ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA :

A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

ANURADHA SEN

CENTRE FOR STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI – 110 067
INDIA
1999

Dated : 20.07.99

CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled **"Environmental Movements in India – A Sociological Analysis"** submitted in partial fulfillment for the M.Phil degree of this University has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university and is my original work.

Anuradha Sen
(Anuradha Sen)

We recommend that that the dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Susan Visvanathan
(Supervisor)

(Chairperson)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Ecological Movements are not new in the history of people's movements in India. However strictly speaking environmental movements in their more organized form as social movements for ecology and survival of people in ecology, are relatively recent. Their timing coincides with the environmental debates in the early seventies, especially the 1972, Conference on Environment and Development at Stockholm which debated the natural costs of civilizational developments. Even as the critiques of the dominant development paradigms gained popularity, people's struggles over the environment reflected significant protests towards the western model of modernization for which the natural resources and ecology had to bear a tremendous burden.

In India, the western developmental model was put into force after India gained independence. The necessity of employment of modern technologies and the promotion of development of capital sought to bring about large increases in the country's percapita output, expand the provision of basic needs, including, education, modern health supplies, piped water supply, electricity, and within a short time develop the economy to match with the west.[1] In the spate of such frenzied development what was left behind, without much consideration was the traditional mode of existence of people who belonged to a different social reality. It was taken for granted

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[1] For a critique on modernization, refer to Tariq Banuri, "Development and the Politics of Knowledge A critical Interpretation of the social Role of Modernization Theories in the Development of the Third world" in, Frederique Apffel Marglin and Stephen Apffel Marglin (ed.), *Dominating Knowledge*. Clarendron Press, Oxford, 1990.

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than the construction of a new social reality had the consent of the entire population of the country.

Environmental movements in India directly address this particular problem with the country's model of development. The first major environmental movement in India in the recent times was the Chipko movement in the Garhwal Himalayas, which made public, for the first time, the space of nature in the life on the local people and the disastrous consequences of the efforts to conquer that space. It provided the platform for discussion of the harmful effects of technological intrusion into the greens, which in the process tramples over the lines of thousands of people whose lives revolve around these greens. The Chipko movement was followed by several different movements in other parts of the country as the environmental debate entered the public space in India. National and international attention was directed to these movements and the discussion of concern for protecting the environment for future sustenance of human life and of those immediately affected by it, gained form and shape.

In this study I choose three famous environmental movements in India, for an in-depth sociological analysis. These include the Chipko movement in the Garhwal Himalayas, the movement against building dams on the river Narmada, and the movement against commercial fishing by the traditional fisherfolk in Kerala. Regionally the three movements cover the length of the country. While the Chipko movement centred in U.P. and upper Himachal Pradesh, the movement on Narmada centred in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The methods of intervention in the

environmental movements are also unique. While at the local sites the movement and its leadership resort to modes like, 'hugging the trees' for Chipko, the struggles generate interventional mechanisms which quote from the Gita and Bible, and the ancient texts of Hindus which glorify the green-heritage of the country and provide it the space of the sacred. On the other hand, outside the local environs, the issues are handled yet differently by the different allies of the primary participants.

The issues which are raised from such environmental conflicts are also very different from other social protests. Some issues concentrate on the specific struggle, while others relate to the discourse, which the movements generate. In terms of the impact, which these movements cause, the basic environmental consciousness of the nation is definitely higher than before. Ecological groups like Patriotic and People-oriented Science and Technology Foundation (PPST), Kerala Association for Popularisation of Science and Science Literature (KSSP) are working among people and have been spreading the message of protecting the environment.

The environmental movements are thus not only different from other social movements, but are of active relevance beyond the local sites of struggles. The movement also occurs through public debates and discussions which generate a commitment to the issue of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra and the movement by fisherfolk located in Kerala, geographically the lowest tip of India. The reason for choosing these three movements have been the geographical location and the popularity of these movements. The movements are chosen with the assumption that the

nature of discourse they generate, issues they involve, actors which participate in them, are representative of the environmental movements in India.

/ The environmental movements are both new and different in terms of their participants, methods of intervention, issues raised by them, their impacts in terms of redressal, policy shifts and consciousness and the discourse they provide, which makes them significant as social mobilizations in the present times.[2] While the agitations are carried out primarily by those directly affected by the shifts in the environment which include the rural peasant, the forest tribals, their women folk, the fisherfolk, it also includes an allied hearing space where voluntary organizations, the media, professionals, civil and human rights groups and even sympathetic policy-makers and bureaucrats who have created a public-space that supports the movements have a functional role even though removed from the locate sites of the movement.

In the first chapter, I seek to put together the events of the movements and classify them into distinctive categories. I refer only to the movements on the sites and restrict my categorization to it. The Chipko movement, the movement in the Narmada Valley and the fishing movement in Kerala are treated separately. The purpose of putting the events together is to use it later in the course of the analysis as a database, to which I can refer back. I use these events both to draw conclusions and also to make use of these movements as illustrations to explain my analysis. The events of the

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[2] Harsh Sethi, "Survival and Democracy: Ecological Struggles in India". In Ponna Wignaraja (ed.) *New Social Movements in the South, Empowering the People,* Vistaar Publication New Delhi, 1993.

movements are classified into categories of participants, methods of activism and the demands put forward by the movements.

In the second chapter the discussion is on knowledge. I take up the cause of traditional knowledge and the effort made by it to fight the combination of the developmental state, capitalist onslaught and the dictum of modernity. The rural peasants, tribals and the fisherfolk have lived in harmony with nature over the centuries. Their existence is derived from nature which forms their natural habitat. Their economy, polity, culture is bred amidst the natural reservoirs. The object of the chapter on knowledge is to find out why these people (who have taken up the struggles) are, as they we find them to be. The effort is to trace answers to the questions which relate to the constitution of the knowledge which is manifest in these struggles. These people find the nature to be their very own. The notion of nature as common property is understood in the light of the fact that these ecosystem people have often claimed that their existence in nature is their 'right'. Understanding common property in nature explains the rights that these people re struggling for. Traditional knowledge further celebrates the harmony of such knowledge in nature. This harmony in existence gives rise to the major concept of the recent times, 'the sustainable utilisation of natural resources'. The section on knowledge winds up with a discussion of the confrontation of knowledge with the forces of capitalism, the developmental state and the knowledge of modernity.

In the Chapter on Ideology, I try to analyse the three ideological trends which are most prominently found in the movements. These include

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the Gandhian ideology, that of the Appropriate Technologists and the Ecological Marxists. I show how these different ideological trends have given different shapes to the movements on different occasions. The section on Ideology opens up the sociological debate regarding the status of ideology itself. I engage myself in breaking the conventionally held notion of ideology being false and untrue and always the tool of the bourgeoisie. My pursuit remains to place ideology as an objective doctrine, which one may follow if one wishes to. I employ sociological tools in this endeavour of saving ideology from being rejected for being coloured in favour of the elites. Ideological loyalties have played an important role in shaping the environmental movements and have helped to generate the critiques of development that the movements provide. The methods of activism that the people resorted to are also a derivative of the ideological underpinnings of the movements.

In the final chapter, I try to look at the discourses that the movements generate. I specifically look at the discourses on power, hegemony and authority which may be read from the movements. I treat discourse as Barthes did and subsequently discover them from interpreting events, demands, and actions. The aim remains to recover the main evils which the environmental movements fight against and try to obtain the third world perspective regarding global domination of the west.

Environmental movements in India attain significance not only as new social movements which focus on ecology but also as the active battle-field where a whole lot of motivated people, backed by supportive allies

from different walks of life are rejecting the dominant official paradigm of development. Their cause is genuine and crucial for the future of not just those who are active in the struggles but of those as well who live in the protected walls of fancy homes and find themselves far removed from the marginalised, tribals, peasants and fisherfolk. It is the expansive horizon of the movements which make them interesting subjects for analysis and understanding. The environmental movements reflect the agony of the third world countries, who have to fight the domination of the west which take the shape of unsuitable policies at home.

CHAPTER – I

CLASSIFYING

THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

The environmental movements in India are the response to the continuing struggles of people hit by the ecological problems which have put their survival into question. What emerges as conflicts over specific issues related to a wide spectrum of immediate problems like resource use, economic dislocation, destruction of natural societies, increase in daily hardships, a daily life prone to attacks by natural calamities, also translate into struggles relating to the problem of global domination of science, technology and capital. Different movements, in this case, the Chipko movement, the movement in the Narmada Valley and the fishing movement in Kerala take on different issues of conflict, involve diverse people, bring about different agenda of demands, and resort to different techniques of conflict-generation. The varied nature of the movements, makes the construction of an adequate taxonomy of the movements absolutely essential. For the purpose of a socialogical analysis which discusses the elements of knowledge ideology and discourse emerging from the environmental movements, it is important to classify the movements by facts and figures, so that in course of analysis referring back to the events helps to make the analysis more realistic and not an exaggerated abstraction which has title evidence in terms of factual data. The movements are classified in the order of the events, the interest of the contesting parties, the participants, the methods of activism and the demands of the movement.

THE CHIPKO MOVEMENT

The Chipko Movement started on 27th March, 1973 in Mandal village of Chamoli district in UP when the villagers stood against a sports goods manufacturing company, Symonds Co., Allahabad from felling ash trees which had been auctioned to them by the UP government[1]. The villagers were organised by the DGSS, a cooperative organization based in Chamoli. Interestingly the villagers had been prevented from felling the very same trees for making yokes by the Government. Social activist Chandi Prasad Bhatt suggested the embracing of trees as a mechanism of protest. Thus the Chipko movement that means "hugging the trees" was born. Alam Singh Bist, the village headman, led the villagers of Mandal, against the company's axeman in hugging the trees, even if the axes split open their stomachs.

Similar protest movements occurred in Reni, this time by village women, led by Gaura Devi, in the absence of the men-folk. According to Gaura Devi, head of the village Mahila Mandal (Women's Club),
" it was not a question of planned organization of the women for the movement, rather it happened spontaneously. Our men were out of the village so we had to come forward and protect the trees. We have no quarrel with anybody but only we wanted to make the people understand that our existence is tied with the forests"[2]

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[1] Sunderlal Bahuguna, *Chipko*, Chipko Information Centre, Silyara, Tehri Garhwal, 1980, p. 1.
[2] Das and Negi, 'Chipko Movement' in K. Singh (ed.) *Tribal Movements in India*, Vol. 2, Delhi 1983.

Following Reni, in various parts of Tehri-Garhwal, forest auctions were opposed. In the Chakrata division forests of Dehradun, local students protested against forest auctions, which were thereafter called off. Sunderlal Bahuguna, the social activist, went on a two-week long fast at Uttarkashi's Hanuman Mandir in October 1974, demanding a review of the existing forest policy. People's Committees successfully opposed felling of trees in Loital, Amarsar, and Badyargarh. The Chipko movement spread further to Kumaon, Dungri-Paintoli. In May 1981, Sunderlal Bahuguna and his companions walked out of Srinagar along the national highway, after a warm send-off by the Kashmir Ecology Society and the late Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir State, the late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The activists walked for the spread of Chipko message from Kashmir to Kohima, in Nagaland. The message of Chipko however did not stay confined within national limits. It has become an internationally celebrated movement, finding a regular place in environmental journals and texts, which concern the global environmental crisis. Sunderlal Bahuguna is increasingly in demand as a speaker in major environmental conferences related to environment in the third world.

The Chipko movement was a clear confrontation between the local villagers and peasants on one hand and the government-commercial felling nexus on the other. Here we seek to clearly identify the interests of each of the contesting parties.

The villagers and peasants of Uttarakhand region have fought the government and the company's axemen for a wide range of reasons. The

survival of people in the upper hills of the Himalayas is intimately related to the forests. The people are dependent on the forests for their sustenance and the fulfillment of their basic needs. The forests provide for the fuel, fodder wood for building huts, necessary tools and so on. Further the village people in this region have been badly hit by successive floods. The flood in 1970 in the monsoon season washed away 6 metal bridges, 10 kilometers of metal roads, 24 buses, several dozen vehicles, 366 houses together with a the destruction of around 500 acres of standing paddy crops in the Alaknanda valley.[3] The monsoon in 1978 saw another flood in the Bhageerathi valley. The loss in the flood was estimated at Rs. 25 crores. The reason for these floods has been the disappearance of forests in these areas, which generally help contain the floods. The villagers who had to live with the massive destruction began to realize the links between deforestation, landslides and flood. The involvement of women in the Chipko movement has been of tremendous importance for the movement and the social relations in the region. It may be noted that while the menfolk in the hills leave their home in search of livelihood, the women are left behind with the responsibility of agriculture and managing the household. Hence the immediate need of the forests are more realistically felt by the women in the region According to Bahuguna, "Due to washing away of the fertile soil, the menfolk were compelled to leave their families and wander in search of employment, thus making the women bear all the responsibilities, collecting fodder, firewood, carrying water which form the main chores besides farming." The role of women in the movement has been very prominent. While in Reni, women under Gaura Devi single-handedly managed to ward off the axemen, in

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[3] Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods : Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*, OUP, Delhi, 1989, p. 155.

Dungri-Paintoli there was an open conflict of interest between men and women. While the men wanted to sell their Oak Forest to the horticulture department for a potato farm on the land, the women protested as the forest provided for their daily needs. The Chipko activists' intervention saved the forest from being extinct. This kind of a conflict shows the effect that the Chipko movement has had among women in this area, who have not only raised their voices, but openly challenged the system. Chipko as a movement has thus considerably affected the balance in social relationships in this region. It has not only enabled women to speak of their needs and problems but also provided them the authority to decide the best for themselves.

The interests of the forest department i.e., the government and commercial interests combine are typically reflective of the mindset of a capitalist economy, based on the order of money. The unthoughtful actions of the government of Uttar Pradesh in promoting commercial forestry in the region at the cost of prospective floods and daily needs of the local people quite clearly marks out the state playing the role of the capitalist enterprise. The state indulged in activities that led to removing the young generation of men from the area. Lucrative proposals were made to these people struggling for a livelihood at the expense of that which provided the fundamentals to their lives. The forests have for ages provided the people their sustenance.

