know what they were looking at. Nor was there any single moment when everyone cried, Eureka! There was only what one student of the green house calls the evolution an awareness.[28]

Environmentalism as New Social Movements

The environmental movement is a child of the sixties that has stayed its course. Where other manifestations of that decade of protest - pacifism, the counter-culture and the civil rights struggle - have either lost out or lost their way, environmentalism shows no sign of abating. Since then, environmentalism has gained steadily in power, prestige, and what is perhaps most important the 'social appeal'.[29] Environmentalism has thus come to constitute a field - of - force in which different individuals and organisations, far removed in space, collaborate and sometimes compete in forging a new social movement that transcends national boundaries.

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[26] Burke C.Thomason, *Making Sense of Reification: Alfred Schutz and Constructionist Theory* (London:1982).

[27] Peter L.Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York:1996), p.89.

[28] Jonathan Weiner, *The Next One Hundred Years'. Shaping the Future of Our Living Earth.*(New York:1990),p. 58

[29] Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism – A Global History* (New Delhi: 2000), p.1.

The rise of environmentalism has been attributed to the development of environmental consciousness, the pattern of opportunities and constraints imposed by institutional arrangements and the shifting balance of political competition, and upon unprecedented awareness of environmental problems.[30] Environmentalism takes on different shapes in different countries out of a class framework. According to Yearley, environmental movements are called new social movements as the movements take politics out of a class framework.[31] The clearest indication of how environmentalism can be seen as a genuinely new departure from the established political spectrum is offered by Paehlke. The way in which this spectrum is defined is crucial. Paehlke observed that traditional politics is about distribution - who receives what - and that interests are generally interpreted in these terms. The left - right spectrum, insofar as it is useful, represents a range of views about distribution. Environmentalists do not ignore distributive issues, but they give a higher priority to matters of technology - how resources are used and how our relationship with the rest of the natural world is organised. Thus, once environmentalism is included within the political spectrum, the distributive axis between left and right is no longer an adequate representation of that spectrum.[32] But Paehlke also made the point that, in order to fulfil its potential as a political ideology, and offer a realistic alternative to neo-conservatism, environmentalism should break away from its 'neither left nor right' image, and be prepared to engage in distributive politics. In other words, environmentalism can only become an effective player in the political arena if it is concerned with the kinds of

[30] Jon Burchell, *The Evolution of Green Politics: Development and Change within European Green Parties* (London: 2002), pp. 7-15.

[31] S.Yearley, "Social Movements and Environmental Change",in M. Redclift and T. Benton,eds., *Social Theory and the Global Environmen* (London and New York :1994), p.152.

[32] R.C. Paehlke, *Environmentalism and the Future of Progressive Politics* (New Haven, CT and London: 1989), p.188.

issues that have traditionally fuelled political debate in the industrial world. Such is the "central tactical dilemma".[33] This dilemma haunts environmentalists and undermines their aspirations to become an effective political force while remaining truly Green.[34]

It could be argued that the new social movements are also about distribution, but not of material wealth. Instead, they seek to evenly distribute access to power, and goes a long way in restoring the rights of the human and non-human world. Therefore, environmental consciousness and its social expressions through various protests form part of what come to be known as the new social movements. Besides, one of the significant factors that distinguishes the newly emerging environmental groups and their activities from the older movements is the growth of development-oriented action groups, popularly known as Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs).Most environmental movements are now spearheaded by these groups and thus constitute the actors of the new social movements. The nature of these groups is varied and disparate with numerous ideological shades. Yet they share one common platform, the non-party political platform. Politically conscious of their movements, these groups operate outside the sphere of party politics.[35]

Environmentalism in all its forms was born in environmental movements. Environmental movements emerged from within the non-institutional, more informal realms of society and its politics. This creative politics of the people is evident in

[33] A. Scott, *Ideology and the New Social Movements* (London: 1990),p..93.
[34] A.Dobson, *Green Political Thought* (London: 1990), pp.207-13.
[35] Janki Andharia and Chandan Sengupta,"The Environmental Movement: Global Issues and the Indian Reality", *Indian Journal of Social Work*,Vol.59,Issue 1,Jan.1998,p.440.

dynamic, amorphous networks, associations, grassroots groups and alliances.[36] Rarely is this dimension governed by formal laws and statutes of association, such as constitutions. Boggs believed that the post-industrial setting generates a unique social and political climate that promotes the formation of movements differing from those that went before in terms of class, and ideological and organisational characteristics. Boggs argues that the new social movements are less likely to be co-opted than movements existing prior to the 1970s.[37]

Environmentalism as a new social movements therefore, has since spawned a mass movement with millions of followers, generated new bodies of law, hatched new political parties, encouraged a rethinking of economic and social priorities and becomes a central issue in international relations. Humanity has awakened to the basic truths about the interrelatedness of the biosphere, and has been alerted to the basic truth that nature is finite, and that our mismanagement of the environment ultimately threatens our own existence. The questions are matters of grave concern for all the members of the international community. The destructive impacts of these problems transcend national jurisdictions irrespective of the question of who have made what portion of contribution in the creation of these global environmental problems. The problems compelled a shift in the development discourse and gave rise to various environmental movements which are called new social movements.

The new social movement's activism of the 1960s and the 1970s which is rooted in environmentalism represented a radical and distinctive break from previous forms of political activism and provided an initial home for many of the instigators of

[36] T.Doyle,*Green Power: The Environmental Movement in Australia*(Sydney:2000).
[37] C.Boggs, *Social Movements and Political Power: Emerging Forms of Radicalism* (West Perth: 1980).

Green party development during the 1980s.[38] Many of the distinguishing features of Green parties are thought to reflect a commitment to the ideals and principles that emerged from within the new social movements.

New Social Movements and the Attempts for Theoretical Explanations:

The development of new social movements is linked to value priorities and socioeconomic change, claiming that an adherence to 'post-materialist values' lay at the heart of these new social movements. [39] In particular, Inglehart identified a shift away from the traditional concern with class conflict and material wealth and towards a greater concern for "belonging, esteem and the realisation of one's intellectual and aesthetic potential".[40] New values and new goals, he claimed, resulted in the adoption of different styles of political action.

On the other hand, Touraine links the development of new social movements to the search for alternative forms of social and cultural life. He argues that recent changes represent a reorganisation of the relationship between society, state and the economy with new movements which is the potential bearers of new social interests. Emphasising the importance of their spontaneity of action and their anti-institutional characteristics, Touraine is sceptical of the value of movement organisations, fearing that they can destroy the creativity and vitality of a movement.[41]

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[38] H.Kitschelt, "New Social Movements and the Decline of Party Organisation",in M. Keuchler and R. J. Dalton,eds.,*Challenging The Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies* (New York:1990),pp. 179-207.

[39] R.Inglehart, "Values, Ideology and Cognitive Mobilisation in New Social Movements", in M. Keutchler and R. J. Dalton,eds.,*Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies* (New York:1990),p.45.

[40] K.Inglehart, "Value Priorities and Socioeconomic Change", in S. H. Barnes and M. Kaase, eds., *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies* (Beverly Hills: 1979),p. 308.

[41] A.Touraine, "An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements", *Social Research,* Vol. 52, No. 4, (Winter)1985, pp. 749-787.

Habermas also highlights a new focus for conflict based around issues such as cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation. He argues that it is no longer possible for these conflicts to be channelled through traditional parties and organisations as they are ill suited and often unprepared to tackle such issues. New social movements, therefore, provide an outlet for these conflicts and a defence against the encroachment of state and economy on society.[42] In maintaining this position, Habermas argues, it is vital that the movements remain committed to the ideal of grassroots horizontal control and the restriction of organisational growth. Building upon these concepts, Melucci describes the new social movements as displaying a multidimensional character incorporating a plurality of perspectives, meanings and relationships.[43] They function within a new political space between state and society, from which they can:

> ...make society hear their messages and translate these messages into political decision making while the movements maintain their autonomy.[44]

This aspect is identified as an important element of what exactly is 'new' about these groups. New social movements seek to reveal fundamental problems within a given area. As such, the social movements have an indirect effect, seeking influence over the central issues and concerns of modern society. They develop grassroots, informal and hidden forms of organisation, and their strength lies in their ability to

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[42] J.Habermas, "New Social Movements", *Telos,* (Autumn)1981, p. 35.
[43] A.Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society* (London:1981),p. 25.
[44] A.Melucci, "The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements", *Social Research,* Vol. 52, No. 4, (Winter)1985, pp. 789-816.

stimulate radical questions about the ends of personal and social life. Through their unique style of activism, Melucci argues, "they are able to announce to society that something else is possible".[45]

From this brief summary, it is possible to identify some of the key features that distinguish this 'new' form of social movement activism from its more traditional predecessors: features that are reflected within Green party analysis. Firstly, new social movements are to represent a new social paradigm, contrasting with the dominant goal structure of modern industrial society.[46] Emphasis is placed upon quality-of-life issues rather than personal, wealth and material well being, leading to a focus upon social and collective values surrounding, among other things, issues such as the environment and women's rights. While it is true to say that feminist, ecological and peace movements all have a long history of activism before the 1960s, what has changed is the value that society places on these issues and the manner in which these has been channelled through the new social movements.

Organisational structure represents another defining characteristic, in particular, the notion that forms as vital an element as substance. Significant emphasis is laid upon moving away from traditional structures in favour of more decentralised open democratic organisations. A final key distinction is the identification of the role of conflict. Whether viewed in terms of class conflict, 'old' versus 'new' values or conflict between state intervention and society, new social movements challenge the expansion of the modern state and highlight the contradictions that state intervention

[45] Ibid. p. 812.
[46] M. Keuchler and R. J. Dalton,eds., *Challenging The Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies* (New York:1981),p. 10.

generate. This conflict helps to explain the apolitical nature and non-institutional character of the new social movements. New 'post-industrial' demands are constrained through established political channels requiring the development of new political vehicles to pursue these aims.[47]

The main set of theoretical principles, explaining the nature and strategies of the new social movements can be traced to the work of, amongst others, Laclau and Mouffe. This work helps us to understand "the open and contingent nature of political identities and political struggles".[48] Against the privileged status of workers in traditional labour/socialist discourse, they examine the plural nature of society and the autonomy of the various oppressed groups. Radical politics, for them, should abandon a narrow, productivist logic, and adopt a broader strategy aimed at articulating new democratic political identities across society. Society is seen as open, unstable and contingent, being discursively constituted through a process of articulation and negotiation. Once the traditional idea of the working class as a central unifying feature in the social strategies is abandoned, the door are opened on a new radical democratic politics more attuned to the needs of the next century. This, more pluralist, politics clearly entails an engagement with the multiple identities and diverse struggles of the new social movements. Faced with uncertainty, fluidity and even chaos, it is not surprising to see radical thought and new approaches.[49]

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[47] H.Kitschelt, "Left Libertarian Parties: Explaining Innovation in Competitive Party Systems", *World Politics,* Vol. 40, No. 2, January 1998, pp. 194-234.

[48] E.Laclau and C.Mouffe,*Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London:1985).

[49] Munck Ronaldo, "Labour in the Global Challenges and Prospects", in Robin Cohen and Shirin M.Rai,eds., *Global Social Movements* (London:2000),pp. 83-100.

The new social movements are associated with the politics of reconstruction. These movements, conventionally contrasted to the 'old' movements of labour or nationalism, are taken to include the women's, peace and human rights movements, as well as, in some conceptions, a diversity of regional, local or community associations. These are seen to represent a qualitatively different form of transformative politics and, in embryo, a new societal paradigm. These movements stress their autonomy from party politics and prioritise civil society over the state. In social movement politics, power itself is redefined, no longer being seen as something out there ready to be seized, but as a diffused and plural polity woven into the very fabric of society. These social movements have, arguably, help to create a new political space where new identities have been developed, new demands have been articulated, and the dividing line between the public and private domains has lost much of its meanings. The very notion of power is, hereby, redefined, the limits of state politics exposed, and a challenge laid down to the atomisation alienation characteristic of contemporary capitalism. Sometimes, however, there is too stark a counter position drawn between the 'old' labour movement and the 'new' social movements around gender, race, ecological or peace issues.[50] Alan Scott has usefully summarised this assumed differences in terms of the distinct location, aims, organisation and medium of action of the workers' movement and the new social movement respectively. Whereas the struggle of labour has increasingly been located within the polity, the new social movements are usually assumed to operate within civil society. As to the aims of labour, they have usually focus around securing economic rights for workers and the political integration of labour within the dominant system. Conversely, the new social movements stress the autonomy of civil society and often seek changes in social

[50] Alan Scott, *Ideology and the New Social Movements* (London:1991).

values or lifestyles. The organisational mode of labour has traditionally been formal and has adopted a hierarchical aspect. For their part, the new social movements tend, at least during their inception and in theory anyway, towards a networking and grassroots type of organisation. Finally, whereas the workers' movement has usually stressed political mobilisation, the new social movement often go for direct action and daring attempts at cultural innovations. The above represents only two ideal types, which are not always reflected in practice. But we can see in this general picture, albeit tempered by empirical counter examples, the challenge posed by the new social movements to the old, or at least traditional, labour movements. As the old paradigms of labour structuring and organisation dissolve, so new forms are developed.

The transformation of the theoretical bases of the conception of movement from the traditionally class -bound conception of the 'old' or classical to the generally non-class 'new' or contemporary movement is seen as the general expression of the transforming representation of contemporary societies. The transformation of societies from modernism to post-modernism, industrialism to post-industrialism and from materialism to post-materialism on the one hand, and the increasing distance of the state from the civil society, on the other, offer a new representation of society.

In the contemporary context, it may be noted that, so far as state duties towards citizens and civil society are concerned, the state remains dull and sluggish. However, the state becomes animated when it comes to imposing exactions, demands and controls on society. The increasing right of the state on the lives of the citizens and its generally unnoticed entry into almost all aspects of the citizen's public and private life, into their biology, psychology, economics, ethics, information and

morality are a new phenomenon defining the emerging nature of the contemporary representation of society. The 'new' representation of society defines itself by 'new' types of movements and collective social actions.[51]

The shift from the modernist society to post-modernist-post-society reflected in a similar shift in the form of social movements which changed from the 'old' form of classical and neo-classical movements to single 'new' social movements. The changes in the forms of the society, we posit, reflect in and correspond to a change in the form of social movements. While the 'old' movements corresponded to the representations of capitalism and industrialism, of the expansion and domination of Western civilization over non-Western societies, the new social movements suggests the exhaustion of that modernist representation. It in fact reflects the very idea of growth and development, the ideological wheels on which capitalism, materialism and modernity run. It is the functioning of these forces that enables the West to dominate the non-Western societies, reducing them to marginal and peripheral entities. It is mainly in this context that the ethos of new social movements germinated in India during its freedom struggle back in the 1920s and 1930s or even earlier.[52]

New social movements, therefore, projects the need for a new paradigm of collective action, an alternative model of culture and society, and a new self-consciousness of the communities about their future. And in this, the new social movements can be treated as a reflection of the cultural revolt of the contemporary individual against the increasing mechanization of systems of control and surveillance by the state over civil society, on the one hand, and on the other, the equally

[51] Rajendra Singh, *Social Movements, Old and New-A Post-Modernist Critique* (India: 2001), pp.7-88.
[52] Ibid.p.96

increasing realization and self-confidence of civil society that it ought not to place the destiny of the human in the hands of the state, and must remain vigilant against the unwisdom of political system; and that it has a historical agency, i.e., the civil society has the ability to change the course of its movement and transformation. The new social movements, therefore, appear as the agents and reinterpreters of delinking from contemporary capitalism and transition to socialism.

The Character of the New Social Movements

In order to characterize some of the features of the new social movements, scholars in the field have generally tried to locate the 'newness' of new social movements either in the changing interface between civil society and the state, or in the changing make- up and representation of contemporary society itself. Most new social movements anchor their ideological conceptions to the assumption that civil society is getting diminished; its social space is suffering shrinkage and the 'social' of the civil society is eroded by the controlling ability of the state. The expansion of the state, in the contemporary setting, coincides with the expansion of the market. State and market are seen as two institutions making inroads into almost aspects of the citizen's life. Under the combined impact of the forces of the state and market, society grows helpless. Consequently, the new social movements raise the issue of the 'self - defence' of the community and society against the increasing expansion of the state apparatuses: "agencies of surveillance and social control."[53]

[53] Ibid. p.98.

Jacque Donzelot's , 'The policing of the Families'(1980), epitomises the emerging new consciousness of civil society against the increasing encroachment of the 'public', in the present case, the state, on the 'private' spheres of life of the individual's in society. Donzelot's concern is an example of the growing self-awareness of civil society. According to Laclau and Mouffe, the new social movements include struggles as diverse as urban, ecological, anti- authoritarian, anti-institutionalist, feminist, anti-racist, ethnic and regional .The sites of the struggles go beyond the traditional workplace of industries and factories, fields and farms.[54] Alberto sees the forms of new social movements as 'segmented, reticulate polycephalic structures' which is the product of a profound transformation of social movements in the post-industrial era. Social conflicts now spill over a space wider than the social space of the classes, extending beyond the confines of a specific society or political system. The new social movements are trans-national movements. These movements articulate, project the struggle of human issues, and for issues relating to the very conditions of human existence, possibly a sensible existence in the future. A number of their goals and targets are, therefore, located at the trans-societal global human site. Their conception of conflicts and tensions are international, and their overarching width and spread covers the entire humankind. New social movements seek answers to questions relating to peace, disarmament, nuclear pollution, nuclear war, ecology, environment, human rights, etc. Their concerns go beyond the class paradigm and overcome the inability of Marxist materialistic explanations to answer these new contemporary stirrings.