Now that the interest of the contesting parties has been identified, the people who undertook the movement are categorized.

1. The men and women villagers and peasants who were directly affected by the commercial forestry which caused the shifts in their environment.

2. The Dashauli Gram Swarajya Sangh (DGSS), a cooperative organization based in Chamoli district. Though DGSS, organized by local youths, initially devoted itself to problems of unemployment, end of liquor sale, untouchability, giving priority to local use of forests. However in 1971, led by sarvodaya workers like Sarala Devi (Gandhiji's English disciple) and local activist Chandi Prasad Bhatt, DGSS held major public meetings at Gopeshwar and Uttarkashi demanding the replacement of contractor system with forest labour cooperatives (FLC's) and the establishment of small scale industries. The DGSS took a significant role in organizing the local people.

3. In several places like Gopeshwar, college students took part in demonstrations.

4. Activists of the Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini (USV), Badyargarh Van Suraksha Samiti.

5. Chipko leader Sunderlal Bahuguna, social activist Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Sarvodaya workers, Dhum Singh Negi, Kunwar Prasun, Pratap Shikhar, Vijay Jardari

Methods of Activism

The Chipko movement took place mainly as a non-violent protest movement that resorted to peaceful methods of protest and activism. In the main demonstrations, foot marches or padayatras were held apart from

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"hugging the trees", which formed the ultimate culmination of the protest. Chipko leader Sunderlal Bahuguna went on fasts that compelled the government to action. Further folksongs reflecting the harmony of people in nature were spread, often through school children who were taught the same by singers or tapes. Shri Ghanashyam Sailani, the folk singer, has a special contribution in this regard. For a direct contact with non-book educated peasantry, who were religious-minded, the cultural and spiritual heritage of India based on the relationship with forests and trees were emphasized. Legends like those of Amrita Devi's sacrifice, who was a Bishnoi, laid down her own life along with her three daughters in protecting the forests near her village which were sought to be cleared by the Maharaja of Jodhpur for his lime-kiln were told and retold to and among the people. Further sessions of religious discourses like those of the BhagwatGita reading sessions were held to spiritually bind the people to the moral cause of protecting the forests. Apart from these at the national and international level, Sunderlal Bahuguna wrote extensively and lectured, to mobilise opinion for the Chipko cause.[4]

Demands of the Chipko Movement

Chipko movement developed into a powerful mass-based ecological movement. According to Sunderlal Bahuguna, the movement sought for a permanent economy against the traditional shortsighted destructive economy. The main contention of the movement is that the Himalayas' gift to the nation is water, while its function is to produce, maintain and improve soil-structure. The movement seeks a ban on commercial felling of green

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[4] Thomas Weber, *Hugging the trees, The Story of the Chipko Movement*, Viking, Delhi, 1987, p. 81-95.

trees for 10 to 15 years, so that the green coverage of the area is restored as proposed in the National Forest Policy, 1952. Further it proposes the planting of Five 'F' trees providing food (nuts, fruits oilseeds, honey etc), fodder, fuel, fertilizers and fiber. Planting of profitable species like pine deodar is held responsible for robbing the land of its fertility. Overall, Chipko centres on the question of peasant access to the forests, what the peasant considers as a 'forfeiture of their hereditary rights'. The question of village rights over forests formed the background of grievances from which Chipko movement developed.[5]

[5] Sunderlal Bahuguna, *Chipko*, Chipko Information Centre, Silyara, Tehri Garhwal, 1980, p. 18-19.

THE FISHING MOVEMENT IN KERALA

The movement of the fisherfolk in Kerala started in the late 1970s and took a reckonable form in the early 1980s. The traditional fisherfolk in Kerala were hard hit by the capitalist penetration in their artisanal fishing sector which started in a major way as early as the 1960s. The fishing economy was confronted by a major drive towards modernization which was undertaken at the initiative of the state. Mechanised fishing in Kerala began in 1953-54 with the establishment of the Indo-Norwegian Project in the Neendakara region of Quilon district.[6] The Department of Fisheries was the first to issue mechanised boats to groups of fishermen. However industrial capitalism registered itself in the fish economy of Kerala post 1963, with the introduction of trawlers, which were mechanised crafts operating trawler nets, a direct consequence of the demand for processed prawn products from USA and Japan. The shift in the traditional economy saw the artisanal fishermen, traditional processors and traders who were essentially from the fishing community, being gradually edged out from the various sectors of the fish industry. The money economy which was generated on the Kerala coastline was in more ways than one art the expense of the traditional fisherfolk. As the suffering of these people grew beyond control, Kerala witnessed a major movement against the capitalist trawler which was a ventilation of a decade-old grievance.

The first clashes between the capitalists and the fishermen occurred in 1977 and this led to subsequent agitations. The fishermen also realised the

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[6] P. Ibrahim, "Evolution of Capitalist Relations in the Fishing Economy of Kerala", *Social Action*, Vol. 43, January-March 1993, p. 78.

need to organise themselves. In 1978, fishermen from various parts of India met with the purpose of forming a federation. Thus the National Forum for Cattamaran and Countryboat Fishermen's Rights and Marine Wealth was formed. This forum was formed by thirteen major regional fishermen's unions. Coordinated by a national forum, they protested against the mechanised boats and trawlers, which directly led to severe losses for the traditional fisherfolk apart from degrading the marine resources.[7] Further isolated physical conflicts between trawlers and purse-seiners on the one hand and artisanal fishermen on the other was on the rise.

In similar clashes in 1976, around 16 fishermen had been killed in Tamil Nadu and the Mazumdar Committee was set up by the Union Government to look into the lawlessness in the seas. The Committee submitted its report in 1978, recommending that Parliament should pass an Act for the protection of the marine resources, together with protecting the interests of the traditional fishermen. In as much as fisheries was a state subject, the Union government thrusted the Kerala state government with the responsibility of formulating the enactment. An Act was passed by the Kerala state in 1979, which prohibited trawling in the monsoon months, i.e., June July and August. However the trawler owners from Neendakara got an exemption using political lobby and clout. The reason attributed for not closing Neendakara, the largest trawler-operating centre in the state was that the heavy concentration of the sea-prawn, P Stylifera, in the inshore area, would perish lest it was not harvested leading to loss of valuable foreign exchange for the country apart from causing unemployment. As a result, the

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[7] Susan Visvanathan, "The Fishing Struggle in Kerala", *Seminar* 423, November 1994, p.20.

ban turned out to be ineffective. The boat-owners charged the government of discrimination in the treatment of trawlers located around the state. No significant benefit, ecological or otherwise could be derived from government enactment.[8] The apolitical Kerala Swathantra Matsya Thozhilali Federation (KSMTF) started an agitation. The result was the formation of Babu Paul Committee. While the Committee was divided on monsoon ban, it provided 16 discreet suggestions for conserving the marine resources. The government however remained inactive. Further agitations by the KSMTF led to the setting up of another Committee. The government again remained without action and the struggle under the leadership of KSMTF continued.[9]

Unionization among Keralite Fishermen began with the formation of KSMTF in 1977-78 with local priests actively pursuing the cause of the struggle in various areas along the Kerala coast. The first district-wide union mobilization, however began in Trivandram by NGO initiative, women's groups called the Mahila Samajams, which addressed transport problems faced by women vendors while commuting to and from the markets. This was in the year 1979 and the mobilization translated itself into a demand for statuatory order for the vendor's right to use public transport. This incident was the first public demonstration by fishworkers demanding a right from the government[10] It paved the path for the establishment of the Trivandram District Fishermen's Union (TDFU), which was a general union catering for the fishermen's interests and political demands. The Union joined the

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[8] John Kurien and TRT Achari, "Overfishing Along Kerala Coast, Causes and Consequences", *EPW*, September, 1990, p. 2016.
[9] Vijayan, ISI Dossier, cited in Susan Visvanathan, "The Fishing Struggle in Kerala", *Seminar* 423, November 1994.
[10] Wickey Meynen, "Fisheries Development, Resource Depletion and Political Mobilization in Kerala : The Problem of Alternatives", *Development and Charge*, Vol. 20, p. 746.

Kerala Latin Catholic Fishermen Federation (KLCFF) formed by small-priest-led fishermen's unions in Quilon, Allepy and Cochin areas.

In May 1984, several of the clergy, office-holders and sympathisers of the KSMTF including Sr. Alice Lukose, Sr. Philomena Marie, Sr. Patricia Kuruvinakkunel and Sr.Thevamma Prayikkulam went on an indefinite fast. "Thousands of fishermen courted arrest on May 15th. On 28th May, 40 fishermen and Fr. Dominic S.J. were arrested for picketing the office of the Asst. Director of Fisheries, Calicut." In June, Sr. Philomena Marie along with several others were put behind bars. In early May, 1984, the fishermen of Kerala led by several political unions like CITU, INTUC, AITUC and the Independent Fishermen's Union of the clergy went on a strike which concluded on June 22nd, 1984. Sr. Philomena Marie who was jailed in June went on a 23 day fast and refused to give it up in the face of police attempts of force feeding.[11]

Even as the movement still continues in Kerala, it has certainly registered some small victories. In 1989, on the basis of an Expert Committee Report, the government implemented a total monsoon trawling ban even as the enforcement resulted in physical confrontations between enforcement police and boat owners. The government enforcement was contested at both the high court and the Supreme Court which refused a stay order to the government's decision. Subsequently the ban was totally effective.[12]

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[11] Susan Visvanathan, "The fishing struggle in Kerala", *Seminar* 423, November 1994.
[12] J. Kurien and TRT Achari, "Overfishing Along Kerala Coast, Causes and Consequences", *EPW*, September 1-8, 1990, p. 2017.

The fishing movement presently continues under the aegis of the National Fishworker's Forum (NFF), which is a federation of state level trade unions. A seven-day agitation by the fishworkers supported by all state level fishworker's unions from the maritime states had taken place from 1-7 July 1998. Sit-up dharnas were arranged in Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram) and simultaneously at several other places including Kakdwip (West Bengal), Gopalpur (Orissa), Ongole (Andhra Pradesh), Nagercoil (Tamil Nadu) and Mumbai (Maharashtra). Also thousands of fishworkers marched to the Kerala assembly and the rally was addressed by Thomas Kocherry, the co-ordinator of the World Forum of Fish Harvestors and Fishworkers, and Shri A.K. Anthony, opposition leader and CPI(M) MLA from Kadakampally. The main cause of this NFF agitation was to demand the inclusion of fisherwomen and inland fishworkers in the Saving cum Relief Scheme, which was introduced in 1991 to help fishworkers below the poverty line. However the Government of India excluded women from the scheme in 1994. Such discrimination resulted in the fisherwomen not being considered as workers though they were mainly responsible for running the family.

The National Fisheries Action Committee Against Joint Ventures (NFACAJV) organised monthly meetings with the government ministries at the Centre to review the Deep Sea Fishing policy as suggested in the Murari Committee Report.

An All–India Fisheries strike was observed on May 10, 1999 which sought to recover the traditional rights of the fisherfolks and provide fishing women relief under the government sponsored schemes.[13]

The fishermen's movement in Kerala, broadly, was a protest movement against the industrial capitalist order which has established itself along the coastline. The interests of the contesting parties in the movement are identified here.

The mechanised economy of trawlers required capital investments and maintenance costs which were far beyond the capacities of the traditional fishermen. Institutional finances were easily available from the government-owned Kerala State Financial Corporation Ltd. And nationalised banks for borrowers who have proportionate assets. Consequently, the capitalists engaging in pursuit of huge profits from fishers, turn out to be essentially people from non-fishing sector. A FUCID-ISI, Delhi joint study of three fishing villages in Kerala has revealed diverse occupational backgrounds of boat-owners, outside the fishing community, including bus conductors, government clerks, port officers, businessmen. Further the processing and marketing of the frozen and canned products, which are the primary export items, call for large capital investments in comparison to the dried fish, processed by traditional fisherfolk. Thus, traditional fishermen find themselves progressively ousted from fishing as a means of livlihood.[14]

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[13] From correspondences between NFF and the Union government Source : Delhi Forum. Letters by NFF to PM Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Ministry of Agriculture respectively.
[14] P. Ibrahim, "Evolution of Capitalist Relation in the Fishing Economy of Kerala", *Social Action*, Vol. 43, January-March, 1993.

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The modern sector in fish production received all the attention of the state government. The non-mechanised sector comprised of the traditional craft, Kattumaram, was labour-intensive together with internal market-oriented distribution and processing activity. The prawn export business generated a tremendous excitement which had an automatic impact on the state fiscal policy. In the period 1961-69, out of a total Rs. 110 million spent on development of fisheries, Rs. 82.5 million (i.e., 75%) was spent on schemes which were oriented to production. This included Rs. 54 million for financing mechanised boats equipped for fishing prawns and another Rs. 20 million for supporting infrastructure and training. Another Rs. 20 million was utilised in schemes directed towards processing and marketing out of which Rs. 18 million was provided for the creation of facilities related to export drive. The artisanal fisherfolk in the absence of state patronage were largely left to survive on their own. The polarization of the economy was clearly reflected in the divergent per capita income of the fishermen in the two contrasting sectors. According to 1969-70 prices, the per capita income of the fisherfolk in the modern sector was about Rs. 1600 with the output per worker being 5150 kgs. The output of the fishermen in the traditional sector was 3340 kg per worker and his per capita income was Rs. 1095.[15]

The heavily state-financed mechanised fishing sector, not only led to higher productivity but also a higher income for the fishermen apart from still larger profits accrued by the capitalists i.e., the boat-owners and merchant exporters. John Kurien notes that this nexus pattern between the

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[15] John Kurien, "Technical Assistance Projects and Socio-Economic Change, Norwegian Intervention in Kerala's Fisheries Development", *EPW,* June 1985, Pg. A-78.

modern sector and prawn exports stood in the way of sectoral desireability, from the overall economic and social considerations of Kerala society. The traditional sector was socially more popular from different counts: firstly, its ability in providing cheap protein for local consumption, secondly, ensuring a more decentralised method of operation and widespread effects in employment generation. While the social profitability of the traditional sector contrasted with the private gains made by the capitalist enterprises, the latter contributed successfully to the impoverishment of the traditional economy. Motorization and new gear designs led to a large increase in capital investments in traditional fishing units. As a result the fishermen were compelled to borrow heavily to remain in the business. The result was unusually high level of indebtedness among the fisherfolk to middlemen and merchants. Gradually, the fishermen lost effective control of the fish caught by them as they were compelled to sell the same at pre-determined prices. The entry of big capital, thus, not only weakened the traditional sector but made it restricted to all future enterprise.