[54] E.Laclau and C.Mouffe,*Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London:1985),pp.163-64.

Most of the new social movements, therefore, are defined by their non- class, non materialistic focus and emphasis. Their ideological articulations of goals and values go beyond the Marxist method of explanations in terms of class and class formation. Besides, the site of the struggle is not the political economy of a nation , but the very existence of the humans ,irrespective of their nationalities and their varying systems of political economics. The new social movements respond to these questions relating to the existence of the human on planet earth with dignity and with a future.

Since the class background does not determine either the identities of the actors or the stake of the collective action, new social movements generally abandon both the industrial worker's model of union organisation and the political model of the political parties. New social movements generally evolve a grassroots politics, grassroots actions, often initiate micro-movements of small groups, targeting localised issues with a limited institutional base. They produced horizontally organised democratic associations 'that are loosely federated on national levels.' According to Cohen, new social movements generally respond to issues stemming from civil society. "They target the social domain of the civil society rather than the economy or state, raising issues concerned with the demoralisation of the structures of everyday life and focussing on forms of communication and collective identity."[55] According to Cohen the new social movements are self-limiting in four senses:[56]

(1) Generally, the actors in new social movements do not struggle for the return of the Utopian undifferentiated communities of the past.

[55] Jean Cohen, "Strategy of Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements", *Social Research*, Vol.52, no.4, 1985, pp.663-716.
[56] Ibid. p. 669.

(2) The actors struggle for autonomy, plurality and difference without rejecting the formal egalitarian principles of democracy, parliament, political participation and public representation of its judicial structures.

(3) The actors make a conscious effort to learn from past experiences, to relativise their values through reasoning, except in the case of fundamentalist expressions of new social movements.

(4) The actors accept the formal existence of the state and of market economy.

The aim of new social movements is to reorganise the relations between state, society and the economy, and to create a public space in which democratic discourse on autonomy and freedom of the individual and collectivities, their identities and orientations could be discussed and examined. In its many expressions, the new social movements generally confine themselves to social action with a spirit of what Cohen calls 'self limiting radicalism.'[57]

The structure of the new social movements is, unlike the classical movements, defined by the plurality of pursuits and purposes, goals and orientations, and by the heterogeneity of their social bases. According to Touraine, in the past, the capacity of a society to reproduce itself was limited. It was limited on account of a meta-social guarantee of social order, divine rule, natural laws, historical evolution, including the meta-social characteristics of the notion of modernity of the recent past. "In our times, self-transformation and self-construction is boundless."[58]

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[57] Ibid. p. 670.

[58] Alaine Touraine, "An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements", *Social Research,* Vol.52, no.4, 1985, pp.749-87.

The actors of new social movements, such as feminists, ecologists, peace activists, and autonomists have a self understanding that their identities, goals and modes of association are historically new. The participants in the new social movements, according to Cohen, "do not view themselves in terms of a socio-economic class".[59] However, in the context of the new social movements, class background hardly determines the collective identities of the actors. Instead the actors of the new social movements 'focus on grass-root politics and create horizontal, directly democratic associations that are loosely federated on national level.'[60] The new social movements generally address themselves to the need for the democratisation of the structures of everyday life, and focus on the forms of communication and collective action. Touraine's conception of the social movements in general, and of new social movements in particular, is embedded in the macro-sociological perspective of the 'societal type', such as in the conceptions of the agrarian society and industrial society. The conception of social movements corresponds to the conception of a specific type of society. Touraine insists that new social movements have to be seen in relation to the conception of the new representation of the society. The main condition for new social movements to take shape is the awareness of entering into a new type of social life. It is with the decay of the industrial society, its cultural representation and the beginning of the post-industrial society that the new social movements came into being. In Touraine's paradigm, 'this new society is, at the same time, characterized by new forms of social conflict and correspondingly by new social movements.'[61]

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[59] Jean Cohen, "Strategy of Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements", *Social Research*, Vol.52,no.4,1985,p.667.

[60] Ibid. p. 67.

[61] Alaine Touraine, "An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements", *Social Research,* Vol. 52, no.4,1985, pp. 780-81.

The new social movements are more interested in authenticity than in analysis; happening and experiencing stand at the centre, not their systematic analysis and reflection. There is no demand for observers but for participants.[62] The new social movements ushers the global civil society for collective action.[63] This suggests that new concepts and analytical frameworks are needed which are appropriate to this level of analysis. The way social movements today link local struggles with international movements seems to imply a completely new agendas for research on social movements.[64]

There are different ways to conceive of this new context. More often and however, and especially from the point of view of the poor and exploited populations of the Third World, the new context is understood as a global development crisis affecting the common security of the Third World as well as of the so-called developed countries. "This crisis is simultaneously economical, financial, ecological, social, cultural, ideological and political", according to Marc Nerfin.[65] According to this perspective, there is a growing movement of "all people who suffer, in one way or another, from the current development crisis, whether economically, socially, culturally or ecologically".[66]

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[62] Saral Sarkar, *Green Alternative Politics in West Germany: The New Social Movements, Vol. 1,*(The United Nations University:1993).

[63] M.Shaw, "Civil Society and Global Politics: Beyond Social Movement Approach", *Millennium,* Vol. 23, No. 3,1994, pp. 647-667.

[64] A.Janison, "The Shaping of the Global Environmental Agenda: The Role of Non-Governmental Organisation", in S. Lash, B. Szerszynsky and B. Wynne, eds., *Risk Environment and Modernity,* (London:1995).

[65] Marc Nerfin, "Neither Prince nor Merchant – An Introduction to the Third System", *IFDA Dossier,* No. 56,1986, pp. 3-29.

[66] M.Finger, "NGOs and Transformation: Beyond Social Movement Theory", in T. Princen and M. Finger,eds., *Environmental NGOs in World Politics: Linking the Local and the Global* (London: 1994),pp. 48-66.

Beyond states, governments and powerful economic actors, there is an immediate and autonomous power, sometimes obvious, always present: the power of the people. Some, among the people, become aware of it, get together, act and become citizens. The citizens and their associations, or movements, when they neither search nor exercise governmental and economic power, constitute the third system. By contributing to make visible what is hidden, the third system is an expression of the people's autonomous power.[67]

This way of linking the local with the global, extrapolating, as it were, 'national social movement theory to the phenomena they seek globally,'[68] leads to a perspective that see diverse movements of the 'powerless, the poor, the unemployed, the disenfranchised and the marginalised' fighting for a people-centred development across the globe which ultimately is the new social movements.[69]

Conclusion:

The new social movements, rooted in environmentalism, are evidently being used as an instrument to raise objections and resistance which would be more difficult to express in other ways. Besides, most importantly, it has become a significant tool for addressing diverse environment issues, as well as asserting and enforcing human rights. The new social movements or environmentalism, then, exists within a larger socio-cultural context and is frequently linked to other political issues such as equal rights, democracy, liberation, equitable distribution and so forth. The new social movements therefore, generate and wield social power through the social mobilisation of their participants. This social power is at once generated by and derived from the

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[67] Nerfin (1986) op. cit. p. 5.
[68] Finger (1994) op. cit. p. 48-66.
[69] D.Korten,*Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda,*(West Hartford, Conn.:1990).

social movement itself, rather than from any institution, political or otherwise. Thus, the new social movements confront existing (state) political power through new social power which modifies political power.

CHAPTER TWO

The Rise of New Social Movements in South Asia

> It must be considered that there is nothing more to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising partly from fear of their adversaries, who have the laws in their favour; and partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of it.
>
> Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince,* 1532.

The rise of new social movements, the forms and style of their mobilisation, the type of claims they stake, and the issues they have come to respond to, including the justification of their 'newness' in the contemporary setting in South Asia can be understood at two different levels. The first relates to a process of major changes in the nature of Indian society during the post-independence phase of democracy, reforms, development and globalisation. These experiences are generally new to peoples'. Based on experiential construction, the emerging representation of the society has come to be characterised by the emergence of an aggressive and restless consciousness of peoples' about their rights, their claims, and their share in the resources of the nation. On the other hand, there is a growing awareness of their ability to collectively contest, compete and even to enter into conflict, and confrontation, including the use of violence against the state or against another adversary collectivity, including the multinational corporations.

The arrival of the Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the social scene in South Asia is historically and structurally an altogether 'new' phenomenon; a 'new' social formation which has come to stand between the rich and the poor and

between the state and civil society to mediate, moderate, represent and often to fight and struggle for the establishment of a 'new' social order. The new social order need to be characterised by post material, egalitarian and humanistic democratic contents. Such an order would value the importance of nature, ecology and environment and recognise the life supporting sanctity of planet earth. The values and organisational structure of such a social order would cut across the boundaries of caste, class or tribe and this would merge in the transnational pan-humanistic haemophilic stirring of the humans at the global level.[1]

The new social movements, in South Asia, comprises a diversity of organisations and new actors with common orientations but with varying emphasis and strategies. As a program of political reform, articulating concrete policies for states and societies to adopt environmentalism need to be distinguished from a more narrow aesthetic or scientific appreciation of the natural world. The history of environmentalism in most countries has followed a broadly similar pattern; an early period of primary and prophecy, culminating in recent decades in a widespread social movement.[2]

In South Asia, the new social movements emerge as a response to a wide spectrum of struggles and conflicts over the use of natural resources, social justice issues and violation of human rights in the face of the state development activities. At one end of the spectrum, the movement is around specific issues, such as deforestation or construction of dams. At the other end, the focus is on alternative development paradigm. The new social movements in South Asia are, therefore,

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[1] Rajendra Singh, *Social Movements, Old and New – A Post Modernist Critique* (India:2001), p.192.
[2] Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism – A Global History* (New Delhi:2000), p. 3.

varied in their nature, methodologies and their ideological orientations. To understand the nature of the new social movements, i. e., the environmental movements in South Asia, one attempt has been to analyse them in terms of their material, political and ideological contexts.[3] According to this approach, the material basis of 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 mobilisation of people affected by environmental degradation. The ideological expressions of the movement are analysed by describing different ideological strands of environmentalism in South Asia.

In another attempt, the nature and type of the environmental movement in South Asia have been analysed on the basis of the classification of the struggles over the use and control of natural resources. In this scheme, the environmental movement in South Asia is contextualised by three types of struggles over natural resources. The first type of struggle is related to the entitlement of different social groups to environmental resources. Second environmental action is directed towards seeking a change in the official policy related to the pattern of environmental resource use, and demanding relief and rehabilitation for the internally displaced persons. The third type of struggle raises ecological issues of development and concerns, particularly the dimension of human-nature relationship and presents a critique of the development paradigm. All these struggles are clustered around various natural resources that include land, water, forest and air.[4]

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[3] M.Gadgil,and Ramachandra Guha, "Ecological Conflicts and Environmental Movement in India", *Development and Change,* 25 (1)1994,pp. 101-136.

[4] H.Sethi, "Survival and Democracy: Ecological Struggles in India", in P. Wingnaraja,ed., *New Social Movements in the South: Empowering the People* (New Delhi:1993).

Environmental movements or the new social movements in South Asia have complex roots and it is difficult to dissociate one from the other. Bowman rightly argues that it was not a single issue or sudden crisis that led to the formation and growth of the environmental movements.[5] The evolution of environmental movement indicates that it is life-centred, and distinguished by essence of moral imperative regarding human behaviour in relation to other life-forms within the biosphere. A thesis common to the environmental movement in South Asia is that the undefined endless growth assumptions that dominate governmental and economic policies are impossible to attain, in the absence of a people-centric approach, and are destructive in the long run. While all goals of the new social movements have not been clearly defined, the attainment of a sustainable economy of high environmental quality by recognising the importance of man is a widely shared objective. Although the new social movements in South Asia contain several paradoxes and contradictions, it is above all a social force attempting to shape the future in the face of environmental crisis. There is a wide spectrum of agreements-disagreements over the incidents, significance, urgency and implications of an environmental crisis in the states on the one hand and the new actors, the NGOs, on the other hand.

Diversity Within the New Social Movements:

The environmental movements facing people in South Asia are many and varied, and the variety of actions and strategies employed by the new actors, the nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), or action groups in South Asia is enormous. There are myriads of roles to be played by people working within these NGOs: watchdogs, gadflies, teachers, scientists, lobbyists, reporters, publishers, community

[5] J.S.Bowman, "The Environmental Movement: An Assessment of Ecological Politics", *Environmental Affairs,* 5 (4)1976,pp.649-667.

organizers, development workers, lawyers, students, and intellectuals along with the 'locals', who are the indigenous peoples.[6]

The new actors also vary with regard to their aims and objectives which usually differ from place to place. Some of them address a wide range of questions and cover enormous regions, while others are narrowly focussing on one problem or one particular case or site. Many organizations strive to combine local people's needs with those of the environment by enabling the local people to gain more access to the natural resources in the hope that it will lead to more sustainable resource use. They vary in their philosophical background as well as in their organizational set up. Actions undertaken vary from non violent forms of opposition or civil disobedience, to forms of aggressive and militant resistance towards outside interference. It may take the form of public awareness campaigns, political lobbying, solid scientific research, human rights protection, or investigative journalism aimed to expose critical environmental issues to a wider audience.

There are other dimensions along which various movements and organisations can be analysed. For instance, there is a distinction between organizations that narrowly fight against unsound use of the environment and those that actively try to improve resource exploitation. A number of the local environmental NGOs come into existence and operate from a negative agenda as has been argued by Sayer. According to Sayer: they oppose something. They fight against encroaching outsiders, the construction of a dam or a highway ; the granting of concessions for mining, fishing

[6] J.Rush,*The Last Tree. Reclaiming the Environment in Tropical Asia* (New York1991), p.94.

or logging activities; or the establishment of protected areas denying access to resources.[7]

A different category comprises organizations that do not operate from a negative agenda but which, faced with a less productive or increasingly polluted environment, take positive action to improve the situation. In some cases people accept self-imposed restrictions on resource use by shortening hunting periods, by putting limitations on technologies applied, or by reorganizing systems of waste disposal. These self-help groups might be found at all levels of society. These diversities have its roots in the different perceptions of nature or the environment, with culture as the filter of the perceptions. Therefore to understand the diversities of the new social movements in South Asia, it is imperative to understand the perceptions of nature in South Asia.

Other categories could be added, but a common core in the activities of the new actors in South Asia is that all of them are directly or indirectly related to either the escalating conflict over natural resources (i.e. over access to natural resources) or to problems of over-exploitation and pollution. Besides, the environmental movements in South Asia tend to have a local focus. Whereas many of the most successful Western campaigns (in terms of fundraising at least) focus on perceived problems in distant parts of the world (e.g. the campaigns against whaling, sealing, ivory trade and felling of rainforests), the environmental movements in South Asia are usually responses to very concrete problems in people's immediate neighbourhoods. Hence, most of them are run by citizen action groups: people become involved in a

[7] J.A.Sayer, *Science and International Nature Conservation.* Inaugral Lecture, 'Prince Bernhard Chair.' (Utrecht:1995).

cause for very practical reasons and not merely out of some sort of idealism. Few such groups develop into what Dalton calls "environmental interest groups", defined as "ongoing, institutionalized advocates for political action that reach beyond the concerns of a specific locale".[8]

The environmental movements in South Asia, therefore, goes beyond the terms of 'local environmental issues' alone. They have successfully emerged from the 'localness', into a broader perspective where they intimately bound up with development and human rights issues. Besides, the environmental concern and local participation have become a part of a global discourse whereby the local activists are immediately linked to the extensive networks of global environmental organizations. It is, therefore, evident that the new social movements in South Asia also subscribe to the global environmental issues and concerns while dealing with the immediate local environmental challenges. Their programmes of activities are not restricted to the local demands alone. Instead, they have been obliged to align and collaborate with various national as well as international organizations which provide them the global content, thereby delivering the localness into a larger global context.

The bare physical facts of the deterioration of the environment in South Asia are by now well established. But more serious still are its human consequences, the chronic shortages of natural resources in their daily life. People who, once, subsisted on nature / environment are already joining the band of 'ecological refugees', flocking to the cities in search of employment. The urban population itself complains of shortages of water, power, pollution, overpopulation, etc. Such shortages and

[8] Russel J.Dalton, *The Green Rainbow.Environmental Groups in western Europe* (New Haven: 1994), p.17.

complains emerged from the abuse of the environment.[9] Meanwhile, shortages in the face of the multiplying profit- making multi national corporations (MNCs) in turn led to sharp conflicts between competing groups of resource users. These conflicts often pit poor against poor, and the rich against poor. However, the most dramatic environmental conflicts are set by the rich against the poor. The rise of new social movements in South Asia covers a multitude of these local conflicts, initiatives and struggles which possess an anti-statist ideology as a unifying element for collective action.

Ideologies of the Environmental Movement in South Asia:

Ideology constitutes an important element of the new social movements in South Asia. An ideology is a system of ideas which gives legitimacy to an existing or proposed system of relationships, and correspondingly support an action programme to sustain or subvert the prevailing system.[10] Ideologies, therefore, provide inspiration as well as legitimacy to a social movement. They also provide explanations and indicate a value framework of a social movement. Ideologies are action - driven. "The action element related to an ideology is what we call a social movement".[11] An ideology can also be a product of a social movement and this usually happens through the crystallization of ideas during the course of a social movement. The definitions of ideology and social movement suggest that both contain change-resisting or change-promoting elements. What, however, is problematic is the direction of change-resistance or change promotion within a movement. As a corollary to this, an ideology

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[9] Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez Alier, *Varieties of Environmentalism – Essays North and South* (New Delhi:2000),p.4.