The economic overfishing which were evidenced in the early 1980s adversely affected the working of the traditional fisherfolk as well as the poorer consumers. Fish production continued to drop in Kerala as a result of mechanised fishing. In the main prawn-landing centre in Kerala (Neendakara in Quilon district) the catch per unit effort declined from 83 kg per hour of fishing effort in 1973 to 20 kg per hour in 1984. (George, 1988). Further the size of the prawns caught had also been reportedly on the decline. Together with this, the decline in the catches of the demersal species of fish clearly indicated to ecosystem overfishing. The trawler crew

which harvested 10 tonnes of fish in 1974 landed only 7.7 tonnes in 1982. The fall in productivity of fish registered a still steeper decline in case of artisanal fishermen whose productivity declined from 3.3 tonnes to 1.6 tonnes.[16] The fishermen as a result protested against this serious resource depletion which provided the basis to their livelihood and sustenance. The ecological question was supported by strong economic considerations. The result was the organised struggles of the country's one of the most unorganised sectors.

Now that the interests of the contesting parties have been identified, the people who undertook the movement are categorised.

1.   The traditional fisherfolk who were directly affected by the problems created by marine-resources depletion in Kerala.

2.   The leadership provided by Jesuit priests and nuns, like Tom Kochery, Sr. Alice Lukose, Sr. Philomena Marie, Sr. Patricia.

3.   Various non-political unions like KTSMF

4.   Political Unions of the fishermen like CITU, INTUC, AITUC, Independent Fishermen's Union of the Clergy.

The above groups of people led the movement against:

1.   The state government which promoted mechanization, which became a serious problem for the traditional fisherfolk.

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[16] John Kurien and Achari, "Overfishing Along Kerala Coast; Causes and Consequences", *EPW,* September' 1990.

2.   The capitalists including the boat-owners, the trading merchants, MNCs who did not belong to the fishing community but were taking advantage by making profit at the cost of the poor traditional fishermen and ruining the fishing economy by introducing large-scale processing and marketing mechanisms.

Methods of Activism

The fishing movement in Kerala often resorted to violent methods of activism like physical clashes with the capitalists on the sea, which even led to the death of several of the fisherfolk. However, the violent means were never resorted to under the organised aegis of the movement.

The fisherfolk often resorted to agitations and demonstrations, especially before the offices of important officials of the state fishery department. The clergy leadership of the movement are also known to have undertaken severe fasts which prompted the government to take action on their demands. Besides, on several counts the fisherfolk, in thousands have courted arrest, which has been their expression of discontentedness with the system. Newspaper reports quoted by Susan Visvanathan noted the strikes which were led by the politically affiliated fishermen's unions like CITU, AITUC INTUC, etc.[17]

An important direction was provided to the movement in terms of ideology by the symbol of Jesus, and the essence of Christianity. This was essentially ue to the fact that the clergy activity pursued the fisherfolk's

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[17] Susan Visvanathan, "The fishing struggle in Kerala", *EPW*, November 1994, p.22.

cause, and that the majority of them are Christian Catholics. The Jesuit Journal Vidyajyothi brought out articles which sought to establish similarities between the struggle of the fisherfolk and the struggle of Jesus. Quoted by Susan Visvanathan, R.J. Raja, S.J. wrote in Vidyajyothi," The prophet was one who risked securities and protections, possessed by the power of God – a task of great humility and the power of vision – the Prophet is unafraid." Concepts of the Bible were resorted to explain struggle for justice and freedom. Sr. Thomas Kochery wrote, " In the bargain, church leaders have been exposed for what they are. They are in their own way honest and honourable men – They would help the poor fisherfolk but without harming the interests of the big boat-owners. They would allieviate the misery of the exploited while giving a free hand to the exploiters".[18]

While preaching for a non-violent struggle, the Gandhian method of Satyagraha was sought to be revived. Satyagraha and Ahimsa were concepts that were used by writers to direct the struggle that the fisherfolk undertook. T.K.John S.J. wrote in Vidyajyothi, "Hence Satyagraha was not a warfare but a service!"[19] Thus the movement was one which did not limit itself merely to demonstrations and strikes. The movement operated on clearly identifiable ideological strands that provided the fisherfolk their moral strength and provided ample justifications to their struggle.

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[18] Ibid., p. 22.
[19] John Kurien and TRT Achari, "Overfishing Along the Kerala coast, Causes and Consequences", *EPW*, Sept., 1990.

The Demands of the Movement

The consistent demands of the traditional fishermen over the years have been as follows:

1. Proclaiming an exclusive economic zone for small scale fishermen. State regulation of the commons by creating distinct fishing zones would necessarily compel the mechanised boats to fish in deeper waters.

2. Ban on the destructive fishing techniques. The fisherfolk demanded that anarchic and destructive fishing by trawlers and purse seiners had to be stopped.

3. A systematic regulation and management of the living marine resources of Kerala

4. A total ban on trawling during monsoon season i.e., the months of June July August, which was the breeding season of many fishes.

5. Establish traditional rights of the fishing communities.

6. Remove hurdle for fishing communities to build there hurdles.

7. Implement Murari Committee recommendations to ban Deep Sea Fishing.

8. To include fishery women and informed fishers in Saving cum Relief Scheme under the laws of the land.

THE MOVEMENT IN NARMADA VALLEY

The Narmada Valley Project (NVP) is the single largest river valley project planned in India. The entire NVP includes the construction of thirty major dams, of which ten dams will be built on the Narmada river and the rest on the tributaries of the great river. In addition NVP includes the construction of 135 medium and 3000 minor dams. The Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) and the Narmada Sagar Project (NSP) are the two mega projects of the NVP. The NVP reservoir shall be the world's largest man-made lake, ever to be planned in India. The reservoir is calculated to submerge around 37,000 hectares of land, thereby directly displacing, around 1,52,000 people who reside in the area.[20] The total number of people to be affected by the NVP is still more. It includes people displaced by the construction of dam-infrastructure, canals, compensatory afforestation, secondary displacement and so on. The total number of people affected as a consequence of the NVP is expected to rise above a million. These people are spread over three states, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The movement against the NVP started in protest against the issues of displacement, reallocation, environmental concerns, to name a few.

The first registered protest against the SSP occurred in Nimar in 1978 soon after the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal gave its award. The Tribunal was set up in 1969 for conflict resolution between the states which benifitted from NVP. It was only in 1978, after the Tribunal submitted its report that the last stages of planning, financial allocation and work on the

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[20] Amita Baviskar, *In the Belly of the River* OUP, Delhi, 1995, p. 200.

project began.[21] The first protest movement, led by the Congress(I) politician from Madhya Pradesh, Arjun Singh, was essentially on the issue of displacement. The movement, better known as Nimar Bachao Andolan (Movement to save Nimar), however collapsed after Arjun Singh won the state elections in 1979.

A more organised opposition to the NVP began around 1985 when Medha Patkar, a social scientist from the Tata Institute of Social Studies, Bombay, began mobilising the peasant community, working in the SSP submergence zone villages in Maharashtra. The movement also concentrated in the plains of Nimar, Dhar, and Khargone districts of Madhya Pradesh. Alirajpur, Anjanvara were villages with above fifteen thousand population. Movements occurred in these places organised by Sangath (worker's union) which had an established base among these people. In the villages of Maharashtra, again Shramik Sanghatanas (Worker's unions) were helpful in mobilising the people as they had an already established base.

The Arch-Vahini group, a NGO, moved to Narmada Valley in the early 1980s, and concentrated its activities in the villages of Gujarat. The Arch-Vahini group began its movements with a total opposition to the dam. However in the process of the struggle, they accepted the proposition for rehabilitation.

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[21] Kalpavriksh, 1988, p. 1-2.

Baba Amte, the social worker famous for his work among leprosy patients, led a mass movement against the construction of the dams at Bhopalpatnam and Inchampalli, Bastar respectively. In July, 1988, Baba Amte held a mass-meeting at his Ashram in Anandwan where environmental activists from all over the country participated with the purpose of coming out with a common policy on the dams.

In February 1989 more than 8000 people protested at the dam site in Gujarat. Policemen resorted to beating the activists and many were arrested. On 28th September, 1989 the National Rally against Destructive Development was held in Harsud, a small town in the submergence zone, which saw the participation of 55,000 to 60,000 people who called for an end to such development which was destructive for both the environment and the local inhabitants. The National Rally called for an ecologically sensitive developmental pattern. Fiery speeches, torchlight processions, tribal dances highlighted the pledge of these people against "displacement of poor communities and plundering of their natural resources by destructive development which served the interests of elite consumers and foreign capital" (Baviskar; 1985: 206). Again on 31st December, 1989 in the Hapeshwar village, hill tribals gathered to perform a stirring ceremony. Holding aloft their bows and arrows and the waters of the holy Narmada cupped in their palms, the tribals pledged to fight the dam to their dying day.

On March 6, 1990, 10,000 people from the Narmada valley blocked traffic on the Bombay-Agra National Highway. Assurance from the Madhya

Pradesh Chief Minister of reviewing the SSP led to the withdrawal of the rally. The people marched peacefully to stop work at the site of the dam in December 1990. The march started at Nimar, and this Jan Vikas Sangharsh Yatra (March of the Struggle for People's Development), demanding a comprehensive review of the NVP, suspension of work at the sites, and felling of the forests. Four Hundred representatives from tribal mass organisations met the Prime Minister in Delhi and asked him to look into the matter.

The Sangharsh Yatra was stopped by the police at the Madhya Pradesh – Gujarat border. Two thousand people camped there for more than a month braving the winter cold, sleeping in open fields. Seven people including the leader Medha Patkar went on an indefinite hunger-strike. Even after twenty two days of fasting the government refused to talk. The andolan (struggle) went back to the village, declaring a non-cooperation movement with the Gujarat government. The people declared the slogan "Hamara gaon mein hamara raj".

Collective action in the valley faced stiff repression. The people nevertheless courageously continued their struggle. In January 1989 when the entire dam site was declared a prohibited site under the Official Secrets Act, defiant people who sought to enter the dam site, were arrested, threatened and beaten up by the police. The protesting people were implicated in false cases by the police. Even women protestors were not spared. Women Protestors were especially subjected to assaults by the police. Their clothes were ripped off in public, they were dragged by their

hair and in one incident a pregnant woman was repeatedly hit on her stomach with a rifle butt by the police.[22] Violence by the police terrorised the people to leave their villages. In the Kakrana village in Madhya Pradesh even the District Collector resorted to assault on the people. The Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) not only beat up the arrested people active in the Sangath but also threatened them with dire consequences if they lead the people in the movement against the dam. The SDM is reported to have told an activist while beating him, "So you fancy yourself as a leader? Carry on the netagiri (acting like a leader) and you will die just like Shankar Guha Niyogi did. We will dump your body in a lake. Who do you think you are?"[23] The activists constantly found themselves in jail, arrested on false charges and were brutally tortured, humiliated and assaulted. Since 1992, such incidents of human rights violation is reported to be on the rise in the valley. In as much as the movement still continues, the uncertainty which loomed large in the fate of these poor people have reduced by no means.

The movement of the people for their land, livelihood and survival in nature which began in the small villages of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra have had its effect on the world forum as well. International NGOs like the US-based Environmental Defense Fund, Environmental Policy Institute and National Wildlife Federation urged the US Congress to put pressure on the World Bank to stop funding the project. In March 1993, the Bank stopped funding the SSP. Friends of the Earth, an environmental NGO based in Japan convinced the Japanese Government in stopping the

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[22] Reported by PUCL, 1990, Cited in Amita Baviskar, *In the Belly of the River*, OUP, Delhi, 1995, p.209.
[23] Ibid., p. 210.

aid to the SSP. Recognition of the movements activities fetched it the Right Livelihood Award in Sweden in 1991 and the Goldman award in US in May 1992.

The Supreme Court by an order dated 18th February 1999 allowed construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam to 85 metres (from the 80.3 metres height previously constructed) excluding hums.[24] The Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award (NWDTA) required rehabilitation to be provided for the people who are affected by the new height of the dam. However in violation of the NWDTA, no rehabilitation was provided to the affected people. Consequently the tribal villages of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat were likely to be devastated as the water behind the Sardar Sarovar Dam rose to 88 metres during the monsoons. A few thousand houses and farms in about 50-60 villages are likely to be submerged. The 'Update' by the Narmada Bachao Andolan states "submerging in the rising waters will be the land, water and forest resources of the valley (Jal, Jungle, Jamin), the God and Spirits (Devedani), the Schools run in the valley by the Andolan (Jeevanshalas) along with farms and houses on which the very survival of the adivasis depends." The entire valley thus took part in the Narmada Satyagraha which began in Domkhedi village in Maharashtra and Jalsindhi village in Madhya Pradesh on the 20th of June, 1999. The Satyagraha had participants from Manibeli to Bhadal in Maharashtra, and Jalsindhi to Kakarana in Madhya Pradesh. The Narmada Satyagraha also include fast and maun (silence) by the Samarpit dal from July 4th to July 12th, 1999. The Narmada Stayagraha had participation of adivasis and peasants

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[24] Update, NBA, June 26, 1999.

from the valley. Further people's organizations and students from all over the country lived on the bank of Narmada and pledged, "We will not leave our homes and land for an ill-conceived project". Supporters from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Karnataka, West Bengal and Rajasthan participated in the Satyagraha which was followed by padayatra in the villages to be affected by submergence. The people decided to stay put in their houses when the submergence came. The Narmada Control Authority (NCA) meanwhile caused gross violations as they did not check, or evaluate the information regarding the availability of land or the readiness for resettlement claimed by the states. As a result the people are rendered homeless and without any shelter or livelihood.

The movement in the Narmada valley has stemmed from certain discreet interests on part of the contesting parties. The primary issue in the movement have been the displacement of over a million people. The people stand to lose their land, homes and their livlihood. While a small number of people may be given land elsewhere, the people find the dams causing a direct destruction to their existence. The government has automatically assumed all the people to be agriculturists which is not the case. People are working in different sectors in an economy which is essentially river-based in character. The negation of the economy would thereby land the people without a means of survival.

The submergence will also considerably affect the social relations of the local people. Vasudha Dhagamwar reflecting on the movement writes in her experiences with the people that there is considerable concern among

the people, who are at least aware of the displacement, especially women.[25] She writes that women were more openly concerned with displacement as far as their social relations were concerned. While the left bank of the river was primarily Maharashtra, the right bank fell divided between the states Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. The Bhils, residing in the area, unconcerned about the state-wise boundaries entered into marriage relations across all the three states. The boundaries caused by the dam has assumed critical importance in the life of these people. Women have been bothered as to whether they would ever meet their daughter married across the river.

Another issue which is fundamental to the movement is the question of ecological sustainability. Submergence in the area will follow the deforestation of the entire area. In the NVP area of Madhya Pradesh around 41,000 hectares of forests will be cut. The forests are not only hosts to wildlife and vegetation. The normal natural host of certain diseases are several species of forest animals like sloths, anteaters, rats between which parasites and sandflies circulate. Disturbance of forests lead these disease causing insects and virus to find a new host in man. For example, Scrub Typhus in Malaysia is propagated in the imporate grass which appears after the clearing of tropical forests. Also the disturbance in ecology will have impact on the development of biomass in the region. The impact occurs on both wildlife and vegetation. Loss of forests will lead to reduction in native plants, species diversity, community stability, native animals. Altered ecology of the impounded water and changed stream characteristics would be indicated by the changes in the temperature of water, change (reduction) in

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[25] Vasudha Dhagamwar, "Reflections on The Narmada Movement", *Seminar* 413, January, 1994, p. 91.

the oxygen content and changes in the nutrient and organic content of the stream water. Such impacts will have a drastic effect on species composition due to effective changes in their ecology and natural habitat.[26]

The **participants of the movements** are categorised as follows:

1. The local people of the Narmada valley including peasants and tribals who are immediately threatened by displacement following submergence of their land.

2. NGOs like Arch Vahini and the Rajpipla Social Service Society in Gujarat and the Narmada Bachao Andolan in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. These voluntary agencies organised the people in their movement against the Narmada Valley Development Authority (NVDA) and the governments of the three respective states.

3. Workers Unions (Shramik Sangaths) which had a considerable mass base helped the voluntary organizations in channelizing the movement.

4. Leaders like Medha Patkar, Baba Amte, the renowned social worker, formed a leadership to whom the people devoted complete allegiance.

5. Environmentalists from all over India expressed their solidarity for the movement. In July 1988, environmental activists from different parts of India came together to forge a common policy on the dams.

6. Across India, city-based NGOs, rural-based mass organizations contributed both directly (by sending their representatives) and indirectly (by disseminating information about the movement in the media, writing

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[26] R.K.Ojha, "Environmental Impact of Narmada Valley", *Folklore*, June 1989.

newsletters, making films, lobbying and collecting funds for the movement), thereby broadening the canvas of the movement as a whole.

7. The movement gained the support of celebrities ranging from film stars to Supreme Court Justices. Arundhati Roy, the celebrity-writer of the book 'The God of Small Things' donated the entire money from the Booker prize to the Andolan. Intellectuals, scientists, and prominent persons from all walks of life in India went beyond their creative contributions in supporting the movement in the valley.

Methods of Activism:

1. Demonstrations and rallies were organised on a very large scale from time to time.

2. The activists resorted to peacefully stopping the work at the project site.

3. Delegations of the tribals and the peasants presented petitions to the good offices of the President and the Prime Minister in New Delhi.

4. Padayatras or foot marches were held by people, singing and chanting slogans demonstrating non-violent satyagraha.

5. Hunger strikes by the leaders and the activists sought to pressurise the government into action in the valley.

6. The only form of violence that manifested itself among the activists was the pulling out of submergence markers placed by the surveyors, which were subsequently sent to the state capital. Protesters in large numbers courted arrest and committed themselves to the "andolan" even if that called for personal sacrifices. The village activists decided against moving out from their land even if it called for "jal samadhi"

7. The Hindus in the valley carried out "puja" (devotional offering) to the Narmada as the river symbolised the goddess – provider, a symbol of bounty and life. In Nimar, women bathe in the river and offer coconuts to her on the day of the new moon. During the rains the villagers of Koteshwar assemble to recite the epic Narmada Puran over seven days and seven nights.

8. Activists embarked on bicycle rallies singing "andolan" songs, many of which were bhajans in praise of the river. Puppet shows were also organised on the basic theme of the movement. Leaflets and newsletters regularly spread the struggle of the people.

Demands of the Movement :

The movement in the Narmada valley centered around the question of displacement. While ecological imbalances were an important reason for the protests, the opposition to the dams stemmed from very pertinent questions regarding livelihood, property and survival. In the beginning the Arch Vahini was more opposed to the dam in distinction to the other NGO, Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA). The later began the movement with a constructive approach towards rehabilitation. However with the genesis of the movement, the experiences of NBA with the governments of the two states, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, convinced them that the dam oustees would be in a miserable situation if the dam was allowed to be constructed. Consequently, Medha Patkar, vehemently opposed the SSP as did the NBA. The Arch Vahini however has held the view that the Gujarat government would fulfill the promises of land compensation and that reforestation can help make up for the lost forests. The NBA however does

not agree with such a stand. The demand of the NBA is a complete stop to all dam-building activities.

CHAPTER – II

KNOWLEDGE

The environmental movements register a strong and passionate protest against the state-efforts for development and progress at the cost of the destruction of traditional knowledge and the traditional modes of existence. The government's policy for modernization reflects a policy of vivisection where the rural peasants, tribals and poor fisherfolk are put on the alter for sacrifice which is justified for the greater good of the community.[1] Thus the poor peasants and tribals are expected to bear the pain of both loss of livelihood and displacement, as the homes of the rich are lit by electricity or children of elites use the sports goods at the expense of destruction of natural forests. Destruction of the natural resources which cause shifts in the ecology cause violence to the social and existential reality of the peasant, tribal and fisherfolk. The dominating knowledge of science, technology, and capitalism armed by the state and bureaucracy seeks to bulldoze the culture and lifestyle of these people without any consideration to their traditions which lie intermingled with nature. The environmental movements thus reflect the struggle of traditional knowledge against a wide variety of forces. Traditional knowledge contests the modern knowledge which is a devil with several faces, including destructive ecology, capitalism and the developmental state.

(In this chapter I treat knowledge at two levels. Firstly, I deal with the constitution of traditional knowledge of the traditional people and how the knowledge of these people participating in the protests leads them to identify themselves with nature. This also brings along with it their

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[1] For details on vivisection see, Shiv Visvanathan, *A Carnival for Science*, O.U.P., Delhi, 1997. "Vivisection is the infliction of pain for experimental purposes of understanding, and control, where pain and suffering are justified in the pursuit of scientific knowledge as an absolute value". (Visvanathan : 1997 : 24).

perception of nature. For the forest peasants, tribals and the fisherfolk nature is constituted at two levels, firstly nature as a part of them and secondly, as nature belonging to them, where upon nature is understood as common property) It is on the basis of such a knowledge and understanding that the institutions like capitalism and the state are fought against and the issue of sustainable resource utilization is generated, which gives the participants the strength in their argument. Environmental movements are reflective of the contestation of the people against modern knowledge of scientific, technological development along the lines of the west, and the kind of response the latter generates when applied without consideration upon a people's culture and way of life.

Traditional People & Traditional Knowledge

Broadly, the participants in each of the movements may be clearly distinguished into two groups. These are the affected group, who are directly hit by the shifts in the environment, and the supportive group, who have helped organise and channelise the movement. The affected group in each of these cases involve people who are marginalised, who live a life embedded in nature and derive their sustenance from the natural resources. They include, the women who have to work extra hours collecting fuel and water, the tribal people who suffer have lost access to forest use, the fisher folk who are losing their access to the sea, their livelihood, with the advent of the commercial trawlers, the peasants and tribals of Narmada who are at the risk of the land to which they belong. These people have been referred variously by categories such as ecosystem people, and ecological refugees.[2]

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[2] Madhav Gadgil & Ramachandra Guha, *Ecology & Equity*, Penguin, Delhi, 1995

Their society is a biomass society, where these poor people scratch the earth and depend on rains for their food, gather wood or dung for fuel, build their huts themselves with bamboo or stick and depend on the natural environment of their habitat for meeting their material needs.[3] Raymond Desmann calls such people the ecosystem people. However, the dependence of the ecosystem people on their natural habitat is not limited to their basic material needs of livelihood. The ecosystem people whether of the Garhwal Himalayas, or the Narmada Valley or the Kerala coast depend for every moment of their lives on their natural environment. Their dependence is as much material as cultural and social. It is their survival which is by character ecological. It is the embeddedness of these peoples total lives with the natural resources that provides them the strength to carry on the movement. To suggest that the movements are the result of merely organisational capacities of outside agencies, NGOS and leaders and their environmental ethics is to be blind to the emotion and excitement which each of these movements have generated. Such tremendous display of strength, from people untaught in ecological studies, and for whom every single day is lived laboriously suggests the deep ecological knowledge of the ecosystem people. It is these ecosystem people who are potential ecological refugees, who are hit the most hard by depletion of the natural resources, with a life that is displaced, and disjunct from nature.

The ecological knowledge of the ecosystem people derive from their social situation and environment. Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge

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[3] Pravin Sheth, *Environmentalism*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1997, p. 215.

very well explain this. Ecological knowledge may be understood sociologically as partially being determined by the social configuration in which it emerges. Further, the content and form of knowledge can be analysed in relation to its social context. This sociological knowledge has to reflect on its own knowledge as relative to the context of its production.

It is this ecological knowledge which led the Bishnois, as a sect to take up the cause of the protection of the trees, and Amrita Devi, to sacrifice her life, together with those of her daughters in protecting the trees from the Maharaja of Jodhpur's axemen, a story which inspired many in the Chipko movement. The ecosystem people are indigenous communities who live a life of self-reliance, in harmony with nature.[4] The lives of these people are organically tied to the earth, from which they derive their knowledge and experience of sustainable practices. This knowledge passed on from one generation to another however is a mode of knowledge that has a social basis. Mannheim wrote, " in an inherited situation with patterns of thought which are appropriate to this situation and [she] attempt, to elaborate further the inherited modes of response or to substitute others for them in order to deal more adequately with the new challenge, which have arisen out of the shift and change in [her] situation.[5] Thus the attitude and response to nature, is a product of the situation, an untaught quality among the ecosystem people, and thus, in their response to environmental crisis which hurts them; their response has a certain similarity, in terms of emotions, anger and desperation, which emanate from a common grievance which relate not merely to material losses but goes much beyond it.

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[4] Ibid, p. 281.
[5] Karl Mannheim *Ideology and Utopia*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1936, p. 3.

Thus it is the social character of knowledge which has a important role in inspiring participation of the ecosystem people. Following Mannheim, one can further conclude that the knowledge is social in two ways, firstly, it is present in the society into which the individual is socialized and secondly, it is also a resource shared by members of the society.[6] While the inherited knowledge is not the full content of it, there is scope for individual ideas or outside influence. Nevertheless, a style or pattern of thought is established. This style is present in the categories of meaning used for perception of the world whether it is a peasant in the Garhwal hills, or the Narmada Valley or fisherfolk in Kerala he/she is clear with regard to the meanings of nature. They know what nature, whether it is the forest / the river or the sea, means to them in its entirety.

The ecosystem person then very comfortably fits into Mannheim's category of the social being. Relating knowledge to social action, Mannheim writes, "Men living in groups do not merely coexist physically as discrete individuals. They do not confront the objects of the world from the abstract levels of a contemplating mind as such , nor do they do so exclusively as solitary beings. On the contrary they act with and against one another in diversely organized groups, and while doing so they think with and against one another. These persons, bound together into groups, strive in accordance with the character and position of the groups to which they

[6] Tim Dant, Knowledge, *Ideology & Discourse, A Sociological Perspective* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1991, p. 18.

belong to change the surrounding world of nature and society or attempt to maintain it in a given condition.[7]

According to Mannheim, the social situation is based on collective action and a collective will to act in a particular manner. The group will establishes the trend of thought for the members of the group, one which is significantly dominating. Mannheim's concept of the social being refers to a collectivity of individuals living in a group from which they inherit a language of interpreting the world. While this conception concentrates on the individual's experience in common with the social group, the language and the ideas, the presupposition which the group retains are functional to the everyday activities of its members. This language is passed on from member to member without much conscious reflection. "The functionality of the presupposition to the collective experience explains their durability", and the knowledge passes on from member to member unquestioned.[8] From an unpublished essay by Mannheim on the sociology of culture, Frisby quotes,

"A large part of their total experiences are shared with other individuals. These experiences which are, as it were, at hand and which are the experiences of individuals within the same society and community must, however be structurally related to one another in the same way as in the case of the strands of experience within an individual stream of experience."[9]

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[7] Karl Mannheim *Ideology and Utopia*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1936, p. 3.

[8] Tim Dant, Knowledge, *Ideology & Discourse, A Sociological Perspective* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1991, p. 20.