[10] M.S.Gore, *The Social Context of an Ideology: Ambedkar's Political and Social Thought* (New Delhi:1993),pp.29-30.

[11] Ibid.p.46.

that is not aimed at any transformative change in the system may not be fully comprehended as an ideology.[12]

Ideologies of environmentalism in South Asia are essentially characterised by free floating eclectic brands of multifarious, often conflicting groups. The crusading Gandhians, the Marxists, the proponents of appropriate technology,[13]the ideology of conservation and the perspective of indigenous ecological management, [14]and eco-feminism,[15]are the known ideologies of the environmental movements in South Asia.

The ideologies are apparently distinct but sometimes overlap. A particular environmental organisation/group follow more than one ideology. Similarly, a particular ideology may inspire many environmental movements at the same time. For example, in the Chipko movement, the oldest environmental protest movement in India, the Gandhian ideology of pre-modern village based self sufficiency of people championed by Sunderlal Bahuguna has combined with Chandi Prasad Bhatt's constructive ideology based on appropriate use of technology. This movement truly began with the Chipko Andolan (Hug the tree movement) which was founded in April 1973 to protect trees in the Indian Himalaya against industrial exploitation. In one of the first printed accounts of Chipko, a breathless journalist announced that Gandhi's ghost had saved the Himalayan trees. Ever since, Mahatma Gandhi has been usually acknowledged and occasionally unacknowledged patron saint of the Indian environmental movement. From Chipko to Save the Narmada Movement (Narmada Bachao Andolan) of the present time, environmental activists have relied heavily on

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[12] Janki Andharia and Chandan Sengupta, "The Environmental Movement:Global Issues and the Indian Reality", *Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol.59,Issue1,Jan.1998.

[13] Ramachandra Guha, " Ideological Trends in Indian Environmentalism", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 23(49)1988,pp.2578-2581.

[14]:A.Baviskar, " *In the Belly of the River:Tribal Conflicts and Development in Narmada*",(New Delhi:1995).

[15] M.Mies and V.Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (New Delhi:1993).

Gandhian techniques of non-violent protest or *satyagraha*, and have drawn abundantly on Gandhi's polemic against heavy industrialisation.[16] Similarly, various other new social movements opted for a Marxist interpretation of history and followed a Marxist strategy of achieving its goal of environmental movement. The course of the Narmada movement also seems to have been charted out through a Marxist value framework that has questioned the monstrosity of large dams as a product of capitalist development and has also included the Gandhian perspective of decentralisation and non-violent action.[17]Similarly, the anti-Arun III Movement in Nepal also seems to have been enthused by Marxist ideologies by questioning the monstrosity of large dams which was undergoing the process of construction with the aid of multi-national corporations and other foreign nation-states as donors against the consent and interests of the local people. It also inculcated Gandhian strategy of non –violent protests and agitations.

The presence of different ideological positions within an environmental movement suggests that ideologies are often used more as strategies than as ideologies *per se*. Ideologies being embedded in strategies is not unusual because one of the functions of an ideology is to specify strategies or means to attain it. Although the characterisation of an ideology as transformative or radical, constructive or reformist, the general observation about the environmental movement is that it is largely guided by a reformist ideology. As Bharadwaj states, "the overriding emphasis of the environmental movement has been reformist. Concern with conservation and efficiency in resource and energy use, rather than with reallocating the production

[16] Ramachandra Guha, "Mahatma Gandhi and the Environmental Movement in India", in Arne Kalland and Gerard Persoon,eds., *Environmental Movements in Asia* (Surrey:1998),pp.65-82.
[17] A.Baviskar, *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts and Development in Narmada* (New Delhi:1995).

surplus among social classes, has dominated its agenda. Thus, the radical challenge to the dominant high technology 'treadmill of production' and the softening of the resource perspective of environmentalism by the emergence of equity concerns surrounding the new appropriate technology and deep ecology movements have remained largely rhetorical, even as the focus on efficient resources use in production has made common cause between their membership and elite interests."[18]

Besides, various ideologies – the Green agenda, ecological Marxism, eco-feminism, eco-socialism and deep ecology – also has its influence on the environmental movements in South Asia. These similarities in agenda not withstanding, the Green movement in Europe has attempted to provide an alternative political culture by forming a Green Party and actively participating in party politics.[19] This shows that the new social movements in South Asia are not independent, but rather interdependent with the global environmental movements in terms of its ideological agenda, goals, organisational network, etc.

Resource Exploitation, Indigenous Peoples Rights and the New Social Movements:

The new social movements in South Asia have come to symbolise the struggle of the 'indigenous peoples'[20] –poor and underprivileged communities, mostly tribals,

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[18] L.Bharadwaj, "Human Ecology and the Environment", in E.F. Borgatta and M. L. Borgatta,eds., *Encyclopaedia of Sociology, Vol. II,* (New York: 1992).

[19] S.Sarkar, *The New Social Movements: The Greens, Volume I* (New Delhi: 1993).

[20] The term 'indigenous' is widely used in international discourse on human rights and environmental issues, to describe societies whose economies have never been industrial in character. The label is difficult to define in precise terms, but is probably the more useful for that. For instance, Chapter 26 of Agenda 21, the most comprehensive of the agreements to have emerged from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, the Rio Earth Summit), states, "Indigenous peoples and their communities have an historical relationship with their lands and are generally descendants of the original inhabitants of such lands"(United Nations 1993a:385). The terms "indigenous peoples", indigenous ethnic minorities", "tribal groups", and "scheduled tribes" describe social groups with a social and cultural identity that is distinct from the dominant groups in society and that makes them vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the development process. Many such groups have a social and economic status that limits their capacity to defend their interests in and rights to land and other productive resources, or that restricts their ability to participate in and benefit from development. Needless to say, it is often impossible to establish who the 'original' inhabitants of a region were.

dalits, adivasis, etc.- for a just and equitable society. This they expressed through the new social movements by asserting their rights in the face of the unseemly haste with which Northern capital, in the form of what is termed official development assistance, seeks projects in Third World countries in collusion with the government of the countries. However, despite its noble sound, the practice of development has been a benign social process. Its path is strewn with oustees and the relocatees, the coerced and the coercers, the winners and the losers. In the face of development's complex process, the indigenous peoples have always been the ousted, the coerced and the losers. The new social movements in South Asia represented the indigenous peoples' movements which are leading the crusade for justice and the right to life. The indigenous peoples are being dispossessed of their livelihood and their ways of living to make way for dams being built. On the basis of incredibly dubious claim of "common benefit" and "national interest."

Threats to indigenous peoples rights and well being are particularly acute in relations to resource development projects, be they state or corporate – directed. These projects and operations has had and continues to have a devastating impact on the indigenous peoples , undermining their ability to sustain themselves physically, politically, economically, and culturally. It is, therefore , no coincidence that the new social movements in South Asia emerged to address the violations of their rights in connection with the development and resource exploitation.

It is through the new social movements with other non-state actors that the indigenous peoples assert themselves against the monolith of the state and several donor agencies.[21] The movements owe heir existence to the fact that an effective assertion of rights of all kinds, including cultural rights, is prevented by the prevailing

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[21] D.L.Sheth, "Movements, Intellectuals and the State: Social Policy in Nation Building", *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol.xxvii, No.8, Feb. 22, 1992, pp.425-426.

inequalities within the social structure and, just as often, even by the democratic state, which tends to act in favour of the status quo in the social realm. It is in this sense that the indigenous peoples, through the new social movements play a crucial role in formulation of the social, political and cultural policies of the state, while operating from the spaces available to them in the civil society. [22]

Over the past fifty years, the World Bank has been involved in financing resource development and associated infrastructure projects affecting indigenous peoples. Indeed the Bank's first policy on indigenous peoples *Operational Manual Statement 2.3Tribal People in Bank- Financed Projects* - was adopted in response to "internal and external condemnation of the disastrous experiences of indigenous groups in Bank- financed projects."[23] Moreover, these violations are not cconfined to the past; as the UN Special Rapporteur comments:

...resources are being extracted and/or developed by other interests with little or no benefits for indigenous communities that occupy the land. Whereas the World Bank has developed operational directives concerning its own activities in relation to these issues... and some national legislation specifically protects the interests of indigenous communities in this respect, in numerous instances the rights and needs of indigenous peoples are disregarded, making this one of the major human rights problems faced by them in recent decades.[24]

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[22] Ibid, p. 425.

[23] B.Kingsbury, " Operational Policies of International Institutions as part of the Law- Making Process: The World Bank and Indigenous Peoples", in, G.S. Goodwin- Gill and S. Talmon,eds., *The Reality of International Law: Essays in Honour of Ian Brownlie* (Oxford:1999),p. 324.

[24] *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people,* Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, submitted pursuant to Commission Resolution 2001/57. UN Doc./CN.4/2002/97, at para. 56

Large scale economic and industrial development has taken place without recognition of and respect for indigenous peoples' rights to lands, territories and resources. Economic development has been largely imposed from outside, with complete disregard for the rights of indigenous peoples to participate in the control, implementation and benefits of development. Indigenous peoples are being impeded in every conceivable way from proceeding with their own forms of development, consistent with their own values, perspectives and interests.

The new social movements in South Asia place clear and substantial obligations on states in connection with resource exploitation on indigenous lands and territories. The new social movements in South Asia assert that state policy and practices concerning exploitation of resources cannot take place in a vacuum that ignores its human rights obligations. In other words, states should not justify violations of indigenous peoples' rights in the name of national developments. The basic principle, reaffirmed at the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights is that, "[w]hile development facilitates the enjoyment of all human rights; the lack of development may not be invoked to justify the abridgement of internationally recognised human rights."[25]

While the obligations incumbent on states have traditionally been the focus of international human rights law, there is strong evidence in contemporary law that obligations to respect human rights can apply to non-state actors including multinational corporations.[26] The new social movements asserts that states have

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[25] *Vienna Declaration and Program of Action,* Adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25th June, 1993, Part I, at para. 10. UN Doc. A/CONF. 157/23, 12 July 1993.

[26] M. Addo,ed., *Human Rights Standards and the Responsibility of Transnational Corporations.* The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1999; J. R. Paul, Holding Multinational Corporations Responsible Under International Law, 24, *Hastings International and Company Law,* Rev. 285 (2001); Patrick Macklem, Indigenous Rights and Multinational Corporations and International Law, 24, *Hastings International and Company Law,* Rev. 475 (2001).

affirmative obligations to take appropriate measures and responsibilities to prevent and to exercise due diligence in response to human rights violations committed by private persons, including corporate entities. The two new social movements in South Asia which will be discussed in the next two chapters, the Narmada Bachao Andolan in India and the Anti-Arun III movements in Nepal holds the belief that for indigenous peoples, secure, effective, collective property rights are fundamental to the economic and social developments, to their physical and cultural integrity, to their livelihoods and sustenance. According to the UN Rapporteur on indigenous land rights; "a profound relationship exists between indigenous peoples and their lands, territories and resources. This relationship has various social, cultural, spiritual, economic and political dimensions and responsibilities. The collective dimension of this relationship is significant and the inter-generational aspect of such a relationship is also crucial to indigenous peoples' identity, survival and viability.[27]

This multifaceted nature of indigenous peoples' relationship to land, as well as the relationship between development and territorial rights was emphasised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, in her December 2001 Presidential Fellow's Lecture at the World Bank. She states that, for indigenous peoples:

> "Economic improvements cannot be envisaged without protection of land and resource rights. The rights over land need to include recognition of the spiritual relation indigenous peoples have with their ancestral territories. And the economic base that land provides need to be accompanied by a recognition of indigenous peoples' own political and legal institutions, cultural traditions and social organisation. Land and culture, development,

[27] Indigenous People and their Relationship to Land. *Final Working Paper Prepared by Mrs. Erica Irene A. Daes,* Special Rapporteur. UN Doc. E/CN. 4/Sub. 2/2001/21. at para 20.

spiritual values and knowledge are as one. To fail to recognise one is to fail on all."[28]

The dominant stands of the environmental movements in South Asia focuses on the questions of equity, particularly in safeguarding and upholding of the rights of the indigenous peoples in the hands of the state as well as profit making multinational corporations. In fact, the new social movements have largely arisen out of conflicts between omnivorous, who have gained disproportionately from economic development and ecosystem, people whose livelihoods have been seriously undermined through a combination of resource fluxes biased against them and a growing degradation of the environment which is their 'food basket.' The new social movements in South Asia has been illustrating the situations of the indigenous peoples about the essential connection they maintained to their traditional territories as well as the human rights violations which threaten when these lands are invaded and when the land itself is degraded. The new social movement in South Asia seem to understand that for many indigenous cultures, continued utilisation of traditional collective systems for the control and use of territory are essential to their survival, as well as to their individual and collective well being. Indigenous peoples' territorial rights arise from traditional occupation and use, and indigenous forms of tenure, not from grants, recognition or registration by the state. The latter simply confirm and guarantee pre-existing rights. The new social movements in South Asia deliberated the rights of the indigenous peoples, their rights and demands, articulation of their problems and the modus operandi in asserting their demands outside the institutional framework.

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[28] *Breaching the Gap Between Human Rights and Development: From Normative Principles to Operational Relevance.* Lecture by Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, World Bank, Washington D. C. , Preston Auditorium, 3 December 2001.

The ongoing process of modernisation, in the name of development and national interest is aided by the state, but often, resisted by the new social movements. As an agency of modernisation, the state devises economic policies which, by transforming the economy, allow the state to penetrate deeply to the society. By emphasising and legally recognising the contractual basis of interpersonal and inter group relationships, the state through various legislations and using the jurisprudence evolved by the courts of law also seeks to reformulate social codes of behaviour obtaining in the society. Further, its membership being involuntary, the state subordinates the social codes followed by different communities to the panel and economic codes which it expressly devises for its members and makes them universally applicable to them all. Whenever social codes of communities are seen by the state as repugnant to the secular spirit of the panel and economic codes, the former are disregarded, even suppressed by it. Thus, by reducing the social, cultural codes to criminal and economic codes, accompanied by other processes of modernisation which are at work in the society, it succeeds in detaching economic relations from the diverse socio-cultural matrices in which the economy remained embedded. This is how the modern state acquires a putative social base for creating and sustaining new economic operations in the society as a whole. This activity of the state is embodied generally in its economic policies, but more particularly in its various programmes and projects of developments. This seek to destroy the diverse subsistence economies prevalent in the society, albeit, with a view to integrating them all into the growing national economy and market. As a consequence, the pluralities find it increasingly difficult to control or regulate the growing and much differentiated arena of social systems stemming from economic relations.

Developmental policies also threaten the pluralities and their very survival as communities. More often, the implementation of development programs results in undermining even the legal-constitutional rights of the affected populations: they do not just uproot and displace them but cut the people from the very sources of their livelihood.[29]

The new social movements in South Asia raise such encroachments by the state on the economic and socio-cultural spaces occupied by diverse indigenous communities. They mobilised the peoples adversely affected by such policies of the state. In doing so, they also emphasise such issues as rehabilitation and compensation for the affected populations. Even as they assert the cultural rights of the people to survive as communities, the kind of consciousness the movements raise among the people on these issues and the forms of organisation they devise are more attuned to articulating and securing their rights generally as citizens, as well as economic groups of producers and consumers.

The politics of mobilisation pursued by the new social movements in South Asia often outside the arena of elections and parties, is essentially about protecting and promoting the rights of people with the state. Such a politics of rights seeks to pull the state nearer to understanding a complex society, just as the state through its economic and development policies seeks to draw the society nearer to it. The new social movements, on the other hand, through asserting the political and economic rights of the indigenous peoples, often couched in cultural terms, seek to decentralise the state and to bring it down within the civil society. In this way, the movements not

[29] D.L Sheth, "Movements, Intellectuals and the State – Social Policy in Nation Building", *Economic and Political Weekly,* Vol. XXVII, No. 8. February 22, 1992.

only act as buffers mitigating the severe impacts of modernisation and development on the society. They also shape the discourse on social transformation in which identity of the peoples gets increasingly expressed in terms of their rights as citizens.[30]

Conclusion

The new social movements has visibly enlarged, redefined and extended our understanding of environmental issues and their significance. In the South Asian context, new social movements rooted in environmentalism have been the vehicle of peoples' movement. The rise and growth of new social movements also indicates the arrival of environmentalism not merely as a local discourse, but also as being part of the global discourse. Added to this newness is the emergence of the non governmental organisations (NGOs) championing the issues of the new social movements. Robert Nisbet says that when the history of the twentieth century is finally written, the single most important social movement of the period will be judged to be environmentalism.[31]Similarly, the new social movements are undergoing the process of rewriting the history of peoples' movement in South Asia by going beyond the traditional expressions and linking affective to effective goals and principles with a global network.[32]

[30] Ibid. pp. 426-427
[31] R.Nisbet, *Prejudices: A Philosophical Dictionary,*(Cambridge: 1982).
[32] Janki Andheria and Chandan Sengupta, " The Environmental Movement: Global Issues and the Indian Reality", *Indian Journal of Social Work,* Vol. 59, Issue 1, January 1998, pp. 445-447.

CHAPTER THREE

NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN AS A NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Koi nahi hatega, bandh nahi banega
(No one will move, the dam will not be built)
Doobenge par hatenge nahin
(We will drown but we will not move)
-Slogans of the Narmada Bachao Andolan.