[9] Mannheim, 1922, quoted in Frisby 1983, Pg. 121, located in Tim Dant, *Knowledge Ideology and Discourse, A Sociological Perspective* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1991, p. 21.

Thus for Mannheim the individuals acceptance of the presuppositions are not judgmental in character, rather their functionality for the group renders them significant. The near total dependence of these poor rural people on local natural resources thus provides for their knowledge which is particularly concerned with the maintenance of these resources. The meaning of the resources and their maintenance is substantially a group-knowledge for these indigenous communities.

The ecosystem people for centuries have depended on the natural resources from a limited resource catchment to provide them with manifold services.[10] Consequently their knowledge of their natural environment which are their basic resources is not merely skin-deep. These people know of various uses for their natural resources, be they soil, rocks, plant, or animals. The ecosystem people have been interacting with nature for a very longtime. Their inputs in terms of extracting services from nature have not been large, owing primarily to the restricted access they have been allowed to their resources for a long time. The practices of these people in working with nature have thus been mounded so that the interaction is very close. The community exists, on the basis of the shared knowledge which enable these people not only to experience the world but also to act on it.

The existential determination of the knowledge of the ecosystem people may be so explained that knowledge, partially is determined by the experience of these people in nature. The experience which in so far as it is

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[10] Madhav Gadgil & Ramachandra Guha *Ecology & Equity* Penquin, Delhi, 1995, p. 141.

determinative of knowledge is the experience of not one person, but every member of the group. Determinative of their day to day existence this knowledge constitutes the sociality of the group of which the knowing subject is the member. These people exist together, their commonality in existence is determined by a set of shared meanings available to any individual member. The sociality of knowledge clearly explains this that the knowledge is not the product of thought of any single individual, but determined by the specific social and historical existence of the individual.

Mannheim while grounding knowledge on a concrete social basis left certain relative autonomy for the cognitive processes of the individual. This autonomy which Mannheim explained theoretically explains the fact that certain of these people are lured by the prospects of a easier and lucrative deal in business and this has led men in Dungri-Paintoli to sell their oak forests to horticulture department who wanted to open a potato farm. However opposition from women led to a conflict between the men and women in the area and finally the project was scrapped. Similarly, in Kerala certain fisher folk, have become wage labourers for big trawlers. Ecological knowledge in such cases have failed in the face of individual autonomy, for easier money and regular incomes.

Significant among the participants of the movements have been women, who have taken a strong initiative in each of these movements. In the Chipko movement, women played a decisive role at Reni, though it was because their menfolk were away when the axemen came. However in the Bhyundar valley of Chamoli district, near the famous valley of flowers, in

January 1978, women prevented the felling of trees to meet the fuel need of the quarter-million pilgrims who annually visit the Badrinath Temple. Again women had successfully stopped poaching from the Gopeshwar community forest in 1975, following which they set up their own co-operative society, which became an increasing source of strength for the Chipko movement. In 1977 it was Bachni Devi of Advani who created the ecological slogan of the Chipko movement. "What do the forests bear? Soil, water and pure air." In the Narmada valley, women of Nimar, have come out to the streets, have participated in demonstrations in front of Project offices, raised slogans, challenging the police and taunting bureaucrats and politicians. In the Kerala coast as well women have shown initiatives in forming their unions and organizing protest movements.

The role of women in these movements have been understood as the agony of the women.[11] The depletion of natural resources have hit the womenfolk hard. In case of the Chipko movements, for example, due to the washing away of the fertile soil, the men folk were compelled to leave their families and wander for employment to distant regions. Consequently women have been burdened with all the household responsibilities as well as farming. Women as a result have been forced to lead a life which has been not only more difficult physically, like walking long distances for collecting firewood, water, and so on, but also a lonelier life in the absence of their menfolk. In the Narmada Valley, the peasant women, stand to lose not only their land, society and life due to submergence but also their social relations stand at a risk. With marriage - relations taking place between

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[11] Sunderlal Bahuguna, *Chipko*, Chipko Information Centre, Silyara, 1980, p. 5.

peasants on both sides of the river, the dam might estrange the daughters from their family for ever. The participation of women however stem from not merely economic or social causes. Women have been found to relate themselves intimately to nature. Their ecological knowledge is reflected in the words of Itwari Devi, the village elder who guided the Chipko most in Sinsyaru Khala. According to Itwari Devi, "Shakti (strength comes to us from these forests and grass lands; we watch them grow, year in and year out through their internal Shakti, and we derive out strength from it. We watch our streams renew themselves and we drink their dear and sparkling water - that gives us Shakti. We drink fresh milk, we eat ghee, we eat food from our own fields - all this gives us not just nutrition for the body, but a moral strength, that we are our own masters, we control and produce our own wealth. That is why `primitive', `backward' women who do not buy their needs from the market but produce them themselves are leading Chipko. Our power is nature's power, our Shakti comes from Prakriti. Our power against the contractor comes from these inner sources, and is strengthened by his trying to oppress and bully us with his false power of money and muscle. We have offered ourselves even at the cost of our lives,....to challenge and oppose the power that the government represents.[12]

Such knowledge develops out of co-existence, when these community of women share similar difficulties and as a result rise up to defend their lives.

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[12] Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive* – Kali for Women, Delhi, 1988, Pg. 209.

Vandana Shiva has identified Prakriti as nature with the feminine principle. `Prakriti' is a popular category through which women in rural India relate to nature. Nature and the feminine are identified by the commonness of producing life and providing sustenance. Shiva finds nature as Prakrit being inherently active, a powerful force in the dialectic of creation, renewal and sustenance of all life. The creative impulse of Prakriti leads to the creation of the diversity of natural forms of mountains, trees, rivers, animals, human beings, and many more. The interrelation of the created world and the creative force, is the similarity which Shiva, likens to that between women and nature.

Feminist theories have drawn several relationships between women and nature, as contributing to their ecological knowledge. Maria Mies calls women's work in producing sustenance, the production of life, and views women's relationship to nature as a truly productive relationship. She justifies this on the ground that women not only collected and consumed what grew in nature but they made things grow.' Mies is of the view that the partnership of women and nature has stemmed from such as organic process of growth.[13] Mies outlines this special relationship in the following terms:- (a) Women's interaction with nature, both their own and the external environment was a reciprocal process. Mies identifies the productivity of nature with the productive capacities of female bodies. (b) Women co-operate in the development and growth of their own bodies and nature/earth. (c) As producers of new life, women were the first subsistence

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[13] Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a world Scale*, Zed Books, London 1986. Pg. 16, 17, 55.

producers and inventors of the first productive economy, thereby initiating social production as well as creation of social relations.

However, identified, ecological knowledge of the men and women of these indigenous communities contribute immensely in the success of the organisation of the environmental movements in India. The knowledge and practical wisdom of these ecosystem people provide considerable motivation for care, sustainable use for the natural resources. This view is gaining increasing recognition that over centuries, having lived sustainably with nature, adivasis have acquired a deep knowledge and understanding of the ecological processes so that they become ideal natural resource managers (Shiva and Bandyopadhyay 1990 : 77). Further that cultural beliefs and practices of indigenous communities constitute a critique of ecologically destructive development is gradually being accepted as providing an alternative vision of a sustainable human-nature relationship. Scholars of social movements have found rural women and indigenous people to retain the Aranya Sanskriti [forest culture]. Writing of the indigenous people, Taylor [1990] wrote- " [T]heirs is an ecological wisdom that is intricately women into the very fabric of their culture; for the most part it is not an articulated, conscious body of knowledge'.... [T]heir entire way of life expresses an ecological wisdom that enables them to take care of their forest environment." [14] This knowledge, which the indigenous people retain is an important factor in the participation of these people in each of the environmental movements. This knowledge is however organized and

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[14] Taylor (1990), Cited in, Amita Baviskar, *In the Belly of the River*, OUP, Delhi, 1995.

expressed and finally shaped by intellectuals and agencies into what we know as environmental movement.

Traditional Knowledge & Ecological Sustainability

The knowledge of the traditional communities determine the basic issues involved in the environmental movements. Environmentalism, as perceived from the three environmental movements, is not simply concerned with nature per se, but with the sustainable use of nature. Low intensity utilization of nature to meet the basic needs is considered ecologically sustainable because it does not completely exhaust the capacities of the natural resources. The resource utilisation of nature by the traditional communities maintains its regenerative capacities. As a result the struggles of the traditional communities for retaining control over natural resources for subsistence become a key issue of contention in each of the environmental movements.)

The 1970 flood in the Alakananda valley which caused considerable damage to the local people, washing away 6 metal bridges, 10 kms of motor roads, 24 buses, 366 houses and 500 acres of standing paddy crops was an immediate cause to the Chipko movement. Folksense easily correlated increasing erosivity and floods and mass scale telling of trees commercial felling of trees threatened the ecological stability of the region, by not only increasing the potentiality of floods and landslides but also the forest which provided fuel and fodder for the traditional communities vanished rapidly. The concern for ecological sustainability emerges very clearly from a narrative by Bahuguna. He writes that " When Dharmendra, a ten-year old

schoolboy of village Silyara was asked why he had gone to Amarshar forest to cling to a tree, he promptly replied that he did so because last year all their farms were washed away due to a landslide and his widowed mother had-wept bitterly that she had no other means of livelihood to support their 3 children, and that he felt that if trees of other villages too are felled, landslides could come and the farms would be destroyed and other mothers would also suffer like his mother-that was the reason he was taking part in the movement in order to wipe the tears of other mothers."

The question of ecological sustainability emerges again very prominently in the fisherfolk's movement in Kerala. Overfishing caused by trawling, together with indiscriminate and non-selective fishing of whole shoals of pelagic fishes, i.e., purse seining, led to serious resource depletion. In the post 1974-76 period, overall catches of fish declined very sharply. Oil sardines and mackerals, which were once the prime catches, fell to very low levels. Total fish production overall fell sharply. The ecological crisis which emerged with the question of ecological sustainability was intricately woven with the question of control of the natural resources by traditional community. Further ecological sustainability took on a social dimension with the survival of people dependent on it as a livelihood was in jeopardy. In cases of the fisherfolk's movement resource depletion affected the traditional fishing community in several ways. First of all, overfishing left less fish for the masses. In Kerala, fish was the poor person's source of protein in food. Overfishing, commercial export-oriented fishing left less and less fish for domestic consumption. Availability and quality of the fishes deteriorate as well. Resource depletion affected the female artisanal skills

such as fish salting and drying, which gradually began to disappear. Head-load vending which was a major occupation also began to disappear. For the traditional fishing community fishing provided the mainstay of their socio-economic life. It was rather self-sufficient with the involvement of different sections of the community in catching, drying, salting, i.e., processing of the fishes. Thus the advent of capitalist enterprises in the form of big trawlers and purse seiners, ecological sustainability was severely destroyed which had not been the case so long as the use and management of the natural resources remained in the hands of the traditional communities.

Thus, clearly, the advent of capitalist ventures in the forests of Garhwal or the Narmada valley or the Kerala coast has deeply affected the ecological stability of the regions. Traditional knowledge had prevented the same. The affected ecosystem people thereby directed their movements into a language of rights over common resources. The struggle thus may be understood to be the movement of the people over the right they have over the resources they consider their own. The first question of rights to resources relates directly to the perception of nature as common property for the people who live in nature. This quality then also involves a critique, whereby it forms the accord question which realities to the utilisation of common properly as a commodity by outside agencies. These two important questions are understood separately here.

Knowledge of Natural Resources as Common Property

Historically the natural resources in India have been treated as common property by the rural communities. Chatrapati Singh of the India Law Institute writes,

"It is evident that till the end of the last century and in all historical periods before that, at least 80 percent of India's natural resources were common property, with only 20 percent being privately utilised... This extensive common property has provided the resources base for a non-cash non-market economy. A whole range of necessary resources has been freely available to the people. Thus commonly available wood, shrubs and cowdung have been utilised for cooking and heating; and bamboo and patru leaves for housing, wild grass and shrubs as animal fodder, and a variety of fruits and vegetables as food.[15]

Thus the free commons which have been treated by the traditional communities as common property, have provided them their survival base, to which they had unrestricted accessibility. Whether forests or rivers or the seas, the natural resources have been treated as common property by the communities. As a result they have often protested at the contravention of their traditional rights by the introduction of forest management. Reservation of common began with the reservation of the forest through the notification of the Forest Act, 1878 by the colonial British government.

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[15] Chatrapati Singh, *Common Property and Common Poverty*, Oxford Publishing House, Delhi, 1982, Pg. 2, cited in Shiva, "Staying Alive", Kali for Women, Delhi, 1988, p 83.

Protection of forests, alternatively meant the exclusion of the villagers' access to the forests as a common resource.

The consideration of natural resources as common property by the rural communities is well illustrated by the fact that when the charcoal required for smelting iron in the mines of Kumaon was taken from the forests lying within the village boundaries, villagers prevented cutting of tree without the payment of malikhana.[16] Following the Forest Act, the deputy commissioner (DC) of Garhwal reported, 'forest administration consists for most part in a running fight with the villagers'.[17] Thus the protest against being denied rights to what they considered to be the common property by the rural communities has quite a history. The forest settlement officer of British Garhwal commented, 'The notion obstinately persists in the minds of all, from highest to the lowest, that Government is taking away their forests from them and is robbing them of their own property. The nation seems to have grown up from the complete lack of restriction or control over the use by the people of waste land and forest during the first 80 years after the British occupation. The oldest inhabitant therefore (and he naturally is regarded as the greatest authority), is the most assured of the antiquity of the people's right to uncontrolled resource use of the forest; and to a rural community there appears no difference between uncontrolled use and proprietary right. Subsequent regulations, and these regulations are all

[16] J.O.B. Beckett, 'Iron and Copper Mines in Kumaon Division', report of 31st January 1850, in Selection Vol. II, p. 31-8. Cited in Ramachandra Guha *Unquiet Woods* OUP, Delhi, 1992, p. 105.
[17] 'Note on forest administration for my successor', by McNair, DC, Garhwal, February 1907 in FD file 11/1908, UPSA, Cited in Ramachandra Guha, *Unquiet Woods*, OUP, Delhi, 1992, p. 105.

very recent, only appear to them as a gradual encroachment on their rights, culminating now in a final act of confiscation..."[18]

Not just the forests but, the fishery was deemed as community property as well, intended for all, in Kerala. A significant feature of small-scale fishing communities have been the existence of numerous community-evolved and sanctioned mechanisms which take care of the fact that the natural resource, livelihood opportunities, and revenues from common property fishery are widely spread across the whole community.[19] Significant and reflective of the fisheries being treated as common property is the Karanila system of fishing in Kerala. Practiced in Kerala for around fifty years Karanila, literally means 'shore-status' - a privilege which is granted to anybody who demonstrates interest in associating with a fishing unit by being present on the coast when the unit is ready for the sea. Apart for the first occasion, the person is under no compulsion for the person to go to the sea for fishing. The Karanila system is an example of an income - spreading mechanism which operates within the context of common property resource, combining open access conditions together with communitarian systems of sharing and caring. Modernisation of the fisheries in the state have led to the breakdown of community institutions, threatening the Karanila system, for example, which became an integral part of the production relations, intricately bound to the social relationship of the traditional fishing communities, acquiring the status of an unquestioned social custom.

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[18] J.C. Nelson, "Forest Settlement Report of the Garhwal Distt", (Lucknow, 1916), p. 10 – 11. Cited in Ramachandra Guha, *Unquiet Woods*, 1992 p. 106.

[19] John Kurien & A.J. Vijayan, "Income Spreading Mechanism in Common Property Resources : Karanila System in Kerala's Fishery", *EPW*, July 15, 1995.

The question of forest rights, and in the larger context of right to common resources directly emerge as the communities' concept of property and ownership. These concepts of property exist in a strong historical justification of the popular belief that all forests within village boundaries were the property of the villagers.' [20] However the notion of property, here in these cases, may be understood as a thing one makes ones' own. One appropriates the thing thereby property and property is understood as being constitutive for man.[21] True property include others, is oriented to others and is a possibility only in a social context.[22] The human form of property operates in a process of exchange where cohere men relate to each other as men, thereby mutually complementing each other in the process. Colletti explains the process of exchange of human activities in the course of production and human products as being equal to the species-activity and species-spirit whose real, conscious authentic existence consists in social activity and social enjoyment.[23] The reciprocal complementarity and exchange observed in such cases of human activity may be understood as an unalienated form of social labour. The unalienatedness of labour, here stems from the unfragmentedness of the individuals from the community. the strong bonds between the individual and the community derives from the firm social situatedness of the individual.

[20] T.D. Gairola, *Selected Revenue Decisions of Kumaun*, Allahabad 1936 p. 211, Cited in Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods*, OUP, Delhi , 1989.

[21] Karl, Lovith, "Man's self-alienation in the early writing of Marx", *Social Research*, July, No. 2, 1954, p. 219.

[22] Ravinder Kaur, "Some Aspects of Marx's Approach to the Study of Society in Light of His Early Writings", Dept. of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, 1980, p. 45.

[23] Lucio Colleti, (ed.), *Karl Marx : Early Writings*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1975, p. 265.

Karl Marx interrelates the discussion of labour, property and division of labour. In The German Ideology, Marx wrote,' the various stages of development in the division of labour are just so many different forms of property lie, the existing stage in the division of labour determines also the relation of individuals to one another with reference to the material instrument and the product of labour.[24] The relationship of the traditional communities to the natural resources may be explained as "the natural unity of labour with its material prerequisites." The individual in such cases understands himself to be the owner or proprietor of the resources, in as much as such similar relationship exist between one individual and the rest.[25] The other community members are the co-owners..

In Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations, Marx writes, 'The earth is the great laboratory, the arsenal which provides both the means and the materials of labour, and also the location, the basic of the community. Men's relation to it is naive : they regard themselves as its communal proprietors, and as those of the community which produces and reproduces itself by living labour. Only in so far as the individual is a member - in the literal and figurative sense - of such a community, does he regard himself as an owner or possessor.'[26] The ownership of the inorganic nature, thus establishes itself from "the mediation by means of a grant (Ablassen) from the total unity to the individual through the intermediary of the particular community."[27] Marx explains that the individual in the tribal communities of the communal

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[24] Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, The German Ideology, (Student's Edition), Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1974, p. 95.
[25] Karl Marx, The Pre Capitalist Economic Formation, 1964, Lawrence and Wishart, London, p. 69
26 Ibid p. 69.
[27] Ibid p. 69.

mode of production, reproduces himself in certain definite relationships to his community (Formen pp. 80-81) whereby the individual has an objective mode of existence in the ownership of the earth.[28] "The individual simply regards the objective conditions of labour as has own, as the inorganic nature of his subjectivity, which realises itself through him. The chief objective condition of labour itself appears not as the product of labour, but occurs as nature. On the one hand we have the living individual, on the other the earth, as the objective condition of his reproduction."[29]

Common property in natural resources, may be understood in terms of the category of `Property-as lived experience', explained by Rita Brara in her paper, `Grazing Lands : Negotiating Custom and Law, where investigating the `commonness' of grazing resources and the rules that govern inclusion and exclusion in Lachchmangarh tehsil of Rajasthan, Brara differentiates between `property as lived experience' and `property as legally constituted.' Brara finds that the rights in common are a response to the imperative of ecologically sound animal and crop husbandry"[30]

In as much as the discourse of the environmental movements' articulate in a language of rights over common recourses and property, the protests may be read as being directed against the changes brought about by the intrusion of capitalism in the simple rural economies and the policies of the developmental state in India.

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[28] Ravinder Kaur, "Some Aspects of Marx's Approach to the Study of Society in Light of His Early Writings", Dept. of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, 1980, p. 51.
[29] Karl Marx, The Pre Capitalist Economic Formations, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1964, p. 81.
[30] Subir Sinha and Ronald Herring, "Common Property Collective Action and Ecology". EPW, July 3 – 10, 1993.

Knowledge Against Capitalist Changes.

The loss of rights on common property by the traditional communities brings into clear view the protests as being directed against the change brought about by forces outside the communities. The change in the traditional situatedness of these people may be attributed to the inroads made by capitalism, bringing with it characteristically a money-order, commodification of the natural resources, over all a big-time commercial orientation to the otherwise self-contained people.

The utilisation of the natural resources by the tribals, peasants and fisherfolk have been in the main for the purpose of sustenance, one which was considerate about ecological sustainability. The natural resources were not valued as commodities, utilisable for the production of exchange values. Infact for the traditional communities the natural resources did not contribute to the creation of value at all, although they had use-values, in that the resources were used for the communities for drawing their daily needs and survival. "Use values become a reality only by use or consumption," in which they formed the wealth of all societies.[31] Marx writes that a thing can be a use value, without having value. This is the case whenever its utility to man is not due to labour. Such as air, virgin soil, natural meadows. A thing can be useful, and the product of human labour, without being a commodity. Whoever directly satisfies his wants with the produce of his own labour, creates, indeed, use values but not commodities.

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[31] Karl Marx *Capital* Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1986, p. 44.

In order to produce the latter, he must not only produce use - values, but use-values for others, social use-values. [32]

The transition from the natural resources being utilised for the creation of use-values to the creation of exchange values took different forms in the different regions. In the Garhwal hills of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh the traditional communities were faced with the rapid expansion of forest industries. Felling of oak forests and their replacement by planting conifers was envisaged. Resin-tapping was another of the new commercial ventures into these forests. Rising commercial and industrial demand intensified commercial forest operations. Sale of chirwood got a fillip as laboratory research in the Forest Research Institute (FRI) showed that chir waste could be utilized for making paper. Further research at FRI revealed that ash and hornbeam could be used to manufacture sports goods, and the Symonds Company, Allahabad gained access to the high level broad-leaved forests. [33] The state enabled furthering of commercial forestry by simultaneously entailing further restriction on village use. The government provided extensive powers to the forest department in the management of forest panchayats. Just as local use was restricted and placed under the authority of the forest department, the government also had large share holdings in the forest - based industries. The government played the role of a commercial administrator, which had joined hands with business enterprises. Small units were discriminated against by the government which refused to do away with the contractor system. Forest labour co-operatives

[32] Ibid. p. 48.

33 Agarwala, 'Kedarnath, WP' Pg. 78 – 9. Cited in Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods*, OUP, Delhi, 1992, p. 141.

(FLCS) started at the initiative of Sarvodaya workers, in different parts of Garhwal and Kumaon were not given forests blocks at any concessional rates, despite pleas for the same. The forest department continued to be a revenue generating machinery for the government of Uttar Pradesh; this is reflected from the increase in forest revenue from the hill region which between 1967-8 and 1978-9 increased from Rs 962 lakhs to Rs 2020 lakhs.[34]

In the Narmada Valley, on the other hand, the purpose of state expenditure has been to promote economic growth in the region. The massive scheme to harness the waters of the Narmada, have been specifically for the purpose of irrigation, power generation and drinking. The Narmada Valley Project has been yet another attempt of the government of independent India to achieve industrial development and growth. the project of national development in this region has been based on two interrelated reasons, points out Amita Baviskar. The first is the unchecked use of the earth's natural resources and together with it the transformation of people, often against their will, into a dispossessed working class. The Narmada Valley project has been powerfully justified by the acute need of water for people in the Kutch and Saurashtra region, by the state. The Sardar Sarovar Dam has projected benefits especially irrigation and power generation. However despite official protests, little evidence is available to justify any serious exercise undertaken to plan water supply from NVP to these regions, already remarked upon by the Independent Review, 1992 and restated by the Five Member Group in

34   U.P. Forest Statistics 1978-9 (Lucknow, n.d.) Cited in Ramachandra Guha *The Unquiet Woods*, OUP, Delhi, 1992, p. 143.

1995.[35] In as much as the SSP is justified as the lifeline of Gujarat State, Kutch & Saurashtra being located at the tail-end of the dam's catchment area are not likely to derive any benefit from the dam. According to the Chairman of the Narmada Planning group, Y. K. Alagh, water could conceivably reach these areas only around 2021 and that too by the most optimistic projections.[36] The World Bank Review Mission Report, 1992 puts this date as being around 2020-5 when water could possibly reach Saurashtra and Kutch region. With several water starved regions in the three states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the government motives become clear with the expected coming up of a new industrial corridor around the main Narmada Canal, the development of the Ahmedabad-Delhi metregauge railway line and the eastern highway, extending, the rail-corridor to Delhi. Industries proposed include agro-business and export oriented units. Five sugarcane factories licensed several years back, suggest the sugarcane cultivation in the command area of the main canal. Niraja Jayal suggests that this is of crucial symbolic importance for the SSP as in a similar case, with the construction of the Ukai dam in 1970s, sugarcane replaced cotton as the most important cash crop of Gujarat. The traditional communities, displaced from their habitat came to the sugar field as seasonal labour, as the Patidars, the powerful landed elites, using their political connections alongwith, consolidated their economic control.[37] Niraja Jayal concludes that the landed elite of central Gujarat stand to be the prime beneficiaries of the SSP, both in terms of electricity and water supply and

[35]   Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Democracy and State – Welfare, Secularism and Development in Contemporary India*, OUP, Delhi, 1999 p. 199
[36] Ibid., p.199
37 Ibid, p. 201

thus constitute its most vocal supporters. Thus in the Narmada Valley as well, what is operative is the government - nexus with the business elite by ushering a new prosperity to Ahmedabad economy through rapid agricultural development and also agro-based industrial development. The richest districts of Gujarat Baroda, Ahmedabad, Kheda, Gandhinagar, Surendranagar stand to gain the maximum from NVP, with the eastern hills which is the home of tribals and backward communities would receive almost no benefits.[38]

In Kerala, the drive for modernization was linked to the national policy which sought large scale development of the fisheries industries. The policy received a fresh impetus with foreign exchange deficit in 1960s. The policy goals included increasing production as well as productivity of the fisheries, and exploring and developing the export potential. Platteau (1984) notes that private entrepreneurship received powerful incentives to invest in the fisheries industries. Instrumental in this commercial drive promoted by the state, was the alluring export market for frozen prawns. Some big private merchants had first explored such a possibility of export the vast US market in the mid-1950s. These ventures coincided with the bilateral Indo-Norwegian fisheries development project (JNP) for improving existing resources with capital-intensive technologies. High powered craft and gear for bottom trawling were innovative extremely welcome for the merchant capitalist interests in the prawn industry. The 1960s saw the Japanese demand for prawns as well. The 1970s saw multinational and national

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[38] Mehta, 1988 Pg. 10, located in Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Democracy and the State – Welfare, Secularism and Development in Contemporary India*, OUP, Delhi, 1999, p. 202.

industrial enterprises being involved in Kerala sea food industry.[39] By 1970s export volume rose by 39% and export values by 29% much to the satisfaction of the capitalist merchants and the government. (Kurien 1985: A74; A77-9). High powered boats, mechanized fleet, new technologies by INP, along with vast inflow of capital and labour completely changed the character of the fisheries in Kerala. Fish became an exportable product for profit and the labourers and merchants were either wage labourers or people merely doing fishing as business for profit.

In each of the three cases of industrialisation and commercialisation of national resources, it is very well illustrated that the natural resources whether of the forest or the river or the sea came to take upon the traits of a commodity which has a definite exchange value. 'Exchange value' refers to the value a product takes on when offered in exchange for other products. This very nature of the exchange-value, places the commodity into an economic relationship, inseparable from a market where goods are exchanged for money. Further human labour power is utilized for the production of these commodities and it is present in them in an essentially quantifiable form. Marx suggests that the kind of labour present in the commodity production is 'abstract labour'. This means that the labour is understood merely as (x) many hours, for (y) many days, at the (p) rate of labour. As a result the commodity is independent from the labourer who works to produce it. Also, the commodity is also understood only in terms of its value in exchange.