Understanding the Large Dams Debate

The global debate about large dams is overwhelmingly complex. It is complex because the issues are not confined to the design, construction and operation of dams themselves but embrace the range of social, environmental and political choices on which the human aspiration to development and improved well-being depends. Dams fundamentally alter rivers and the use of a natural resource, frequently entailing a reallocation of benefits from local riparian users to new groups of beneficiaries at a regional or national level. At the heart of the Dams debate are issues of equity, governance, justice and power-issues that undertake the many intractable problems faced by humanity.[1]

The top five dam building countries account for nearly 80% of all large Dams worldwide. China alone has built around 22,000 large Dams, or close to half the world's total number. Before 1949, it had only 22 large Dams. Other countries among the top five dam building nations include the United States with over 6390 large Dams; India with over 4000; and Spain and Japan with between 1000 and 1200 large dams each[2]. While many have benefited from the services large dams provide, their

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[1] World Commission on Dams, *Dams and Development: A new Framework for Decision Making, the report of the World Commission on Dams*, November 2000,London and Sterling,VA: Earthscan Publications Ltd.,pp.1-30.

[2] Ibid, P. 9.

construction and operation have led to many significant, negative social and human impacts. The adversely affected populations include directly displaced families, host communities where families are resettled, and riverine communities, especially those downstream of dams, whose livelihood and access to resources are affected in varying degrees by altered river flows and ecosystem fragmentation.[3] More broadly, whole societies have lost access to natural resources and cultural heritage that were submerged by reservoirs or rivers transformed by dams. The construction of large dams has led to the displacement of some 40 to 80 million people worldwide. The world's two most populous countries China and India have built around 57% of the world's large dams and account for the largest number of people displaced. In the late 1980's china officially recognized some 10.2 million people as 'reservoir resettles', though other sources suggested the figure may be substantially higher. In India, estimates of the total number of people displaced due to large dams vary from 16 to 38 million people.[4]

Genesis of the opposition to dams - A Historical perspective:

Conflicts over water and dams are probably as ancient as dam building itself. Populations affected or threatened by dams have fiercely resisted dam building throughout the last century. As they were often isolated, without help from outside sympathizers, affected peoples' resistance to dams often went unnoticed internationally and in some cases, the states concerned used intimidation and violence

[3] Chandan Datta, "Narmada Sagar Project: Tragedy of Local People", *Mainstream*, 27 (55) (Oct. 14, 89), pp. 8-10.

[4] Anant Phadke, "Dam-oustees' movement in South Maharashtra: Innovative Struggle", *Economic and Political Weekly*,35(47),2000(18-24 Nov.)pp.4084-86.

to suppress it. As dam building accelerated after the 1950's, opposition to dams became more widespread, vocal and organized.[5]

Over the past thirty years, the alliance of northern activist groups (environmental and human rights groups) with the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and affected groups associations in the South has resulted in more vigorous and more coordinated opposition to dams worldwide. In many cases, the strength of these coalitions has a major impact on dam-related planning and policy and at the level of individual dams. The emergence of these coalitions, with a global network, raising and asserting issues concerning, environmentalism by promoting and protecting humanity, has been the source of the new social movements. As a result of these concerted pressures, the planning process which until the 1970's was the restricted preserve of government agencies, engineers and economists, began to include environmental impact assessments and public reviews. By the late 1980's, environmentalist and sociologists began to play a more important role in the planning process and by the mid 1990's the involvement of affected peoples, NGOs', indigenous peoples in the process became more significant. It is because of the new social movements, the people's movements that the world Bank, the single largest financiers or large dams, withdraws from the Sardar Sarovar project in India in 1993 and then from Arun III in Nepal in 1995. The perceived injustice in the distribution of the benefits and impacts and the increased concern about the environmental implications indicate that the debates, controversies and conflicts surrounding large dams are not about dams alone. They are part of a wider debate about development, a

[5] Krishna Kumar, "Narmada – State and the people style of suppression and resistance", *Economic and Political Weekly*,31(39) (28Sep.96),pp.,2666-67.

debate where diverging views on the issues of natural resources, environment, human rights and public financial resources confront each other.

The decade since the mid 1980's has seen the emergence of an international movement against current dam building practices. This growing movement comprises thousands of environmental, human rights and social activist groups on all the world's inhabited continents. It coalesced from a multitude of local, regional and national anti-dam campaigns and a smaller number of support groups working at an international level[6]. Dam builders recognize and bemoan its effectiveness. ICOLD President Woldgang Pircher warned the British Dam society in 1992 that "... the industry faced a serious general counter movement that has already succeeded in reducing the prestige of dam engineering in the public eye, and it is starting to make-work difficult for our profession".[7]

The rise of environmentalism has, therefore, greatly helped the opponents of dams. As a result, anti-dam campaigns have ultimately resulted in the rise of new social movements. Dam opponents are not just 'antis' but are advocates for what they see as more sustainable, equitable and efficient technologies and management practices. Political changes which would best encourage the preservation or adoption of these technologies and practices have been a central demand for many anti-dam campaigns. Struggles that have started with the aim of improving resettlement terms or of stopping an individual dam have matured into movements advocating an entirely different model of political and economic development. That decision making be

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[6] Patrick McCully, *Silenced Rivers - The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams* (London and New York:2001), p,281.

[7] W. Pircher, "36000 Large Dams and still More Needed", paper presented at Seventh Biennial conference of the British Dam Society, University of Sterling, 25 June 1992.

transparent and democratic is now seen by many dam opponents as being as important as the decisions themselves.

Large Dams on the Narmada River

The Narmada River originates from the Maikal ranges at Amarkantak, 1057m above the sea level, now in Shadol district of Madhya Pradesh, India. In its 1312 Km long journey before joining the Arabian Sea, the Narmada flows through the three states of Madhya Pradesh (MP), Maharastra and Gujarat. Nearly 90% of the flow is in Madhya Pradesh, and most of the remaining is in Gujarat. It flows for a very brief stretch through Maharashtra. The valley of the river Narmada has been the seat of an uninterrupted flow of human civilization dating from pre-historic times. The Narmada finds mention as one of the seven most sacred rivers in ancient Indian texts. A number of written accounts and ballads refer to this river. Its banks are dotted with temples, myths and folklore, the living symbols of a timeless Indian tradition. The river Narmada has supported a bewildering variety of people and diverse sociocultural practices ranging from the relatively autonomous Adivasi (tribal) settlements in the forests to non-tribal rural population. About 22-25 million people live in the river drainage basin of 98,796 square kilometers.

The idea of damming the Narmada was discussed as far back as the late 19th Century during the days of the British Raj. The issue of damming the river was raised again after independence under the thrust of the Nehruvian Development policy, which referred to dams as the "Temples of modern India". It is said that the first Home Minister of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who hailed from the strong agrarian background of central Gujarat dreamt of harnessing the river for the benefit of his

own people. This 'dream' syndrome became very strong and was subsequently used by every politician in Gujarat to leverage political support for the Narmada project.

However, the Narmada valley project was mired in controversy and dispute right from its inception.[8] In 1965, the Khosla committee planned a 530 feet high dam in Navagam (the site of the Sardar Saravar dam today) while allocating 13.9 Million Acre Feet (MAF) of water to MP and 10.6 MAF to Gujarat. This proposal was immediately locked in a dispute between the so-called riparian states i.e., Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh over the sharing of the costs and benefits of the project. The Chief Minister of MP, Govind Narayan Singh, objected to the unprecedented submergence as a result of the dam and contested the claims of Gujarat on the Narmada waters. Gujarat on the other hand claimed a higher share of water on the basis of the projected needs of the "drought prone area" in the far-off Kutch region. In this effort, Gujarat also made Rajasthan, a party to give itself more bargaining power, although Rajasthan – a non-riparian state had nothing to do with the project.

In 1969, the Government of India under the, then, Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi constituted the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDT) to resolve this inter-state water dispute. The tribunal itself was subjected to a series of wrangling between Gujarat and MP. While MP proposed a dam height of 210 feet, Gujarat demanded that the height of the dam be 530 feet. While Gujarat put its water requirement at 22 MAF, Madhya Pradesh would concede only 4 MAF. Finally in 1979, after 10 years of deliberations, the Tribunal gave its award, which consisted of

[8] Arun Ghosh, "Sardar Sarovar Dam: How much do the people know all the facts?," *Mainstream*, 38(40),2000 (23 Sep.),pp.7-11.

clear compromises between the claims of Gujarat and MP. Accordingly, they allocated 9 MAF of water to Gujarat and arrived at the 453 feet for the height of the dam. Subsequently, two extra feet were added to the dam height for completely unknown reasons to bring the height to round figure of 455 feet. The full contours of the Narmada Valley Development Plan (NVDP) appeared only towards the late 1980's. It is an ambitious plan, which envisages the building of 30 big dams, 135 medium dams and 3000 small dams on the Narmada and its tributaries. Of the 30 big dams, Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) and Narmada Sagar Project (NSP) are the mega dams. The Maheshwar and Omkareshwar dams along with SSP and NSP are to form a complex, which would ultimately cater to the needs of SSP.

The SSP, therefore, symbolizes in many ways the hubris that has driven the development project- the 'arrogance of humanism' that characterizes modernity itself. The controversy that has swirled around the SSP since the 1980s remains unabated today. The challenges to the SSP, especially from the grassroots new social movement of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) are part of a longer contestation of power traditionally vested with the state and the political and economic elite of a country. Unlike many grassroots movements elsewhere in the world, the NBA's struggle against the SSP has gained credence and legitimacy through innovative and powerful linkages in the local, national and international arenas that makes an example of what environmental and social movements can achieve.

The World Bank Entry

In 1985, the World Bank entered into credit and loan agreements with the Government of India and the Governments of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and

Maharashtra; providing four hundred and fifty million US dollars for the construction of the dam and the canal. The construction of the dam began two years later. The agreements between the World Bank and the Central and State governments specified conditions with regard to both environmental issues and the resettlement and rehabilitation of oustees to be met by the governments. In addition, the government of India had environmental legislation in place by 1985 that required comprehensive environmental impact assessment to be carried out for all major irrigation projects, multipurpose river valley projects and hydro electric projects.

The sustainability of economic development has been one of the top priorities of the World Bank. The Bank seeks to promote sustainability in all relevant projects and sectors. The World Bank believes that the most influential way in which sustainability can be approached is to ensure that all environment and natural resources implications are integrated into Bank work at all stages. The basic assumption in this direction is that much of the developing world needs more energy. Concern with big dams and reservoirs, such as the Sardar Sarovar Project is, therefore, related to the World Bank's interest in sustaining economic development.

The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA): The Birth of the New Social Movement

Ever since work started on the SSP, Non-Governmental Organizations(NGOs) have been involved in working with the local people. Arch-Vahini, for example, established its first contacts with tribal people in project-affected villages in Gujarat in 1980 at a time when no real resettlement package was on offer from the government. Until 1987, Arch-Vahini and other NGO's worked individually and collectively to ensure a better deal for the oustees of the SSP. But this changed after the government

of Gujarat, in response to the lobbying by NGO's and under pressure from the World Bank, offered a new Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) package in December 1987 that accepted the major demands of the activist groups. This included offering a minimum of five hectares of land for all oustees, including tribal people, with no formal land title and "major sons" defined by the state as those who were 18 years of age and older. Some organizations, such as Arch-Vahini, accepted this package and decided to work on ensuring a fair and full implementation of the R and R provisions. Others, including the Narmada Ghati Nav Nirman Samiti (Committee for a New Life in the Narmada Valley) in Madhya Pradesh, the Narmada Dharangrast Samiti (Committee for Narmada Dam-Affected People) in Maharashtra and the Narmada Asargrastha Samiti (Committee for the people Affected by the Narmada Dam) in Gujarat decided that not only was adequate resettlement unlikely to happen, but the very model of development represented by the SSP was antithetical to the notion of sustainable development.

In August 1988, these groups announced their total, but non-violent opposition to the SSP and came together to form the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement). The NBA is now a national coalition of environmental and human rights activist, academics, and most centrally the displaced people, the oustees[9]. The NBA was pivotal to establishing linkages with environmental and human rights organizations outside the country, which helped build an international campaign against the SSP. The NBA, however, has not only made an international impact, it has also led to the formation of a national level campaign against large dams.

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[9] Priya A. Kurian, "*Engendering the Environment ? – Gender in the World Bank's Environmental Policies*", (Ashgate Publication Limited:2000),p.174.

The Issues before the NBA

The activities of the NBA are not simply restricted to the question of rehabilitation of the oustees; the movement has also raised fundamental questions about the model of development, whose interests are served through such projects and the accountability of the State and multilateral aid agencies such as the World Bank towards human rights and environmental issues in the host countries.[10]

The primary issues before the NBA are:

(a) Protection of tropical forest.

(b) Maintenance of ecological balance.

(c) Prevention of destructive development.

(d) Social justice and human rights, and

(e) Rehabilitation and resettlement of the displaced peoples.

Millions of people have been displaced by development projects in India since the year 1950. However, less than 25 percent of the displaced peoples have been resettled and rehabilitated[11]. Regardless of the magnitude of the population displaced and absence of rehabilitation measures, neither the Central government nor the State governments have enacted effective legislations to amend the situation. Inherent social and economic inequalities embedded in Indian society, along with the type of laws for land acquisition and compensation payment have curtailed the capacity of the displaced to organize themselves and demand better rehabilitation provisions. However, of late, people affected by the SSP and the NBA has sown the seeds of

[10] Janki Andharia and Chandan Sengupta, "The Environmental Movement: Global Issues and the Indian Reality", *Indian Journal of Social Work* Vol.59. Issue 1, Jan 1998, p.433.

[11] Walter Fernandes and Raj Anthony, "Development, Displacement and Rehabilitation in the Tribal areas of Orissa", *Report* (New Delhi: 1992).

protest and has challenged the government effectively. The NBA has brought the issues of the rights of displaced people to the forefront, generating a national debate[12].

Inequalities based on caste, tribe and economic status, which are inherent in the Indian society, not only undermine the economic and political capabilities of certain groups of affected people but also divide them and create obstacles to the forging of a unified front to demand better R and R provisions. The NBA bridges such inequalities and provides a platform for collective action to confront the government and to protect the rights of the affected people. The NBA's actions and participations emerge in response to individual or group perceptions of a loss. The problem invariably centres on land loss and inadequate compensation. While the universally applicable Land Acquisition Act, 1894 and R and R provisions focus purely on those who are the landed, large and medium landowners and merchant groups perceives the loss to be serious and reacted spontaneously. For these groups, loss of land would mean loss of the social, economic, and political power they wield. Small and marginal farmers are threatened with complete marginalization, but on its own this group lacks political and economic power. The socially and economically marginalized but numerically strong low caste, landless groups never get an opportunity to perceive their stake in the whole process and are forced to remain silent spectators[13].

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[12] Jean Dreze, Samson, Meera,et al.,eds., "*The Dam and the Nation-Displacement and Resettlement in the Narmada Valley*",(Oxford University Press: 1997), p.26.

[13] S.Paraseraman, "The Anti-Dam Movement and Rehabilitation Policy", in Jean Dreze and Satyajit Singh,eds.,*Dam and the Nation Displacement and Resettlement in the Narmada Valley* (New Delhi:1997),p.26-32.

The impact, therefore, of the SSP on the fate of tribal communities, particularly Adivasis[14], has been the focus of NBA's concern. Proponents of the dam argue that since tribal culture must ultimately bow to the superior might of the forces of modernization, displacement will not be an unmitigated trauma for Adivasis, but will merely hasten the inevitable process of assimilation.

Amita Baviskar, however, argues that, in the light of the political economy of tribal development, 'preservation' versus 'assimilation' is essentially a false dichotomy that overlooks the history of exchange between tribal culture and dominant states, markets and religion. The encounter with development has been an unequal one in which Adivasis has been gradually losing their economic and political autonomy. Therefore, the manner in which state policies are made and implemented further marginalizes and alienates the already impoverished and oppressed Adivasis. Under these circumstances, the movements of the Adivasis against the dam along with the NBA together with political mobilization on other aspects of development endeavors to widen the choices available to people's and to democratize the process of decision making out of the hands of planners, politicians, and the local elite. In keeping with their history of struggle for justice, the NBA works to change policies that seek to define their universe and their future, by trying to forge meaningful choices that go beyond 'preservation' and 'assimilation' towards empowerment on their own terms. The NBA has been totally adamant in its opposition to the project.

[14] In the Indian context, the term 'Adivasis' (literally 'original dwellers') seems more appropriate than the term 'indigenous' or 'tribal' 'Indigenous' is unsuitable outside its original context of the America where, historically, there has been a sharper differentiation between natives 'natives' and European settlers. The use of tribe is also somewhat difficult because of the porosity of the boundary between 'caste' and 'tribe' both of which have existed side by side in India for centuries. (Beteille, Andre (1986) 'The Concept of Tribe with special reference to India,' in *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol XXVII P.310). 'Adivasi' is a widely accepted term, employed by the people to refer to themselves. Hardiman presents a persuasive case for this usage (Hardiman, D. (1987a), 'The Bhils and Shahukars of Eastern Gujarat' in R.Guha (ed), *Subaltern Shides V: Writtings on South Asian History and Society*, Oxford University.

The NBA has raised a world-wide consciousness about the plight of oustees, partly by focusing on the tribals. It has also mobilized active support on the international front. Its lobbying has persuaded donor governments and the World Bank to withdraw from the project.[15].