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39. Wickey Meynen, "Fisheries Development, Resource Depletion and Political Mobilisation in Kerala : The problem of Alternatives", *Development and Change*, Vol. 20, 1989.

Knowledge Against Developmental State

Commodification of the natural resources indicate the presence of a capitalist order as well. Profit hungry capitalists have sought for the exploitation of the resources which enable high returns with small capital investments. The state in each of the three cases illustrated have played the role of the administrative - machinery that provides legitimacy to pursuits of more and more capital. Infact the state has in each case its own share of profit - as revenue or foreign exchange as well. Legitimacy to capital intensive industries is provided by the national model of development of the state. Modernization was part of the imperial mission of civilization and improvement of the natives, who were the white-man's burden, during the colonial period. (R. Guha, 1988). The Independent State of India found modernization as essential to the project of national development (Baviskar, 1995 : 35). The Nehruvian plan for prosperity sought rapid industrialization. This was in contrast to the Gandhian vision of development which sought the revival of the village economy. The Gandhian vision of development had sought economic liberation in tune with the cultural traditions of the Indian peasantry. However, the Nehruvian schemes remained more popular in Indian politics. Gadgil and Guha remarks the 'Gandhian era of Indian politics saw the juxtaposition of a peasant based politics with the increasing influence of Indian capitalist over the congress organization.' (Gadgil and Guha 1992 : 182). Baviskar (1995) points out that 'despite theoretical primacy of the peasant it was the Indian industrial class that was able to use nationalism to wrest concessions from the British'. The expansion of the

congress before independence by the financial assistance of Indian capitalists, continued even after independence as a policy of the industrialists, who reigned suitably even after independence. The model of development pioneered by Jawaharlal Nehru, sought for an Indian reconstruction through an emulation of the West, 'intellectually through the infusion of modern science , and materially through the adoption of large-scale industrialization.' (Godgil & Guha, 1992: 183) - As a result the Nehruvian model became popular among Indian nationalists, and capitalists who enthusiastically supported this programme. The Indian capitalists could realise that the state expenditure in essential infrastructure would be a boon for the private industry. Through intensive industrialization and urbanization Indian could overcome the handicap of two hundred years of colonial rule. Even as development was sought to be achieved irrespective of the consequences to be borne by the rural communities for the same, the political choices at the time of independence for the world's largest democracy, were made by the powerful interest groups : capitalist merchants and industrialist, technical and administrative bureaucracy and rich farmers. The strategy of industrialization applied modern technologies, which paid little regard for either ecological or social consequences.[40]

The influence of the capitalists resulted in massive state investments in industrial infrastructure, i.e., power, minerals, metals, communications, which were again sectors heavily subsidised. This led to almost free access of the capitalists to crucial raw materials like forests and wakes. Noted economist Pranab Bardhan notes that the Indian public economy became an

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[40] Amita Baviskar, *In the Belly of the River*, OUP, Delhi, 1995, p. 22.

elaborate network of patronage and subsidies. The heterogenous proprietary classes bought and bargained for their share of the spoils of the system and often struck compromises in the form of 'log-rolling' in the usual fashion of pressure-group politics.[41] The bureaucrat politician nexus constructed an elaborate web of rules and regulations in order to maintain contract over the resource extraction and utilization'[42] This strategy led to the sacrifice of interest of the rural communities whose were directly dependent on natural resources. An analysis of Indian forest policies show how forests are being mismanaged for immediate profits for the state and industry with complete disregard for the future. This include curtailed traditional rights of traditional communities and at the same time subsidies to the industrialist for the same. For example in Karnataka, while bamboo was sold to the paper mills at the cost of Rs 15 a tonne the same were sold to small bamboo users like basket weavers etc., at the rate of Rs 1200 per tonne (CSE 1985 : 368)

The justification of developmental policies in the name of national interests, helped to serve merely the interests of the dominant proprietary classes. Developmental projects end up diminishing the poor people's ability to control or profitably using the natural resources, who end up surrendering the same for national interest, for the greater national good. It is ultimately when the poor people realise that they are being made sacrificial slaughter that conflicts generate, as in the cases of the Chipko movement, Narmada Valley protests and the movement of fisherfolk in Kerala. These conflicts claim not merely the share of rights to resource utilization but also

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[41] Pranab Bardhan, *The Political Economy of Development in India*, OUP, Delhi, 1984, p. 66
[42] Gadgil and Guha, *Ecology and Equity*, Penguin, 1995 p. 185

different perspectives of evaluation and using nature for a balance of both survival and small-profit. The conflict also involve the contestation of two different kinds of knowledge which take the form of two different world views, which Amita Baviskar explains 'one driven by the desire to dominate and exploit nature and humanity, the other moved by empathy and respect, sometimes reverence for the two'. (Baviskar 1995 : 33)

Traditional Knowledge Against Modern Knowledge

The environmental movements in India represent the struggle of not just a people but of their knowledge systems and world views as well. The rural traditional communities on the basis of their traditional wisdom and knowledge not just fight the institutions like property, state, capitalism, but also the modern knowledge which the capitalist ventures and the developmental state policies embody. The modern knowledge is based on technologies for industrial utilisation of natural resources this knowledge seeks maximisation of profit and is thus commercial in its approach. The modern knowledge is reductionist and comparmentalized in approach being limited to facts which had to immediate gains. John Kurien concludes that by no means the modern knowledge aggregates to a holistic understanding of the ecosystem. Picking on Kurien's terminologies the modern knowledge may be caricatured as the 'dam-end' view of the river or 'wood-eye' view of the forest or of the 'fish-eye' view of the sea'. The modern knowledge of the natural resources lacks the learning through labour. As a result modern knowledge is output and productivity oriented, and in fighting for the survival and livelihood, the traditional communities end up fighting the intrusion of a different knowledge system as well.

CHAPTER – III

IDEOLOGY

Environmental movements in India involve wide ranging issues. These relate to production, extraction ownership and control of natural resources, ecological sustainability, capitalist exploitation of sectors belonging to the traditional communities, the profit-economy of the state and the local communities' struggle to retain the traditional position of the natural resources in their subsistence economy. Beyond the immediate reasons which lead to the continuing struggles of the people over their environment there are greater issues involving peoples' relationships with nature, critiques of the ideology of development involving, contradictions over not just interests, but values as well.[1] The environmental movements operate within the framework of certain ideologies which determine the kind of a critique which the movement provides, the methods of activism which it resorts to and the kind of solution which it looks forward to. In this chapter the efforts is to trace the ideologies dominant in the three environmental movements of Chipko, Narmada Valley and Kerala, and then defend the ideologies against the commonly held view that ideologies are false and wrong. In that I try to explain ideologies as doctrines which provide for rational conduct of those who adhere by them.

Ideology in Social Movements

An `ideology' may be understood as a 'system of ideas which gives legitimacy to an existing or proposed system of relationships, and correspondingly supports an action, programme to sustain or subvert the

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[1] E.P. Thompson said, `Every contradiction is a conflict of values as well as a conflict of interest'. Located in Baviskar, Amita, *In the Belly of the river*, OUP, Delhi, 1995.

prevailing system' (Gore, 1993 : 29-30). In as much as environmental movements describe a pattern of collective attempt to bring about social change in institution, value systems and relationships, ideology provide inspiration as well as legitimacy to the movement. Further ideologies provide explanation and also the necessary value-frameworks for environmental movements. Ideologies are often action-driven as well.[2] `The action element related to an ideology is what we call a social movement'. (Gore 1993 : 46). Nevertheless an ideology may determine a movement or may also be the product of the movement. In case of the latter, crystallisation of ideas occur in the course of the movement. Ideologies, in general, may be either change-promoting or change-resisting. Andharia and Sengupta points out that the problematic however, centers around the direction of change-resistance or change-promotion, within the movement itself. A movement that directs itself towards the alteration of a system or against potential or otherwise threat to an alternation of a system is a social movement. A movement aiming for intra-systemic changes is considered to be a quasi movement and not a social movement proper. (Mukherji, 1978). Andharia and Sengupta suggests that an ideology which does not aim for transformative changes in the system may not be fully comprehended as an ideology.

Ideologies of Environmentalism in India

Ramachandra Guha has identified three ideological streams in terms of which the environmental critique of the values of development in India,

may be understood (Guha, 1988). According to Guha, the three ideological perspectives within the Indian environmental movements rest on two distinct characters. One is the identification of the genesis of the problem and the other involves the articulation of mechanisms of redressal. Guha feels that the identification is not exhaustive but indicative. While one movement may represent a particular ideology, it is also possible that the three different ideologies are involved in a specific local initiative in the representations made by adherents. These three ideological streams which Guha calls `Crusading Gandhian', `Appropriate technology' and `Ecological Marxism', are, according to him the most representative tendencies within the environmental movement in India as a whole.[3] They are derived by him after a careful study and interaction with groups spread all over the country. Interestingly in the three movements I have chosen for study, namely, the Chipko movement, the Narmada Valley Movement and the movement of fisherfolk in Kerala, these three ideologies find full development and representation.

The Crusading Gandhians

The first ideological strand identified by Guha, is 'Crusading Gandhian', which upholds the precolonial and pre-capitalist village community as an ideal of social and ecological harmony.[4] The Gandhians' rejection of the modern way of life finds justification from religion idiom. The Gandhian concept of Ram Rajya is idealised and taken literally. Environmental degradation is viewed as a moral problem and it extends to

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[3] Ramachandra Guha, "Ideological Trends in Indian Environmentalism", *EPW*, Dec 3, 1988,
[4] Baviskar, *In the Belly of the river*, OUP, Delhi, 1995, p. 43.

the criticism of the ideology of materialism and consumerism, which is viewed as directly hurting nature, by drawing people away from the latter and encouraging wasteful lifestyles. Crusading Gandhians, Guha suggests, argue indifference and hostility to economic gain as being the essence of 'Eastern' cultures. Consequently, the Gandhian ideology seeks return to cultural roots, together with abandoning western models of economic development. Crusading Gandhians propagate an alternative, non-modern philosophy, firmly rooted in the Indian cultural tradition.

In the Chipko movement, the oldest environmental protest movement in India, the Gandhian ideology of the self-sufficient village community, has been championed by Sunderlal Bahuguna. The Sarvodaya activists and constructive workers who began active work in the Uttarakhand hills in the 1950s and 1960s, were important contributors responsible for the Chipko movement. Bahuguna has spoken on economy in the Gandhian sense. Further he has taken the 'Satyagraha' route in the Chipko activism. Consequently Chipko footmarches have taken in village schools, temples and mosques.[5] On 2nd April, 1981, Bahuguna went on an eleven-day fast in the Uttarkashi district, near the source of the river Ganga, where the prayer and fasting pledged for 'crusade against the destruction of nature until those stony hearted people who have turned a deaf ear to the swan song of the trees have turned': In this time he decided to walk the entire length of the Himalaya, in an effort to teach ecological concern across the hill regions. Also, such an effort was thought by him to be necessary for talking to the people with the message of the need to return to an era when

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[5] Weber Thomas, *Hugging the Trees : The Story of the Chipko Movement*, Viking, Delhi, 1987.

people lived in harmony with the land.[6] On 30 May, 1981, Bahuguna, together with Rattan Chand Dehlu, the seventy-two year old Sarvodaya Worker from Uttarkashi, and two young students from Uttarkashi left from Srinagar. One and a half years later they reached Kohima, in Nagaland having covered 48.70 Kilometers in 300 walking days. The Kashmir – Kohima march brought national acknowledgement of the plight of the Himalayas and helped raise the environmental debate in the country. The Chipko movement gained a new-found respectability and Bahuguna almost the star-status of the 'gentle crusader'.[7] The Chipko movement adopted several Gandhian techniques, which included the glorification of India's cultural heritage. The emphasis on forests and trees in Indian texts and folklores was linked to the Gandhian argument on the spiritual and cultural heritage of India, 'when he preached the ideal of decentralized, village republics living in harmony with nature'. For the non-book educated peasantry, who were simple and religious-minded, such mechanisms helped to get across the Chipko message still further.

Similarly in the protests in Narmada Valley, Medha Patkar, together with six supporters of NBA, underwent an indefinite fast, which lasted for 22 days. Apart from several non-violent footmarches undertaken by the activists, in keeping well with the Gandhian tradition of non-violence, families under the threat of being submerged declared themselves as ready to join the Jal Samadhi, according to a Lok Nirada (People's Referendum) conducted by the NBA in the Narmada Valley in January and February,

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[6] Ibid, P. 88
[7] Ibid, P. 89

1993.[8] In the monsoon satyagraha of 1996, NBA initiated the Nav-Nirman programme, which called for large-scale tree-planting, housing, biogas, soil-water conservation, small-irrigation schemes, schools called jeevanshala (school of life), and libraries. Leading environmentalist Baba Amte wrote extensively in newspapers and magazines, followed the Gandhian mechanisms of protest as well. Repeatedly Baba Amte, Medha Patkar have underlined their own debt to Gandhi.

In Kerala too, the fisherfolks' agitation had its share of Gandhian techniques. Non-violence dominated the fasts undertaken by the clergy and the environmental padayatras (footmarches) undertaken by the National Fisher Folk Forum. The most famous of the footmarches in Kerala have been the Kanyakumari march, organised by the National Fisherfolk Forum in April, 1989 with the slogan, 'Protect waters, Protect life'. The objectives of the padayatra were:

"(a)   To widen people's awareness of the link between water and life and to encourage popular initiatives to protect water.

(b)   To form a network of all those concerned with these issues.

(c)   To pressurize the government in evolving a sustainable water utilization policy, and to democratize and strengthen the existing water management agencies;

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8   Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Democracy and the State – Welfare, Secularism and Development in Contemporary India*, OUP, Delhi, 1999 Pg. 186.