NBA and the International Front

Interest in the growing Narmada controversy within the international environmental community was boosted by two trips Medha Patkar made to Washington in 1987 and 1989. Lori Udall from Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) in Washington was inspired by Patkar to take the lead role in raising the NBA's concerns with the World Bank. Udall also helped build a network of committed and informed activists in North America, Europe, Japan and Australia who become known as the Narmada Action Committee.

The next foreign success for the NBA was a symposium in Tokyo in April 1990. Influencing opinion in Japan was vital for the Narmada campaign as the Japanese government was lending some $200 million for the turbines for Sardar Sarovar. NBA and international activists joined Japanese NGO's, academics and politicians at the Tokyo symposium, which received considerable national press coverage. The activists later met with Japanese government officials. Within a month of the symposium, the Japanese withdrew all further funding for the dam. This was the first time that a Japanese aid loan has been withdrawn for environmental and human rights reasons.

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[15] Vasudha Dhagamwar, "*The NGO Movements in the Narmada Valley: Some reflections, in the Dam* ..."(New Delhi:1997),pp.93-102.

NBA and the Phase of Peaceful Agitation Against the Government

Between 1988-1990, the NBA devoted a major part of their efforts to meetings, marches, demonstrations, petitions, strikes and public confrontations with authorities and similar forms of action. The authorities reacted to the action with intimidation, arrests, and prohibition of gatherings around the dam site. Prolonged agitation during this period in Madhya Pradesh brought assurances from the Chief Minister that he would place the demand for a comprehensive review of the SSP before the Central government. Similar action in Maharashtra prompted its Chief Minister to promise that not an inch of Maharashtra's land would be submerged unless comprehensive resettlement plan acceptable to the people were put in place. Later, in 1990, hundreds of people agitated in front of the Prime Minister's residence in New Delhi. After four days of action, an assurance for a thorough review was given by the then Prime Minister [16].

However, nothing came of the assurances of the Chief Ministers and the Prime Minister. The Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra,as well as the Prime Minister succumbed to the pressure mounted by the Gujarat Chief Minister and the bureaucrat-contractor lobby supporting the SSP. The minority government of the, then, Prime Minister depended on the support of Gujarat's members of Parliament. Successive governments were also silent on the SSP for fear of losing the support of Gujarat. In effect the SSP has become the lifeline of the politicians of Gujarat and as of now no bargaining seems possible.

[16] SSP Monitoring Files, TISS, 1988-1993.

Having failed to enforce a review, even after getting assurance from the Chief Ministers and the Prime Minister, the activists prepared for direct confrontation with the Gujarat government. In early December 1990, Baba Amte and Medha Patkar, along with 20,000 people, started a long march from Madhya Pradesh, from where the Narmada originates, to the dam site in Gujarat to halt the construction work. After crossing Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, they were stopped by the police at the Maharashtra – Gujarat border and were prevented from entering Gujarat. In the meantime, Gujarat politicians and farmers, led by the wife of the Chief Minister, collected around 10,000 people and moved to the Maharashtra border. The standoff continued for twenty-one days with both groups holding ground and the police standing between them. Seven activists went on hunger strike for twenty-one days[17]. No political initiative for talks was forth coming because the Gujarat government successfully pitted pro-dam people against anti-dam people, thereby marginalizing the activists' capacity to bargain. The condition of the hunger strikers only deteriorated, and Baba Amte returned the Padma Bhusan and Padma Vibhusan honors, the most prestigious civilian awards given by the Government of India for his social work.

NBA and the Non-Cooperation Movement

Embittered by their experience with the Gujarat government, the NBA and the activists returned to the villages. However, before that, they took a vow that they would not leave their villages come what may and resorted to "hamara gaon, hamara raj" (our rule in our village). Thus beginning January 1991, the people did not allow anyone connected with the SSP work to enter their villages. The prohibition was complete. It was non-cooperation of a peaceful type and it completely deterred

[17] Kalathil Mathew, "Satyagraha by Sardar Sarovar Oustees", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 18 March 1999.

government officials, World Bank personnel and consultants, and all others connected with the SSP work from entering the villages. All World Bank Missions in 1991 and 1992, therefore, could not reach Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

The movement entered a critical stage when the first village of Maharashtra faced submergence in the monsoon of 1991. Faced with possible flooding and the submergence of Manibeli, fifty families of Manibeli which had refused to move to R and R villages, activists and affected people from other villages waited to take Jal Samadhi (drown in the rising water of the reservoir) in the village. This was in response to the Government's challenge that it would go ahead with the construction of the dam and present it as a fait accompli. The NBA's response was to tell the Government to stop construction until major issues were settled or they would drown themselves.

"We will cling to the land like a baby clings to its mother" Medha Patkar of the Narmada Bachao Andolan told the London Guardian in April 1993. 'When the waters [of the reservoir] rise we will face them as we have always vowed to. It is not suicide and we do not want to die but our commitment to face the waters has been the bedrock of our movement.'[18] The courage and determination of the NBA in its campaign against the SSP has earned the group international respect and the dam notoriety. In the words of the Washington Post, Sardar Sarovar has become a global symbol of environmental, political and cultural calamity.[19]

[18] P. M. Cony, "Why I will Drown", *Guardian,* London, 16 April,1993.
[19] M. Moore, "India's Lifeline or Man-Made Disaster?", *Washington Post*, 24 August, 1993.

The Government's Response

Meanwhile, the Government of Gujarat simply moves on a one-point formula - not to halt the project work. It claimed that it had completely modified its R and R policy to accommodate all the initial demands of the affected people. Further, it tried to motivate the GOM and the GOMP to alter their policies to conform to its new policy, but in vain, it promised to resettle all PAP's from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh with full benefits arising out of its new policy. It advocated a policy of marginalizing the activists. It made use of a divide-and-rule policy to induce the vulnerable to move out, with some success. To mobilize people from the state to support the project, it argued that in order to solve the drinking water problem of millions of people, a few thousands could be moved to other places. The Government argued forcefully for the provision of water to thousands of villages affected by recurring drought. This helped to counter the support given to anti-Narmada activist. Above all, the Government adopted a 'wait and see' policy with the dam work continuing unaffected.[20]

Supreme Court and the NBA

The NBA filed a writ petition under article 32 of the Constitution in 1994. This article guarantees to every person the Fundamental Rights to move the Supreme Court for the enforcement of his/her Fundamental Rights guaranteed in Part III of the Constitution. Through Public Interest Litigation, issues of human rights, governance and environment were brought before the Court. The Court gave up its positivist approach and also departed from the adversary procedure to become more pro-active in protecting the Fundamental Rights of the disadvantaged sections of the people. The

[20] Krishna Kumar, "Narmada -State and the people style of suppression and resistance", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31(39) (28 Sep.(6)pp. 2666-67.

fact that the Court admitted the petition and gave injunction against the continuance of the construction of the dam showed that all the three contentions of the petition, namely, of rehabilitation, environment and review of the project arose out of the concern for the human rights of people's who were affected by the proposed dam, deserved critical judicial scrutiny.

The Supreme Courts' first response was positive. It asked the state governments to submit reports of the rehabilitations so far done and how they proposed to provide it for the future evictees. It also asked them to expedite the environmental surveys and come out with clear plans as to how the environmental hazards could be overcome. It stayed the future construction of the dam until those reports were given and it was satisfied that all conditions regarding rehabilitation of the displaced people and all precautions against degeneration of the environment has been taken. This happened in 1995. For four years, the work of the construction of the dam had stopped.

The hearings continued and in 1999, the Court seemed to change its attitude. Although conditions regarding rehabilitation or environment had not appreciably improved in 1999 as compared to those in 1995, the court allowed the state governments to resume construction and raise the height of the dam from 85 meters to 88 meters. The Court finally disposed off NBA's petition on October 18, 2000. The decision given in Narmada Bachao Andolan Vs Union of India on writ petition no.319 of 1994 was by a majority of two judges against one. The Court had said that it would not go into the wisdom of having big dams. The Supreme Court has lift future

monitoring of the rehabilitation to Narmada Control Authority (NCA), and it is supposed to take decisions regarding future construction.

The NBA and the World Bank:

Meanwhile, the internationalization of the Narmada project complicated things for the World Bank. The anti-Narmada movement was honored with two prestigious awards in 1991: The Ramon Magsaysay and the Right to Livelihood awards. The recognition accorded by these two awards, along with many others, increased the prestige and intensity of the Narmada Bachao Andolan. The standoff in Manibeli and the virtual halt of all R and R work due to the non-cooperation movement of the villagers unnerved the Bank. The consequence of the standoff, if allowed to continue, might have proved damaging to the World Bank, given the strength of the NBA and support to the affected people's from NGO's in Western Europe, Japan and America. Thus, in June 1991, the World Bank ordered a review of the SSP for its internal purposes. The Government of India made every effort to halt the review. When the Bank persisted, the government agreed to co-operate with the review, claiming, however, that the findings of the committee would not have any bearing on its decision to execute the SSP work. The terms of reference of the review included: " an assessment of the implementation of the ongoing SSP, as regards:

(a) the resettlement and rehabilitation of the population displaced/affected by the construction of the SSP infrastructure and by the storage reservoir: and,

(b) the amelioration of the environmental impact of all aspects of the projects.'[21]

[21] *Independent Review*, 1992.

A commission appointed by the President of the World Bank, called the Independent Review, conducted its enquiry from October 1991 to May 1992 and submitted its report in June 1992. The review concluded as follows:

> *...environmental and social trade offs have been made and continue to be made in the SSP, without the full understanding of the consequences. As a result (financial) benefits (of the dam) tend to be overstated, while the social and environmental costs are frequently understated. Further, rehabilitation of all displaced is impossible under present circumstances.*

The review advised the Bank to 'step aside from the projects and consider them afresh.' If the Bank persisted in its stand, the only way the dam could proceed was by 'unacceptable means'. The SSP became the symbol of destructive development and served as a 'test case' of the Bank's willingness and capacity to address the environmental and social impacts of its projects.

The World Bank Withdrawal:

In the light of growing opposition to the dam, the World Bank took exception to the fact that the environmental and social issues received so little attention from the Indian Government, and to the government's continued failure to meet agreed resettlement standards. The independent Review concluded that to make the decision to proceed with a project that is known to severely affect the lives of human beings, no matter how few will be adversely affected nor how many will benefit, in near total ignorance of the people and the impact, was at worst irresponsible and at best in contradiction to existing Bank policy. Lack of information is the single biggest flaw identified by the Independent Review. On the other hand, environmental issues form the second major contentious issue at stance in the debate over the SSP. The SSP has been called the "World's largest planned environmental tragedy", by its critics. The

Independent Review found "gross delinquency" with regard to environmental compliance in the case of the SSP, which has also been the issue raised by the NBA.

In the light of growing opposition to the dam, the World Bank took exception to the fact that the environmental and social issues received little attention from the Indian government and to the government's continued failure to meet agreed resettlement standards. The strong and powerful local opposition led by the NBA and international pressures also led to much rethinking and debate within the Bank about the soundness of its involvement in the project. In June 1992, a high level team led by Bradford Morse, the Independent Review, submitted a report, which was highly critical of the project. While the terms of reference of the report gave no scope for an explicit recommendation that the World Bank should withdraw from the project, the implicit message was loud and clear:

> *(We) think the SSP as they stood are flawed, that resettlement and rehabilitation of all those displaced by the project is not possible under the prevailing circumstances, and that the environmental impacts of the projects have not been properly considered or adequately addressed.*

The report predictably enough was welcomed by the NBA and strongly criticized in Gujarat. In the summer of 1993, the World Bank funding was discontinued and it withdraws from the SSP in March 1993.

NBA after World Bank Withdrawal

After the World Bank finally announced its withdrawal in March 1993, the Indian authorities initial reaction was to step up the use of violence and intimidation. In November 1993, police shot dead an Adivasi boy. Street demonstrations against the

killing were met with lathi charges and yet more arrests. Without World Bank funds, work on the canal system soon all but ground to a halt. Available financial resources were poured into raising the dam wall – the most visible symbol of the project and the most intimidating to the people refusing resettlement. Large-scale submergence began during the 1993 monsoon with the dam wall 44 meters high. The lands of hundreds of villagers were inundated and the homes and possessions of 40 families washed away. Police arrested the occupants of the lowest houses and dragged them to higher ground to prevent them carrying out their pledge to drown. Similar scenes were repeated during the 1994 and 1995 monsoons.

With the World bank out of the way, the NBA stepped up pressure on the Indian government to commission a comprehensive review, one which would look at all aspects of Sardar Sarovar – the terms of reference for the Morse Commission had covered only resettlement and the environment. In June 1993, Medha patkar and Devram Kanera, a farmer from Madhya Pradesh, began a fast in downtown Bombay. After 14 days, the government agreed to start the review process – but once the fast was called off, it reneged on its promise.

Ever more frustrated with the government's duplicity, the continuing arrests and beatings of activists, and the submergence of homes in the valley, the NBA decided, once again, to use the strongest weapon at its disposal – the lives of its own members. In July 1993, the NBA announced that unless the review process began by 6 August, seven activists would throw themselves into the monsoon - swollen Narmada. Less than 24 hours before the deadline, the Central government announced that it would establish a five – member group of experts nominated by both the NBA

and dam supporters to look into all aspects of SSP. The group met within hours of the announcement and called on the NBA to halt their action, while assuring them that they were committed to an unbiased and comprehensive review of SSP. The Jal Samarpan – 'self sacrifice by drowning'-was called off.

The review committee heard submissions from the NBA affected people, Central government ministries and the relevant state governments – except that of Gujarat, which boycotted the review. Scientists and engineers presented detailed suggestion for alternative methods of supplying water and power. The release of the report, however, was delayed indefinitely by legal action from the Gujarat government.

In May 1994, the NBA opened another front in its campaign by filing a comprehensive case against the project with the New Delhi Supreme Court. The case moved forward at a painfully slow pace with numerous postponements, delays and cancellations.

New hope for the campaign came in late 1994 when the Madhya Pradesh government announced that it had neither the land nor resources to resettle the state's huge numbers of oustees and that it wanted the planned dam height to be reduced. In an effort to pressure the upstream government to force Gujarat to halt the dam, the NBA decided to muster its resources for yet another round of fasts, this time to be held in Bhopal, the Madhya Pradesh capital. On 21 November 1994, Patkar and three men from the valley stopped eating. Twenty – six days later, the Madhya Pradesh government agreed to demand a halt to construction pending progress on resettlement. The NBA called off the fasts.

Three days before the end of the Bhopal fast the Supreme Court ordered the government – commissioned review to be made public. The report questioned the basic data used to design the project and criticized the resettlement effort. The Court also asked the review team to investigate further the viability of the project.

The NBA received a significant boost in January 1995 when the Central government in New Delhi forced Gujarat to suspend raising the dam wall with its lowest point 63 meters above the riverbed, just under half the planned final height. The suspension order came because the project was violating a Court ruling that oustees must be resettled six months before their land is submerged.[22]

Whatever the final outcome, the long struggle of the people of the valley and their supporters within India and around the World has left deep scars on the World Bank and the Indian and international dam industry. It is unlikely that the Bank will ever fund another river development project on such a scale in a democratic country. It is also unlikely for the foreseeable future that the Indian dam lobby will succeed in pushing through any projects involving such large – scale displacement. "We are not going in for large dams anymore", Indian power minister,NKP Salve told International Water Power and Dam construction in late 1993. "We want run of the river projects and to have smaller dams, if they are necessary at all, which will not cause any impediment whatsoever to the environmental needs."[23]

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[22] World Rivers Review, Asia Watch, 'Before the Deluge: Human Rights Abuses at India's Narmada Dam', *Asia Watch*, Vol.4, No. 15, 1992.

[23] P.O. Neil, "India: Eternal Snows Versus Finite Fuels", *International Water Power and Dam Construction*, January 1995.

NBA and the State Sovereignty

The internationalization of the Narmada Bachao Andolan, or Save the Narmada Movement, has had a great impact on India's State Sovereignty. International environmental NGO's such as Oxfam, the Environmental Defense Fund and the International Rivers Network, took advantage of the porous nature of the State's territorial and national borders. International actors intervened in the domestic affairs of the Indian state and built up the fire of the Save the Narmada Movement. The NGO's took part in enormous amounts of information exchange, proving the state is unable to maintain absolute control over territorial borders. These interactions also caused new, transnational identities to be formed, eroding the state identity. Thus, state sovereignty was compromised as a result of the internationalization of the Narmada Bachao Andolan.

In 1984, John Clark, of Oxfam United Kingdom, first became involved with the Sardar Sarovar Dam Protest. With his help, the movement acquired an international following. He enlisted several environmental organizations, such as the Environmental Defense Fund and Friends of the Earth, who "for the first time heard of human rights issues associated with the SSP."[24] This major transmission of information helped begin the International Narmada Campaign. Lori Udall claims that the internationalization of the movement was dependent on the connection between the local and international movements. "The heart of the International Narmada Campaign is its partnership, information sharing and collaboration with the Narmada Bachao Andolan".[25] This sharing of information between groups allowed for both

[24] Anil Patel , "What Do the Narmada Valley Tribals Want?", in William Fisher, ed., *Towards Sustainable Development* (London, England:1995),pp.179-184.
[25] Lori Udall, "The International Narmada Campaign: A case of sustained Advocacy", in William Fisher,ed.,*Toward sustainable Development* (London, England:1995). p.201.

sides to fight effectively. India's geographical borders were meaningless in terms of the exchange of ideas and strategy between local and international protesters. The state could not regulate this exchange. The international actors were influencing and interfering in domestic affairs of the state. Thus, the internationalization of the movement challenged state sovereignty.

Gains of the NBA Movement

The NBA movement is unique in terms of its achievements. Besides the exit of World Bank form SSP in 1993, the halt of SSP construction in 1994-99 and the withdrawal of foreign investors from Maheshwar Dam in 1999-2001, the NBA also brought the question of the adverse impact of displacement and the need to resettle people with full development provisions to the forefront. The R and R package of Gujarat has improved considerably over a period of time mainly due to the pressures exerted by the NBA movement. The provision of land to those originally landed and landless and developmental assistance to establish a meaningful livelihood is progressive in the Indian context. The movement has helped to improve the R and R implementation process significantly. It is widely acknowledged by governments and aid agencies that the R and R gains were primarily due to the movement and its opposition to the SSP. Moreover, environmental issues were also successfully addressed by the NBA. The SSP compelled a shift in the development discourse and also gave rise to the importance of various environmental issues which is central to the lives and rights of the people.

Conclusion:

The Narmada Bachao Andolan is therefore, one of the most prominent new social movement in India. Priya Kurian, in *Land and Water Review* (1988) said, "Rarely have we seen the democratic process at work so palpably and so effectively [in India] as in the growing mobilization of people against large dams."

The NBA sees its role as much more than challenging a single dam or even dam building in general. Patkar and other NBA leaders have traveled throughout India supporting other struggles against destructive State and corporate development projects, which strip the poor of their right to livelihood. Together with other leading environmental, women's, lower caste and Gandhian groups, the NBA has helped establish a National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) in March 1996, for India's many thousands of diverse people's organizations to unite in a 'strong social, political force.'[26]

The NBA has, at the local, national and international levels managed to tarnish seriously the lure of large dams as icons of progress and plenty. To many people, big dams have instead become symbols of the destruction of the natural world and of the corruption and arrogance of over powerful and secretive corporations, bureaucracies and governments. The international dam industry appears to be entering a succession from which it may never escape. The NBA, as a new social movement, immensely succeeds in addressing environmental issuess and the plights of the people's.

[26] National Alliance of People's Movements', NAPM, Bombay 1996,p.2.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANTI-ARUN III AS A NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Anti-Arun III and New Social Movement

The anti-Arun III movement in Nepal has been one of the most prominent new social movement,for Nepal and its aid patrons had never experienced a history of opposition to externally introduced technology as has happened in the case of Arun III. Local environmentalism in Nepal, or the anti-Arun III movement, can be understood as a new social movement, for the environmental activism is without formal organization. Moreover, it has no programme or manifesto, but is underwritten by influential and charismatic local activists who draw external assistance from their wide networks. It is a new local expression of a global movement composed of 'people coming together to construct new shared understanding on the basis of shared circumstances'. [1] Moreover, it fulfills the characteristics of a 'new social movement' as the participants 'without clear relations to structural roles transcend class structure'.[2] Although the locals possess an anti-statist ideology as a unifying element for collective action, this local expression, in a narrow sense, shares most aspects of a new social movement in that it:

> [exhibits] a pluralism of ideas and values ... [and] tends to emphasize identity by mobilizing cultural and symbolic issues [and to] employ new mobilization patterns characterized by non-violence and civil disobedience.[3]

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[1] Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity. Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning* (New York: 1992), p.153.

[2] Enrique Larana, Hank Johnston and Joseph R. Gusfield ,eds., *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity* (Philadelphia: 1994), p.6.

[3] Ibid.pp.7-8.

Local environmentalism, or the anti-Arun III movement, as a new social movement, succeeded in influencing the state to reconsider the government and World Bank construction of the Arun III project. This was because the locals and the activists effectively employed the international and national debates about the destructive impact of large dams on the environment as well as on the people, which forced the Government and the World Bank to suspend, at least temporarily, the construction of Arun III project in 1994.[4]

The history of Arun III

In recent years, Nepal's water wealth has begun to attract international attention as a resource of world class proportions. Indeed, with a theoretical hydroelectrical potential billed at 83,000 MW and an established inventory of feasible sites totaling about one-third of the above figure, Nepal's rivers hold the promise of abundant energy that very few places in the world can match. The history of Arun III began in October 1982 when, as part of a JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency) grant, Japanese consultants began a basin-wide master plan study for the development of water resources in the Kosi basin. The study eventually identified some 54 hydroelectric projects in which Arun III was identified as one of the six run-of-river projects in the Arun tributary of the Kosi. Under a certain set of assumptions, it was deemed the best in comparison with other projects. From that point onwards, the entire process of power planning and development has been hijacked by Arun III by shelving investigation studies of other promising projects.[5]

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[4] B. Bhattarai, "Hydropower: The Arun-3 Economics and Politics", *Spotlight*, 17 December(,Kathmandu:1993).

[5] Dipak Gyawali, *Water in Nepal*(Kathmandu: 2001),pp.134 -!40.

Arun III is a hydroelectric project on the Arun river which originates in Tibet and flows south into Nepal just east of two major peaks over 8000m, Everest and Makalu. It joins other tributaries from the Nepali Hills to form the Saptai Kosi, which in turn joins the Ganga in India, but not before being known as Bihar's 'river of sorrow' for frequently changing its course during floods. While the study financed by JICA was being conducted, another run-of-river hydroelectric project, the 69 MW Marsyangdi, was under construction in mid-west Nepal, with primarily World Bank funding. The Japanese, meanwhile, were busy constructing the 30 MW Kulekhani-2 and did not participate in the donor consortium for the Marsyangdi hydroelectric project, which was commissioned in 1989. However, those in the hydropower business were already on the lookout for the next similarly profitable venture, and Arun III arrived on their doorsteps at the right time after much of the necessary institutional ground-breaking had been done by the Marsyangdi project – at $ 4000 per KW, the 69 MW Marsyangdi had been criticised as being outrageously expensive.[6]

Arun III was the logical culmination of monism from the large multilateral donors' side, as opposed to institutional pluralism, a reality on the recipient's side, given its wide-ranging social diversity. It began to overtake the institutions that created it soon after it was identified. Indeed, questions were asked, whether it was identified primarily to cater to a certain electric utility philosophy which gives primacy to the principle of 'efficiency of size' rather than to 'local institutional needs'; whether it was to serve the need of donors to push one large project for the whole country (more manageable from the donors' perspective) rather than smaller

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[6] M.Banskota, "Foreign Aid and the Poor",in *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepa*(Kathmandu:1993),pp.35-81.

ones (more manageable from the recipient host society's perspective) for different regions of the country.[7]

In 1987, the Government of Nepal requested the World Bank to become a lead donor agency in mobilising resources for Arun III. Thus for the first time in Nepal's development history, a ministry gave up its lead role to a foreign institution, authorized it to speak to other donors on its behalf. At this point, on 19 July 1987, Chancellor Helmut Kohl of West Germany paid a state visit to Nepal. One of the gifts he left behind was a commitment on Germany's behalf to provide Nepal with a grant of 260 million Deutschmarks, which was to be used for the feasibility and detailed engineering study of Arun III. Thereupon, a German consultancy firm, which had designed and supervised the expensive Marsyangdi hydroelectric project, received the main contract to design Arun III. The manner in which a large project such as Arun III was selected, and competitors sidelined, highlights the fact that, subsequently, making this particular project 'feasible' became the paramount objective. This was primarily for the good of a monolithic monopolistic institution, as well as the monistic philosophy behind it.[8]

Donors of Arun III

At $1.1 billion, Arun III represented the largest investment ever made in Nepal and hence also the investment with the largest attendant risks.[9]

(1) The World Bank was lead donor, which negotiated and organised the funding from various sources. World Bank credit was to partially finance with the

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[7] Dipak Gyawali, "Foreign Aid and the Erosion of Local Institutions: An Autopsy of Arun-3 from Inception to Abortion", in C. Thomas and P. Wilkin,eds.,*Globalisation and the South* (New York.:1997).

[8] C.Mishra, and P.Sharma, "Foreign Aid and Social Structure", in *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal*(Kathmandu:1993),pp.1 -17.

[9] Dipak Gyawali, *Water in Nepal* (Kathmandu:2001).pp.70-85.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) and KFW civil works bid package lot C1 (dam and de-sanding basin), C3 (access road, camp facilities, surge tank and headrace tunnel, this last with KFW) and C2 (powerhouse and appurtenant structures with an undetermined co-financier). Land acquisition plus rehabilitation was also to be financed by the World Bank.

(2) The Asian Development Bank (ADB) was to fund the civil works together with the World Bank, KFW and an undetermined co-financier.

(3) The German contribution is the only grant portion among the large donors. Of this amount, $55 million was for tied procurement for electrical equipment from Germany and $35 million was for tied procurement with France for the transmission line, leaving about $24 million for untied international competitive bidding for civil works and tied procurement of consulting service for construction supervision.

(4) France was to finance with KFW the 220 KV transmission line from the powerhouse to Biratnagar in east Nepal as well as its construction supervision.

(5) The Swedes were to fund the Duhabi Sub-Station on the 132 KV national grid at Biratnagar where the Arun III generated 201 MW was expected to evacuate. Sweden entered the Nepal Aid Group consortium only after the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990 and this aid commitment was its first major involvement in Nepal.

(6) This portion is the Finnish – tied financing for the supply of construction power to be made through a diesel power plant for which, as the road did not exist, the fuel supply would have to be provided, together with other

construction material, through extended air support, i.e., helicopter lifting, for which almost $40 million was to be allocated in the Arun III project.

(7) This contribution of the Nepali Government was to meet part of the local cost for the project as well as its environmental mitigation plan and creation of a hydro facility. This latter fund was to be created to meet the objections of the alternative development community and environmentalists who argued that this large project would soak up all the funding for the small-scale projects which have had a successful track record in Nepal. For this, HMG was to transfer the equivalent of about $6 million to the government-controlled Nepal Industrial Development Corporation and managed by the Ministry of Water Resources to which the private sector could apply for funding to prepare feasibility studies of mini hydro plants.

(8) The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) was to finance the equivalent of $ 285 million interest during construction as well as $1.89 million for land acquisition, compensation and rehabilitation, and $ 3.76 million for NEA's project administration cost.

(9) The Nepali politicians expected that the Japanese would contribute this amount as grant; but the Japanese never gave any written commitment to this effect even though they did provide some technical assistance to fund the Arun III design consultancy. The UK, another donor, also did not commit any funds for the project even though they professed strong diplomatic support for it at the executive board level of the World Bank.

Table: Arun III – Donors and Funding (in $ million)

Donor	Fund	%	For
(1) World Bank C+Co+L(1)	175.0	16.2	
(2) ADB Manila	127.6	11.8	C(2)
(3) German KFW C+E+Co(3)	124.4	11.5	
(4) France	19.0	1.8	E+Co(4)
(5) Sweden BITS	17.0	1.6	E(5)
(6) Finland's FINNIDA	10.0	0.9	E(6)
(7) HMG Nepal	155.0	14.3	L(7)
(8) NEA	290.7	26.8	I(8)
(9) Undetermined (Japan?)	163.3	15.1	C+Co(9)
Total =	1092.0	100.00	

Key: C = Civil Works; Co = Consultancies; L = Local mitigative measures, compensation and other costs; E = Electrical and electro mechanical works; I = Interest during construction. *Source: World Bank (1994).*

Arun III and Nepal Reality

From its very inception, Arun III had many unanswered technical, economic and social anomalies, which never featured in the official consideration of the project, either within the Government of Nepal or within the World Bank. At $1.1 billion, Arun III represented the largest investment ever made in Nepal and hence also the investment with the largest attendant risks.[10] Out of a total annual budget of the $ 1 billion, the internal revenue Nepal is able to raise is of the order of $ 300 - $ 500 million, the rest coming as foreign aid in the form of grants, technical assistance or soft loans. The risk of such a large project to such a small economy was never properly assessed by legitimate institutions such as the Water and Energy Commission and the National Planning Commission. Indeed even the World Bank failed to conduct a proper macro-economic impact assessment of this large investment

[10] C.Mishra , and P. Sharma., "Foreign Aid and Social Structure", in *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal* (Kathmandu:1983),pp.10 -17.

prior to 1993.[11] It subsequently acted in response to pressure brought to bear upon it by Nepali and international environmental organizations. Even then, the Bank continued to maintain that social and other sectors would not suffer in Nepal as a result of this project until James Wolfenjohn, new President of the World Bank, decreed otherwise in August 1995.

As Arun III was ill planned, the social and institutional cost of its implementation was bound to be very high.[12] It was a project several times the size of the rest of NEA. Moreover, the unidirectional focus of the Bank in massive tariff increase as the main solution to all the problems therein, and the pressure to include private sector representatives on the Board of Directors of a wholly Government-owned utility are changing conditionalities that the socio-system has not been able to digest. The current pressure from donors is to push the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) as the simple solution to Third World institutional ills, and a major macro-economic experiment such as Arun III was also bound to be tied to a SAP. However, a good and efficient technology, though feasible technically and financially, may not necessarily be feasible socially or politically. It may be putting strains on the social fabric – indeed insulting it immeasurably with long-term costs that may far overshadow any perceived gains from efficiency. In the 1990s, the sins of 'inefficiency of size' have caught up with a society unprepared institutionally to handle the large scale; and leading donors are pushing for privatisation as the simplistic panacea. It has immensely confused the Nepali sociosystem. Furthermore, privatisation is only one among many institutional possibilities, including means such

[11] B.Pandey, "Small Rather Than Big: The Case for Decentralised Power Development in Nepal", *Water Nepal*,vol.4,no.1(Katmandu:1994),pp.181-90.

[12] C.Mishra, and P. Sharma, "Foreign Aid and Social Structure", in *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal*(Kathmandu:1983),pp.5-10.

as 'communitisation' and 'municipalisation' as intermediary solutions between the extremes of state control and laissez-faire. Besides, stringent austerity measures were expected to have minimal social impact, since 60 per cent of Nepal's population living below poverty line 'engaged primarily in subsistence agriculture, [and] are not closely linked with developments in the monetised sector of the economy'.[13]

At this point, Nepal entered a period of political upheavals related to deteriorating relations with India and lack of internal democracy. The impasse in both areas was resolved only in 1990 with the introduction of a multi-party democracy. The first year of democracy was steered by a coalition interim government of socialists, communists and the King's nominees, focused only on drafting a new constitution and holding general elections. It brought to power in 1991 the Nepali Congress, which professed a 'democratic socialist' agenda.

Meanwhile, the liberalisation and privatisation programme acquired a greater momentum under this new political stewardship. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) praised the new government for moving away from a dirigiste approach to economic development and adopting instead, a market-oriented strategy aimed at encouraging a vigorous private sector.

Arun-III and Structural Adjustment:

The Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility was a modified version of the strategy outlined in 1987. A major new edition was concentration on hydropower and the promotion of a large project such as Arun III, which would have doubled the

[13] Ibid., pp. 1-10.

generating capacity of the country in one shot. Despite small hydro generation being a success in terms of both local manufacturers, capacity building and construction skills, both the World Bank and the IMF promoted Arun III required major involvement of international contractors and little use of local capacity. They saw the project as a major opportunity for fundamental structural changes within the Nepali economy.[14] Yet they were not aware of some potential problems. With Arun III, foreign grants and loans of roughly $3/4 billion – that is one quarter of the annual GDP – significant macro-economic and administrative uncertainties and challenges were posed. The risk of a large hydro development contributing to increased non-aid imports, balance-of-payments deficits and declining reserves was recognised by the IMF, more readily perhaps than by the Nepali Parliament. Moreover, concentration on this one large project would have crowded out small and medium hydro programmes in the public sector, and decreased investments in hydropower in the private sector.[15]

The SAP represents a type of fatalism in foreign aid and development thinking. Previous development philosophies, despite their shortcomings and contradictions were essentially optimistic about the prospect for improving human welfare. By contrast, the SAP is a pessimistic dead end whose primary concern is to protect the protectors – to assure that the development loans are paid even if development has not occurred and will probably never occur. Indeed, one author has suggested that the imposition of a state of permanent stagnation was precisely the idea of SAP.[16]

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[14] Ibid.pp.5-10.

[15] Alliance for Energy – PO Box 3934, Baluwatar, Kathmandu. *'Arun Pushing Other Aside'*, Vol.I No.1, July 1993, and *'How Arun Crowds out the Smaller Schemes'*, Vol. I, No.3, 31 August 1993.

[16] Bello, et al (1994).

Opposed to this fatalism is the activism of the new and alternative schools of development both in the North and the South. Even though the defects of Arun III had been highlighted within the bureaucracy and publicly for quite some time, institutional filter seemed to block their acceptance. Information emerging from the ruins of Arun III indicate that the Nepali professionals within the Water and Energy Commission of HMG had expressed severe internal criticisms regarding its assumptions and estimates in the Least Cost Generation Expansion Plan as early as 1987. These criticisms were suppressed within the ministry. Publicly, the first criticisms to come out were after the advent of democracy in Nepal.[17] Shrestha (1991) writes, "The Arun III project promised to enrich a few powerful business interests, so propaganda and decisive lobbying were done in favour of the project by championing the Arun III as the least cost".[18]

The Rise of anti Arun III Novement

In reaction to the destructive development paradigm pursued by the State and foreign donor agencies in Nepal, a new wave of social movement emerged. The only way such clogged institutional filters have been penetrated is by the national and international networks of new activists and new actors who have effectively bypassed many of the sentry points set up by hierarchies.[19] Arun III is an excellent example of such a new method of local, national and international discourse. While the pyramidal thinking on which international institutions such as the World Bank have been designed, envisages consensus within nations represented by governments and then a

[17] Gyawali (1990) Himal July/August .
[18] Shrestha is a senior insider within the Nepali Ministry of Water Resources.
[19] D.Gyawali, "Are NGOs in Nepal Old Wine or New Bottle? A Cultural Theory Perspective on Nepal's Contested Terrain", in K. Bhattachan et al,eds., *NGO, Civil Society and Government in Nepal*(Kathmandu:2000).

consensus at the international level between national government. The new reality is that activists groups cut across national boundaries and network all across the globe.

The Actors of the Anti-Arun III Movement

The anti Arun III movement was launched by two Nepali NGOs: the Arun Concerned Group (ACG), a coalition of human rights organizations, and the Alliance for Energy. Both of these organizations were described as the "locals" in the anti Arun III movement[20]. The anti-Arun 'Alliance for Energy' was set up in March 1993.The actors of the anti-Arun III were very new and interesting political phenomenon.They posed a serious challenge to the authority of the Government as well as the World Bank. Indeed, the World Bank was forced to listen when the Alliance for Energy and the Arun Concern Group entered the fray as organized activists with backing from international pressure groups.

Issues before the Anti-Arun III Movement

The activists, locals, of the anti-Arun III movement believed that the Arun controversy presents a test for the Government to extend the concept of democracy from the realm of politics to economics. They fought for democracy to bring transparency and accountability to economic spheres. Besides, the issues and concerns raised by the activists include the denial of basic project information to the public, violations of the Bank's operational standards and policies; and lack of study on alternatives to Arun III. The fundamental issues before the anti-Arun III movement are –

[20] Ann Ambrecht Forbes, "Defining the 'Local' in the Arun Controversy", *Cultural Survival Quarterly.* Cultural Survival,1996,pp.31-34.

1. Adequate Analysis of Alternatives

The very high unit cost of construction and the corresponding high tariff that consumers of the energy from Arun III will have to pay remain a serious concern before the activists of the anti-Arun III movement. Lack of study of the alternatives during the eight years of preparation continues to be a major criticism of the Arun III project. In the interests of generating energy for Nepal at least cost, it is imperative that the study of the alternatives be taken at least the feasibility level to allow a proper comparison with the Arun project before the project is taken to the board for a vote. Unless this is done, the Bank will not fulfil its policy requirement to compute the least cost analysis for additional power generation for Nepal.

2. Inadequate Public Participation

Public participation in the Arun III project has not been adequate. The project is being portrayed by the Government of Nepal as having been chosen through a transparent and open democratic process. However, the activist feels that, only in the last six months (with project preparation almost at completion) has there been any serious discussion in Parliament or with the public with the benefit of accurate information. Prior to that Arun III was consistently presented to the public as a *fait accompli*. The discussions that have taken place have been forced by concerned groups rather than at the instigation of the Government of Nepal or the World Bank. For example, activists organized a public hearing in February 1993, which was boycotted by the Ministries of Water and Finance and by the National Planning Association. NGOs who tried to raise issues in the meeting about the adverse

environmental and social impacts of the project were prevented from doing so. The Government has also misinformed people in the Arun Valley about the project, leading them to believe they will receive jobs and electricity. In reality, there has been no concrete commitment to supply electricity to the people in the Arun Valley and only a small number of jobs will be created for local people, because outside workers will be brought in.[21] This lack of consultation represents a violation of the Bank's Operational Directive on Environmental Assessment, which requires that the government take into account the views of affected groups and NGOs in the preparation of project design, implementation, and to publicly release the draft environmental assessment.

3. Failure to Release Information

Despite repeated requests and pressures made by the activists, no project documents was made available to the Nepali public. Their release only came about following a court case filed by NGOs that led to a Supreme Court decision demanding their disclosure. Despite the ruling, which demanded the release of all documents related to Arun III project, many of the key documents are still being withheld by the Nepalese Government, precluding any meaningful debate. Moreover, the library which was established by the Nepal Electricity Authority after the law suit was filed in the Supreme Court does not contain key documents such as the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Nepal and the World Bank or the draft appraisal documents. In a project of this size and cost, which will affect the whole

[21] Thompson,M.,1997: 'Huge Dams and Tiny Incomes', *Water in Nepal*, Kathmandu, vol.4, no.1, pp.191-195,.

nation of Nepal, the public should be able to access information about existing agreements between the Government and the World Bank. Besides, the full environmental impact assessment has not been made available in Nepali, which is a requirement of Bank policy.

4. Failure to Release World Bank Documents

Both the Bank's Environmental Assessment Policy and the Information Policy require release of information about the project, especially before the public consultations take place. This has been violated consistently throughout all project planning and design. The Bank's new information policy requires the release of the Project Information Document and the release of all factual technical information about the project. While the project information document was readily available in Washington, it has not been available in Nepal. Requests for factual technical information on the project including studies on alternatives to the project were denied until June 10th 1993, when the World Bank released a study on alternatives by Argonne National Laboratories. NGOs have not had sufficient time to analyse this document and many of the assumptions used in the document are not explained.[22]

Moreover, requests for the green-cover staff appraisal report, and other technical information such as hydrological studies have also been withheld. The staff appraisal report is the basic technical document of a project which contains the project justification and rationale for the Bank's involvement in

[22] Dipak Gyawali, *Water in Nepa* (Kathmandu:2001),pp 70-85.

the project. The project Information Document has never been updated and it contains so little information that it is useless for NGOs who are questioning the basic assumptions and objectives of the project.

5. Social Issues

Road construction in the Arun Valley will adversely impact on the 450,000 indigenous peoples living in the valley, through an influx of up to 10,000 construction workers, which will put pressure on precious food and water resources.[23] There are no mitigation measures in place to ensure that these people are safeguarded. The people of Arun Valley fit the Bank's definition of "indigenous people" in its operational directive OD4.20. OD4.20 states that "successful planning for indigenous peoples frequently requires long lead times, as well as arrangements for extended follow-up." The rapid speed of road construction will further undermine the Regional Action Plan's ability to cushion this sensitive region from the long-term and indirect impacts on the valley.

Families whose land will be acquisitioned for the project are being compensated at a rate that is well below the market rate for their land. In this respect, the project is failing to comply with the Bank's Operational Directive on Involuntary Resettlement. Besides, no land has been identified to offer the option of land for land compensation.

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[23] C.Mishra and P.Sharma., "Foreign Aid and Social Structure", in *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal*,1983,pp.1 -17.

Environmental Issues

There has not been enough preparation for detailed planning of the mitigation measures needed to counter the serious adverse environmental impacts of the access road to the Arun project. The Arun Valley is a remote area of vast biological diversity and ecological fragility. The valley is inhabited by 450,000 people comprising ten ethnic groups. These people will be extremely vulnerable during road and project construction. Over one thousand families will be affected by the loss of their homes, lands and livelihoods.[24] No documents regarding the project, including the Environmental Impact Assessment in the local language were available to the local people before the hearing. ACG is concerned about the impact of the project on the fragile ecology of the Arun Valley. Up to 10,000 people will work on the project during its peak implementation period but no provision has been made for their housing, education, and health care needs. It is feared that the squatter type settlements will follow inward migration and this will devastate local forestry resources and intensify soil erosion.

The Anti-Arun III Movement and the Supreme Court Verdict

Denial of basic information by the Nepali Government, particularly the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), about the Arun III Hydroelectric Project has been one of the serious matter of concern for the people and NGOs in Nepal. A formal request was made by the Kathmandu based anti-Arun III activists, International Institute for Human Rights, Environment and Development (INHURED International), Secretariat of the Arun Concerned Group, on December 10, 1993, requesting for all information

[24] Ibid.,pp.5-12.

about the project. Copies of the request letter was also sent to Ministries of Finance, and Water Resources, as well as to the donors.

Public interest litigation was filed by two human rights activists, representing INHURED International, in the Supreme Court on December 31, 1993 under Article 16 (right to information) and Article 88.2 (right to public interest litigation) of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal. By exercising its extra-ordinary jurisdiction, the Supreme Court delivered a verdict on May 8, 1994 in favour of the petitioners and ordered the Nepali Government to provide all documents and information about the project. The Court decision even further stated that denial of information, fully or partially on any grounds that there might be; can be challenged in the Court within 7 days from the date of such denial. In ACG's view, the Supreme Court must seek a national consensus before making a final decision on the Arun project.[25]

Anti- Arun III Movement and the World Bank withdrawal

On October 24, 1994, the Arun Concerned Group (ACG) filed the first claim against the World Bank in the newly created Inspection Panel, an independent appeals mechanism set up by the Bank to investigate claims from people directly affected by Bank projects. The ACG claim charges that the Bank violated its policies and procedures during the preparation of the Arun III hydroelectric project. The ACG believes that there are alternatives to the project that are less expensive, less environmentally and socially damaging, and that would have the advantage of building domestic industrial capacity and developing hydropower more evenly

[25] B.Bhattaraj, "Hydropower: The Arun-3 Economics and Politics", *Spotlight*,17 December1993.

throughout Nepal. While Arun III will be largely dependent on international contractors. The ACG contends that a range of small to medium dams could be planned, built and run by domestic companies. ACG questions the prudence of building the $ 1 billion project – which is almost one and half times the annual national budget of Nepal. The claim against the Bank submits that the Bank violated its policies on economic evaluation of projects, as well as policies in other areas such as energy, information disclosure, environment and indigenous people during the preparation of Arun III.[26]

On the other hand, local hydro experts such as those affiliated with the Alliance for Energy have been promoting alternatives to Arun III. The Alliance for Energy has put forward to the Bank and the Nepalese government a concrete set of alternative proposals which include small and medium scale dam projects of up to 100 megawatts which could be developed in a number of river basins spread evenly throughout Nepal and could easily meet the growing demand for electricity. These projects could be developed and built in less time than Arun III, and would have the advantage of providing electricity to rural communities.[27] According to the Alliance, the alternatives would be less environmentally harmful because the proposed sites are already near existing roads.

In a statement to the press on the Arun controversy in February 1994, the Government accused the ACG for their obstructionist activities and for creating misunderstanding in public minds about the Arun III project. It further added that ACG's action might lead to delays in the implementation of the project, which may

[26] Dipak Gyawali, W*ater in Nepal* (Katmandu: 2001).pp.35 -55.
[27] B.Pandey, "Small Rather Than Big: The Case for Decentralised Power Development in Nepal", *Water Nepal*,vol.4,no.1,1994,pp.181-90,Kathmandu.

prove very costly for the country. Moreover, due to the effective campaign on issues and concerns on Arun-III at national and international levels, the World Bank, for the first time, invited representatives of the ACG, the Alliance for Energy and other NGOs/INGOs to express their concerns at a one-day consultation on June 28 1994 pertaining to long-term repercussions of the proposed project.

Meanwhile the Japanese government Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF), one of the bilateral funders of the Arun III project, was also stung by international criticism for its co-financing role in the discredited Sardar Sarovar dam and is now indecisive on Arun III. The Government of Japan jolted Bank confidence in July 1994 by informing Bank officials that it would not publicly commit itself to co-financing the Arun III project until it completed its own independent assessment of the project.

The US Government has also questioned the wisdom and economics of the Arun III

project in a draft report released by the US Agency for International Development in October 1994. The study contradicted the World Bank analyses of Arun III. It said that Arun III was not the lowest cost solution to the problem of Nepal future power generation and that at this juncture, Arun III would be a risky investment for Nepal.

In a speech on October 25, 1995, Gopal Siwakoti described his role as a lawyer and member of the Arun Concerned Group in the complaint against the Arun III project. The legal attacks against the project consisted of a lawsuit against the Nepalese Government filed by ACG in the country's Supreme Court, as well as the

complaint before the World Bank Inspection Panel. In the case before the Supreme Court, the ACG challenged the Government's refusal to provide relevant information about the project. The Court ruled that the Nepalese constitution gave ACG the right to receive information of public interest from the government, including information about the project's impact on the environment and indigenous people. The Court also held that the government must prove that each condition set forth in the World Bank's structural adjustment programme conforms to the Nepalese constitution.

Finally, in the face of immense pressure by the anti-Arun activists, the President of the World Bank cancelled the Bank's participation in the Arun III Hydroelectric project. The World Bank Inspection Panel found in its formal investigation report that the Nepalese Government and the World Bank had not provided for adequate land compensation and resettlement for the local and indigenous people affected by the project. In addition, they had not undertaken an adequate environmental assessment.

Conclusion

The Arun III Project was an important element in the causal chain of environmental degradation with the introduction of new technology in Nepal by exploiting hitherto inaccessible resources or to exploit resources at an unprecedented level. However, the strong and effective presence and pressure generated by the anti-Arun III activists was entirely new to the Government of Nepal. It is extremely rare in Nepal for a citizen's group to question Government's judgment on public sector investment priorities, much less taking legal action and demanding explanation. It is evident that the new social movement which manifested in the anti-Arun III movement raised, addressed and questioned the 'unseemly haste' with which Northern Capital, in the form of what is termed official development assistance seeks

project in the Third World countries. The manner in which a major development project in Nepal, the Arun III hydroelectric project, which was promoted for ten years by seven donors and the Nepal Government, with the World Bank in the lead, and has been ignominiously dropped by the Bank after opposition by groups espousing an alternative development paradigm reveals the strength of the new social movement.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Being a recent phenomenon, the origin of environmental movements as new social movements in South Asia, is still in its formative stage. However, with the spread of environmental concern initiated, or at least stimulated, the 'green wave' has become one of the most powerful movements, as environmental and development issues are intimately interwoven. In the process, environmental concern and local participation have become part of a global discourse with the active participation of the NGOs, both national and international[1]. What was considered a local discourse acquired a special flavour as a global environmental discourse. As a result, it has become impossible to understand the specificities of environmental movements in South Asia without referring to the wider global context.

The new social movements emerged in South Asia as a small but influential segment .Its contributions must be weighed in the context of the limitations it faced: a narrow social base, limited resources, a high turnover rate, the difficulty of coordinating fragmented local groups and the forces of the state they are fighting against. Many of the forms of action, support and organization which the new social movements portray were imported too. Thus the new social movements in South Asia initially focused on the internal context and issues which had little direct connection to problems of the global scale. But in doing so, they were brought directly into coalition with other groups having global network.

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[1] Kay Milton,ed.,*Environmentalism* (London:1993).

Relatively new on the arena is the involvement of the donor community. Responding to years of severe criticism of environmental movements from national and international NGOs and a large number of ecologists and other scientists, multilateral donors like the World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) as well as many national aid agencies have brushed up their green images in South Asia. The donor organizations have taken serious steps to limit the adverse impacts of dams, highways, resettlement schemes and agricultural projects, and have incorporated environmental issues and checklists on environmental impacts in their lending operations. They have also formulated special programmes for nature conservation and biodiversity.[2] But it is recently, and only with the rise of the new social movements that the environmental departments within these organisation have reached an adequate staffing level and have been able to avail themselves of the legal and technical means to implement the formulated guidelines.[3] The fact that environmental issues have become part of the diplomatic agenda and political debates worldwide has certainly linkages to the rise and growth of new social movements.

The new social movements in South Asia are largely a reaction to the agents of resource – intensification that are given preferential treatment by the state through the grant of generous long leases over the natural resources, particularly the environment. With the injustice so compounded, local communities at the receiving end of this process have no recourse except direct action resisting both the state and outside exploiters – the donors – through a variety of protest techniques. These struggles are manifestation of a new kind of conflict. Where traditional conflicts were

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2 J.A. Mc Neely,ed.,.*Biodiversity Conservation in the Asia and Pacific Region Constraints and Opportunities* (Manila: Asian Development Bank and the World Conservation Union:1995).

3 R.F. Mikesell, and L.Williams,eds.,*International Banks and the Environment.From Growth to Sustainability:An Unfinished Agenda* (San Francisco: 1992).

fought in the cultivated field or in factory, these new struggles are waged over gifts of nature such as forests and water, gifts that are coveted by all but increasingly monopolises by a few. Thus, the shortages of, threats to and struggles over natural resources are the material context to rise of new social movements in South Asia.

India has the oldest and most diverse environmental movement in Asia.[4] It is more deeply rooted and integrated within its host civilization than any other environmental movement in the region, and often refers back to religious traditions and ancient forms of social protest. Others are connected with the colonial past while India, maybe more than other country, incorporates a lot of western environmental thinking.[5] Many of the campaigns directed to the protection of forests and fishing waters, or against polluting industries and construction of dams, have received international recognition.[6]

The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), in India, has made a great impression on environmental activists worldwide. Its success has inspired other local and relatively powerless people to protest against environmental degradation and exploitation of life and discrimination of peoples' rights by the state and foreign donor agencies. The NBA, in the course of its movements, gained flexible and wide ranging "vocabulary of protest."[7] The NBA movement has operated simultaneously

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4 J. Rush, *The Last Tree. Reclaiming the Environment in Tropical Asia*(New York:1991),pp.57-58.

5 Peter Van der Werff, "Divergent Approaches to the Environment in Kerala",in Arne Kalland and Gerard Persoon,eds., *Environmental Movements in Asia* (Surrey:1998),pp. 253-268.

6 Vikram K.Akula, " Grassroots environmental resistance in India",in B. R. Taylor (ed.), *Ecological Resistance Movements. The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism* (Albany:1995),pp.127-145.

7 Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez Alier offered the term 'vocabulary of protest' as an alternative to Charles Tilly's well known concept of the 'repertoire of contention.' Tilly and his associates have done pioneering work on the study of dissent and direct action. Their work has focussed on the techniques most characteristic of different societies, social groups and or historical periods. Tilly's own understanding of direct action tends to be a narrowly instrumental one with participants drawing on, from a broader repertoire of contention, those techniques which most effectively defend or advance their economic and political interests. See Tilly's works, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley,1978).Cf. also the Tilly- inspired two-part special section entitled 'Historical Perspectives on Social Movements', *Social Science History*, Volume 17,nos.2 and 3,Summer and Fall 1993.)

on several flanks: a strong media campaign, court petitions, and the lobbying of key players such as the World Bank, which was to fund a part of the dam project. Most effectively, though, it has deployed a varied vocabulary of protest in defence of the rights of the Adivasis and other tribal communities who were immensely displaced by the dam.

The strategies of direct action or the vocabularies of protest expressed by the Narmada Bachao Andolan as a new social movement might be classified under four broad headings. First, we witnessed the collective show of strength, as embodied in demonstrations organised in towns and cities. Mobilising as many people as they can, protesters march through the town, shouting slogans, singing songs, winding their way to a public meeting that marks the procession's culmination. The aim here is to assert a presence in the city, which is the locus of local, provincial or national power. The demonstrations carry a message that is at once threatening and imploring.

Second, there is the disruption of the economic life through more militant acts of protest. One such tactic is the *hartal* or *bandh* (shut – down strike), wherein shops are forced to down shutters and buses to pull off the roads, bringing normal life to a standstill. A variation of this is the *rasta roko* (road blocade), through which traffic on an important highway is blocked by squatting protesters, sometimes for days on an end. These techniques are rather more coercive than persuasive, spotlighting the economic costs to the state if they do not yield to the dissenters. The *hartal* or *rasta roko* aim at disrupting economic activity across a wide area.

The third type of action is more sharply focused on an individual target. For instance, the *dharna* or sit – down strike is used to stop work at a specific dam site or mine. Sometimes the target is a figure of authority rather than a site of production.

The fourth generic strategy of direct action aims at putting moral pressure on the state as a whole, not merely on one of its functionaries. Pre–eminent here is the *bhook hartal* , the indefinite hunger strike undertaken by the charismatic leader of a popular movement. This technique was once used successfully by Sunderlal Bahuguna of the Chipko movement. In recent years, it has been resorted to on several occasions by Medha Patkar, the remarkable leader of the Narmada Bachao Andolan. In the bhook hartal, the courage and self – sacrifice of the individual leader is directly counter posed to the claims to legitimacy of the state. The fast is usually carried out in a public place, and closely reported in the media. As the day drag on, the leader's health perilously declines, the state is forced into a gesture of submission – if only the constitution of a fresh committee to review the case in contention.

The *bhook hartal* is most often the preserve of a single, heroic, exemplary figure. Another technique, also aimed at shaming the state, is more of a collective undertaking. This is the *jail bharo andolan* (literally 'movement to fill the jails'), in which protesters peacefully and deliberately court arrest by violating the law, hoping the government would lose face by putting behind bars large numbers of its own citizens. The *pradarshan, hartal, rasta roko, dharna, gherao, bhook hartal and jail bharo andolan* are some of the techniques which make up the NBA movement's vocabulary of protest. This is a vocabulary shared across the spectrum of protesting groups, but new situations constantly call for new innovations.[8]

Similarly the anti Arun III movement in Nepal illustrates the paradox which the political elite has worked to ensure the benefits of planned economic development

[8] Ramachandra Guha & Juan Martinez – Alier,eds., *Varieties of Environmentalism-Essays North and South* (New Delhi:1997).pp.11-16.

that will flow primarily to the urban – industrial complex at the cost of the rural 'locals' and their environment. On one side were the poor and ignorant 'locals' of the Arun valley; on the other, an insensitive state government in league with the World Bank for the construction of the Arun III project. To invoke a slogan made famous by the NBA, this has been a process of "destructive development" – destructive both of rural society and of the natural fabric within which it rests. Moreover, the anti-Arun III movement in Nepal also exhibits the environmental concern and development issues championed by the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) whom Dalton calls 'environmental interest groups', defined as 'ongoing institutional advocates for political action that reach beyond the concerns of a specific locales.'[9] The vital element in the anti-Arun III movement eventual success was that it worked not just on the local and national level, but also built up strong links with the international environmental organisations. International awareness help discouraged the World Bank and other foreign donors from pledging funds for the dams in Nepal and South Asia at large.

An India / Nepal Comparision

The NBA in India and the anti Arun III movement in Nepal have been used to outline the origins, trajectory and rhetoric of environmentalism and the rise of new social movements in South Asia. In this work, we have sketched a broad brush homogenous relations and likeness between two movements, in two different countries, each carrying the prefix 'environmentalism' and 'new social movements'. One must of course qualify this picture by acknowledging the similar socio – political

[9] Rusel J. Dalton,*The Green rainbow.Environmental Groups in Western Europe* (New Haven:1994),p.17.

and economic context. Besides, in India and Nepal, still dominantly a nation of villages, environmentalism has emerged at a relatively early stage in the industrial process, unlike in North where environmental movements is related to the emergence of a post – materialist or post-industrial society.[10] The homogenous characteristics of the two countries is also marked by the cultural diversity of their societies; the deep disparities between rich and poor; the history of ambitious and aggressive programs of state-sponsored industrialization; the appalling ecological and social costs, and the emergence of active environmental constituencies which have challenged the prevailing consensus on what constitutes 'proper development' as desired by their respective governments. Moreover, in the two countries, the thrust of development activities has been on industrialization, trade and urbanization as symbols of national growth and progress. These development activities also focus on dam building as instruments of 'development'. However, this has generated growing threats to the ecological integrity, and its construction and operation have led to many significant, negative social and human impacts. More broadly, whole societies have lost access to natural resources and cultural heritage that were submerged by reservoirs or rivers transformed by dams. India and Nepal, with a shared experience, provides the context for the case study.

The government in India, particularly, and Nepal after their independence, were in the vanguard of the movement among the poorer nations of the globe that sought to accomplish what had taken the affluent West to achieve. The intelligentsia – scientists, technologists, civil servants, legislators – manifested an enormous sense of self-importance, viewing themselves as chosen elite, leading their people out of

[10] Ibid.pp.16-20.

darkness into light, or from disease –ridden poverty to prosperity. As a result, pride of place was given to mammoth and pharaonic big dams projects and the like - which, it was hoped, would generate wealth and instil a sense of pride and self – worth among the public at large. These projects had their costs – thousands of people displaced millions of hectares of forests felled and dozens of rivers fouled. Projects were legitimated by the ideal of 'national sacrifice', when tribals had to hand over their forests or rivers to make way for the state paradigm of development. They were offered the solace that this often unwilling sacrifice of their livelihood was being made for the greater good of the nation, or more precisely for the happy augmentation of its Gross National Product.

In both the Indian and Nepal models of development, the public sector was mandated to control the 'commanding heights' of the economy, with private capitalists assigned an important subsidiary role in generating wealth. In both the cases of the Narmada dam and the Arun III project, we saw the World Bank entering into credit and loan agreements with the government of India and Nepal respectively. The private firm, as well as the public firm were, however, allowed the virtually free use of nature and natural resources resulting in conflict with the 'locals'.

In the two countries, the process of industrialisation was callous. The youthfulness of the national culture and the existence of an 'untapped frontier' prompted a greater optimism about development and an acceleration of the pace at which it was to be carried out. For Nepal, the country lacked a tradition of dissent such as Gandhism, which in India provided a cautionary voice to temper the impatience of the planners and developers, forcing them to make haste slowly and to

take more account of the human costs involved. A vibrant multi-party system and multi-lingual press also gave freer play in India to a variety of voices. In Nepal, by contrast, an already fragile government would not tolerate peoples' movement like India.

However, the failure of state–sponsored industrialization lay exposed in both countries. At the same time, nature lay embattled and scarred , subject to levels of environmental degradation that were, in a word, horrific. Besides, with the gross human displacement, the social and ecological realities were also deteriorated.

The rise of the new social movements in the two countries has emerged as a genuinely popular movement, country-wide in its reach, and taking up a range of ecological and social concerns. The new social movements in India and Nepal have revolved around a shared set of issues: forests, dams, pollution, biodiversity, etc. This is no 'elitist' environmentalism but a movement that has taken into its fold communities at the bottom of the heap. In the two countries, the environmentalism of the poor emanates from rural squatters and indigenous peoples in concert with various NGOs by responding to swift and dramatic degradation of the environment. Moreover, it has also been the preserve of long-settled rural communities responding to the take-over by the state or by private companies of the common property resources they depended on. In both countries, protesters have tended to take the militant route, preferring methods of direct action to the patient petitioning of government officials and the judiciary.

In India and Nepal, neither Northern green classics nor northern green bodies have had much of a presence. Again, the repercussions of environmental degradation

are contained largely within the two countries, as are the agents of degradation, who are overwhelmingly government departments and private capitalists. Foreign firms and foreign aid agencies such as the World Bank have had a determining influence on the process of development through destruction.

Thus the elements common to India and Nepal's environmentalism matters more. In both countries, the environmental movement has centrally contributed to a deepening of democracy, working toward a greater openness of decision making and a greater accountability for decision-makers. In both countries, the environmental movement has moved beyond a concern with 'quality of life' issues to more directly challenging the official version of what constitutes welfare and prosperity.

The new social movements in South Asia raised the image and credibility of NGOs, where people's voices are hardly heard in national politics and economics. Moreover, NGOs involved in international development and environment conservation are a relative new phenomenon. Where NGOs were once viewed as a threat or a nuisance by the ruling elites, today their existence is at least acknowledged and dialogues at personal and institutional levels are widening and deepening.[11]

Compared to the large environmental organisations in the Western World, it is evident that the environmental movements in South Asia, in general, focus far more on local issues. Even if they link up with other organisations, they do so primarily to strengthen their position with regard to the issues at stake in their own environment. However, they have taken positive steps to change the course of history and escape from the downward movement of environmental degradation by reorganizing access

[11] Michael R.Dove, "Local Dimensions of 'Global' Environmental Debates", in Arne Kalland and Gerard Persoon,eds.,*Environmental Movements in Asia* (Surrey:1998),pp.44-61.

to their resources, by reallocating their labour and capital investments, and by reprioritising returns to labour and other investments from a short term 'quick and easy money' attitude to a more responsible, long term perspective, and by successfully addressing the issues of human rights.

The environmental movements or the new social movements ,therefore, pit 'ecosystem people' - that is those communities which depend very heavily on the natural resources of their own locality – against 'omnivores,' individuals and groups with the social power to capture , transform and use natural resources from a much wider catchment area; sometimes, indeed the whole world. The history of development in South Asia can, then, be interpreted as being in essence, a process of resource capture by the omnivores at the expense of the ecosystem people. This has, in turn created and generated the new social movements in South Asia.

Starting as local environmentalism, the new social movements in South Asia discuss, redefine or readjust issues both from their own specific concern and the larger society to legitimate their opposition to the government's paradigm of 'development'. Local environmentalism is here defined as the ideological form of peoples' resistance to the commercial exploitation of the environment. It is composed not only of diverse ideas about trees, forests and watersheds, but also of moral and practical ways of relating to them. Sometimes, these ideas are not incoherent with the governments' practices. However, the 'locals' employ them as arguments to legitimate their concern for the protection of the ecological system. Some of these ideas are derived from their traditional system of values and beliefs, while others are backed by modernist orientations with the 'local' environmentalism becoming a global discourse. They are

selectively employed in the practice of environmental activism, but also used to express the locals' desire to get rid of the burden of exploitation and domination. In this context, not only forest and trees, but also political and cultural issues have become types of environmentalism.[12]

At the same time, this new awareness of the environment grows from the tensions and changes of modernity itself. For concepts of the environment, this core culture of capitalism centres on the split between nature and culture. This typically undergirds the entire range of Western thinking. With the new awareness, it is unquestionably true that of the 'new' social movements, environmentalism alone has grown steadily in support and influence.[13] This impressively large constituency can hardly be explained by the theory that environmentalism represents a 'safety valve' to defuse more threatening forms of collective action. Rather, the expansion of the mass base of the environmental movement is more plausibly related to corresponding changes in economy and society.

The fact that environmental degradation often intensifies economic deprivation explains the moral urgency of these movements of protest. The anthropologist Peter Brosius has seen in the new social movements an "unambiguous statement of the rightness of one's case" but similarly convinced that right – though not necessarily might – is on the side of the indigenous peoples' movements.

[12] Kay Milton, "Introduction: environmentalism and anthropology", in K.Milton,ed., *Environmentalism :The View of Anthropology*(London:1993),pp.1-17.
[13] Ramachandra Guha,*Environmentalism –A Global History* (New Delhi 2000),pp.79-84.

New Social Movements and Development

Feeding on indigenous ideologies of justice – Gandhism - and emboldened by a more general assertion of 'eco-feminism,' the environmental movements has contributed to a profound rethinking of the idea of development itself. The new social movements have fashioned a critique of the industrial and urban bias of government policies, urging that it give way to a decentralized, socially aware, environmentally friendly and altogether more human form of development. These efforts have sometimes drawn explicitly on the ideas of the early environmentalists who suggested "Back to the Land!" approach. The new social movements attacked the development paradigm as conventionally understood and practised.

As in the North then, in the South too, there is an active environmental debate as well as environmental movement. Where Northern environmentalism has highlighted the significance of value change (the shift to post materialism), Southern movements seem to be more strongly rooted in material conflicts, with the claims of economic justice – i.e., the rights to natural resources of poorer communities- being an integral part of the environmental movements. Where Southern groups have tended to be more adversarial with regard to their governments – opposing laws and policies deemed to be destructive or unjust – Northern groups have more often had a constructive side to their programs, working with their governments in promoting environmentally benign laws and policies.

The new social movements have increasingly come to be understood as a part of the democratic struggle to build and consolidate a new model for citizenship. Efforts to promote environmental rights have brought together numerous segments of

the social movement, who have sought to ensure access to essential needs, which have often been degraded by private interests that are incompatible with society's collective concerns. It is clear that in Nepal and India's socio-environmental crisis, ecological degradation and social inequality are two branches stemming from the same root, namely, the specific ways in which capitalism has developed in the two countries by throwing the indigenous peoples' off their land.[14] Over the last six decades, the builders of dams have evicted indigenous peoples' from their homes and land many tens of millions of people, almost all of them poor and politically powerless, a large proportion of them from indigenous and other ethnic minorities. These legions of dam 'oustees', as they are called in India, have, in the great majority of cases, been economically, culturally and emotionally devastated. In many cases the people have been flooded out with only minimal compensation- often none at all - and many, once, self-sufficient farming families have thus been reduced to eking out a living as migrant labourers or slum dwellers.[15]Researchers from the Indian Social Institute in New Delhi estimate 'conservatively' that more than 14 million people have been displaced by reservoirs and associated irrigation projects in post – independence India.[16]

The NBA and the anti-Arun III movement was representative of a wide spectrum of natural – resource conflicts that erupted in India and Nepal respectively: conflicts over access to forest, conflicts over the effects of big dams, conflicts over the siting of large dams, conflicts over the gross violations of human rights. One can understand these conflicts as an unfolding of the processes of degradation, shortages, protest, controversies-local, national and international.

[14] Henri Acselrad, *Environment and Democracy* (Botafogo: IBASE: 1992), Preface.
[15] Patrick McCully, Silenced Rivers – The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams (London: 2001), p.66.
[16] P.Panjiar, "Refugees of Progress", *India Today*, 30 September 1993.

In this framework, environmentalism or the new social movements might be understood as the resistance offered by ecosystem people to the process of resource capture by omnivores as embodied in movements against large dams by communities and peoples to be displaced by them. The new social movements represent the rights of the peoples' to participate in the decision making and to give or withhold their consent to activities affecting their lands, resources and rights in general. Observing that the indigenous peoples have and continue to suffer from discrimination, and "in particular that they have lost their land and resources to commercial and State enterprises", the new social movements called upon the states-parties to ensure that members of indigenous peoples have equal rights in respect of effective participation in public life, and that no decisions directly relating to their rights and interests are taken without their informed consent as happened in the course of the construction of Narmada dam and the Arun III project. Emerging standards also require free and informed consent. Article 30 of the UN draft Declaration, for instance, provides that:

> Indigenous peoples have the rights to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands, territories and other resources, including the right to require that state obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands, territories, and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

As a result of the effective mobilisation of the new social movements, indigenous peoples' rights to lands and resources have crystallized into norms of customary international law binding on all states and most intergovernmental organizations. The new social movements continue to make political protests by making use of environmental discourse to express group resistance to outside interference. The new social movements, today, have emerged as a form of cultural, political, and development critique

pursued by the state. In the West, this critique frequently questions modernization and economic growth as such and calls for new relationships between man and nature. Although the environmental movements in South Asia may turn anti –statist, it is safer to clothe a cultural critique in the rhetoric of environmentalism than, say socialism – they usually do not challenge the value of economic growth and modernization. In other words, they do not preach radical solutions but rather to take a reformist approach. The new social movements worked to expand the concept of civil society by understanding the experiences of peoples' affected by the development activities of the state.

The Narmada Bachao Andolan in India and the anti- Arun III movement in Nepal represent the new social movements of the ecosystem peoples who were threatened by large dams pursued by the states and foreign donors in the name of development.

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