(d)   To assess the damage already done, identify problem areas for detailed study and evolve practices for rejuvenating water resources; and

(e)   To revive and propagate traditional water conservation practices and regenerative fishing technologies. (National Fisherfolk Forum 1989)"[9]

The environmental movements in India have been significantly influenced by the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi has been infact often portrayed as an early environmentalist by many modern environmentalists and his admirers. Ramachandra Guha points out the ecological undertones in Gandhi's reservations about the industrialisation of India and the western model of development. Guha is of the opinion the Gandhian critique of the western model of development, in effect has marked ecological undertones.[10] Gandhi realised that India could not possibly have taken on the western pattern of development because she did not have the resources and markets which England and America had when they began to industrialise. As a result if India would try to follow the path of the western nations, it would in effect also mean that India would end up in exploitation of her own people and environment. The urban-industrial sector would make more and more demands on the natural resources in the country side as it has been the case in the Garhwal Himalayas, Narmada valley and Kerala coastline. The catering of the natural resources of forests, river and the seas for meeting the demands of the rich has already brought about accelerated environmental degradation on the one hand, and usurped the rights and privileges of the traditional communities

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9   Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *Ecology and Equity*, Penguin, Delhi, 1995 Pg. 102.
[10] Ramachandra Guha, "Gandhi the environmentalist"? *Seminar* 413, January 1994, Pg. 94

on the other. Gandhi realised that Urban-Industrial development could result only in a one-sided exploitation of the hinterland. This is very well reflected in his writing, "The blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built" (Harijan, 23 June 1946). Still earlier, he wrote, "We are sitting in this fine pandal under a blaze of electric lights, but we do not know we are burning these lights at the expense of the poor" (Harijan, 11 May 1935).[11]

The Gandhian critique of the western modern civilization was directed against the evils of oppression, inegalitarianism, and the technocracy perpetuated by the urban-industrial world order. Since the environmental movements in India fought similar evils, the Gandhian world-view and critique was widely popular in each of the movements. In Gandhi's cultural critique of the modern west lay his rejection of the secular scientific worldview.[12] It was based on the ideological opposition to the post-galilean science which was accepted as the only fully secular area of knowledge. Ashis Nandy points out that based on this pride of secular knowledge, the legitimation of the modern western culture as a superior one, occurred which ideologically put non-secular societies on a lower position in the hierarchy. This secular knowledge, which Gandhi rejected, in its claim of being true knowledge, also resulted in a person's isolation of his cognition from his feelings and ethics and his partition from the subjects of his enquiry emotionally.[13] This effectivley took the form of modern life's 'market oriented equality' on the one hand and also 'non-sacramental

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[11] Cited in Ibid, p. 96.
[12] Ashish Nandy, *Tradition, Tyranny and Utopias*, OUP, Delhi, 1987.
[13] Ibid., p. 132.

concept of nature' on the other. Such characters of modern life led to inevitable violence and supplementary oppression. For Gandhi this took the form of re-endorsing of Brahamanism, devaluation of the folk and non-literate, closing upon their small public space yet further. The ideology of modern science carried with it the ideology of modern technology. Modern technology manifests itself as technicism and ultimately leads to technocracy. Technicism creates a hierarchy between the relationship between human beings and nature and between the possessors and non-possessors of technology. Such technicism promoted as science and scientific rationality ultimately for its own good destroys people, society and nature. Nandy shows that such technisism confronts all technology created crises as internal problems for the technology, as in, solutions to the crises may be found within the technology. He demonstrates this by quoting Peter Medawar's observation in context of ecology: 'The deterioration of the environment produced by technology is a technological problem of which technology has found, is finding, and will continue to find solutions.'[14] Gandhi sought for solution to technological problems outside technology and thus sought to challenge the technocracy of the modern times. These basic criticisms against the modern western cultural order found solutions in his programme for rural reconstruction which emphasized an ideal Indian village. Mahatma Gandhi's solution for the modern technicism say in a simplistic vision of rural life, which based itself on local self-reliance, clean and hygienic environment, collective management and use of the natural resources. With such simple tools Gandhi sought to philosophically tackle the modern civilization characterized by "an indefinite multiplicity of

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[14] Ibid, p. 137. From Peter Medawar, *The hope of progress. A scientist looks at problems in Philosophy, Literature and science* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor doubleday, 1973), p. 135.

wants", by establishing the character of ancient civilizations' in modern times, which were marked by an "imperative restriction upon a strict regulating of these wants."[15]

The environmental movements in India have ideologically sought to fight the basic evils of modern western civilization, which Gandhi had already identified. The traditional communities in each case of the movements classified in this study, have fought the onslaught of oppression, scientific rationality, technocracy and the vanishing public space of folk-views in the spate of the efforts of developmental-industrialisation adopted by the Indian state. As a result the environmental movements have been philosophically very close to the Gandhian vision and critique. As a result the "Crusading Gandhians", to use Guha's terminology, have been the most prominent as an ideology in the environmental movements. However environmental movements are debted to Gandhi, not simply ideologically, but also as an ideology that manifests itself in techniques of activism a well. Consequently, Satyagraha, the Gandhian technique of adhering to non-violence and the goal of Truth, even in conflict situations have been widely popular in Chipko movement, protests in the Narmada valley and in Kerala. Importantly, Satyagraha is concerned with morality and not just winning.[16] Several important elements interrelate in the formulation of Satyagraha. These include faith in the goodness of man, truth, non-violence, self-suffering, the relationship of the means to the end, the rejection of coercion, and fearlessness. In a democracy, mass Satyagraha, may take the form of

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[15] Weber, Thomas, *Hugging the Trees, The Story of the Chipko Movement*, Viking, Delhi, 1987, p. 83.
[16] Ibid., p. 83.

group action manifested in marches, picketing, strikes, non-co-operation movements. Thomas Weber quotes Gandhi as writing, "the exploitation of the poor can be extinguished not by effecting the destruction of a few millionaires but by removing the ignorance of the poor and teaching them to non-cooperate with the exploiters".[17] Sarvodaya activists in the Uttarakhand hills did just that in the early 1950s and 1960s and the hills saw India's most popular environmental movement till date, the Chipko movement.

Ramachandra Guha suggests that the communitarian ideology of the 'Crusading Gandhian' is often dismissed as being idealist, in the sense that the construction of the community is envisaged through the affirmation of shared spiritual values. The Gandhian ideology laments the loss of meaning and desacralising of life in contemporary society and hence calls for a return to the religio-ethical traditions of the pre-modern world. Lynn White and Theodore Roszak share such an environmental ideology which seeks for harmony with nature by the replacement of the modern ethic of domination with a religion that draws from earlier traditions. The recitation of Bhagwat Gita by the Chipko activist, the Narmada–Puja by the peasants and tribals evoking a religiosity associated with the river and the strength provided by Christianity to the fisher folk's struggle in Kerala, immensely justifies such, ideological tendencies. Susan Visvanathan writes, '…..that words could change the world, that if one believed then one could transform hearts, and change anger into understanding'.[18] The activism of the Crusading Gandhians is very well explained by this.

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[17] Ibid p.86
[18] Susan Visvanathan, "The Fishing Struggle in Kerala", *Seminar*, 423, November 1994.

The Ecological Marxists

Ideologically opposite to the Crusading Gandhians, Ramachandra Guha posits the Ecological Marxists, who include radical Christian groups and Naxalite groupings as well. They differ from the Gandhians in their hostility to tradition on the one hand and relatively greater emphasis to confrontational movements on the other. Particularly in Kerala such groups have made a genuine effort in spreading the Marxist message among the people and they believe that ecologically sound technological alternatives must come with the establishment of a socialist state. (Consequent infrastructural changes are, believed to be logically ushering in ecological stability, and thus the environmental movement also specifically fights capitalism and directs political action to that end) Compared to the Gandhians, the Marxists abhor science and technology less, which they consider to be a necessary ally in the establishment of the new social order. The ecological problem in the vision of the Marxists lies rooted in political and economic terms, bordering on the question of unequal access to resource utilisation. The ecological burden is understood to be borne by the less privileged sections of the society and Marxists clearly relate this to social stratification. The matrix of the rich exploiting the poor is the root of the environmental problem in their understanding. While the rich elites destroy nature for profit, the poor scratch the earth for survival Guha points out that for ecological Marxists, the creation of an economically just society is the basic requirement for the social and ecological harmony. As a result political collective action is also directed towards redistribution of economic and political power.

As the Marxists draw a line between the ruling capitalists and the ecologically deprived proletariat, it is a completely different explanation of the mode of production and the relations of production which it creates. It may be pointed out that the ecological perspective does not figure in Marx's own work. He adopted the Ricardian view of the social limits to capitalism rather than on the Malthusian view of natural limitations to capitalism.[19] As a result the social relations of production gained significant importance in Marx's work, as he felt that these had transformed to realize the benefits of technological development. Benton (1989 : 64) points out that Marx's concept of labour thus under represents the role of human intentions and powers for transforming nature.[20] Baviskar (1995 : 38) brings out the ecological understanding in Marx through his opposition to commodification, a process which divorces products of human labour in nature, from their intrinsic worth, reducing them to an economic value. Marx's critique of commodity fetishism, suggests Baviskar, may be understood as an epistemological critique of economism and development, which have their corollary in environmental destruction. Environmentally it may be interpreted as the formation of the classes, of 'haves' and 'have-nots' who reflect their positions in 'destroying' or 'depending' on the environment, and from which they derive their ecological concerns. The adventurer that the capitalist is, leads him to cause destruction to the environment as the latter understands the resources as being freely available to be tamed for money. On the other hand poor traditional communities may also be understood to have their mode of production in nature, and the

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[19] Baviskar, Amita, *In the Belly of the river*, OUP Delhi 1995.
[20] Located in Baviskar *In the belly of the river*, OUP Delhi 1995, Pg. 38.

capitalist (mis) adventures seek to destroy their mode of production and leave them without any means to survival. As forests are cut down for the manufacture of sports goods and other necessary gadgets of the well-off, dam's are planned to provide electricity to those who can afford it and also for the industries planned along the Narmada canal, and the trawlers catch fish for the distant homes in US and Japan, the confrontation over the environment becomes centred around two groups of people, one who has the economic power and the other who does not have it. Hence the Marxist argument on social stratification and redistribution of economic and political power.

An important argument in Marxist ideology deals with the market and its role of reinforcing existing inequalities, rather than rationally allocating resources. Nature becomes the free good in Marxist understanding, which is exploited for profit. Consequently, abolition of private property as in private ownership of the means of production and replacing the market by centralised economic planing for a just and ecologically stable society are typical Marxist solutions to the problem.[21]

The Appropriate Technologists

The third variation to the communitarian ideology identified by Ramachandra Guha is that of Appropriate Technology. According to Guha 'It is, as it were, a philosophy in the making, an eclectic brew drawing selectively upon anarchism, agrarianism and other non-Marxist socialist traditions. For want of a better label we may call it 'decentralised socialism'

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[21] Ramachandra Guha, "Ideological Trends in Indian Environmentalism", *EPW*, Vol. 23 # 49, 1988.

(Guha 1988 : 2579). The appropriate technologists find the mismatch in terms of size and level of operations of agriculture – industry linkages, to be primarily responsible for environmental problems. They are not against modern technology in general, but question the appropriateness and sustainability in specific contexts. The constructive effort in the ideology of appropriate technologists lie in their emphasis to bring about a synthesis between traditional and modern technology, in order to make the technology socially viable. They feel that a judicious mix of traditional and modern knowledge (manifested in science and technology) is necessary to satisfy the requirements of social justice, local self-reliance and environmental stability. Guha points out that appropriate technologists work at a micro level (a group of villages, generally) in showing the viability of an alternative strategy of economic development. The emphasis of the appropriate technologists is not so much on challenging the system as in showing that there are socio – technical alternatives to the centralising and environmentally degrading technologies which are taking their toll on the environment. The alternatives they provide are resource-conserving, and socially liberating. The Appropriate Technologists are represented by the Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal, and leaders like Chandi Prasad Bhatt, who have done good work in ecological restoration.

Amulya Kumar. N. Reddy chalks out an alternative pattern of industrialization for India which very well illustrates the ideology of the appropriate technologists. The new pattern of development would be directed towards :

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[22] Andharia. J, and Sengupta, C., "The Environmental Movement", *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 59 issue I, Jan 1998 p. 437.

"1.   The satisfaction of basic human needs, starting with the needs of the neediest, in order to reduce inequalities between and within countries;

2.   A self – reliance which grows from within i.e., endogenously, through social participation and control; and

3.   Harmony with the environment to ensure the sustainability of development over the long run."

The new pattern of industrialization, suggest Reddy, would be achieved through multiple choices made by the people. These would include energy-conserving capital-saving, employment generating, labour-saving, technologies, making technologies relevant to individual wants, being based on local materials, would generate employment for the underprivileged masses and would be used to produce goods for local consumption and not remote markets. The environmental dimension of such technology would be concerned with rational sustained resource use and not indiscriminate resource utilization.

How Ideologies Combine

None of the environmental movements follow any single ideology. Often all the three tendencies are present in a single movement. For example, in the Chipko movement the Gandhian trend is associated with the leadership of Sunderlal Bahuguna, the Marxist trend with the Uttarakhand Sangarsh Vahini, a youth organization which has organized popular movements against commercial forestry, unregulated mining and illegal liquor trade. On the other hand appropriate technologists are represented by the Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal, who were actively

involved in starting the Chipko Movement and have made appreciable efforts in ecological restoration. The fisher folk's movement in Kerala have suitably woven Christianity with the Gandhian and Marxist ideologies. Devadass (ISI Dossier) in 'Sr. Alice Throws a challenge', writes, ".... The Christian activists had to learn their Christian catechism on justice from the communists"[23] Thomas Kocherry, one of the leaders of the movement has said, "We are certainly not Marxist. We may follow the leftist ideology, that does not make us Marxists" Speaking on the same fisherfolk's struggle, T.K. John, S.J. has said 'Satyagraha is not a warfare, but a service, arguing that the fisherfolk's struggle had revived the Satyagraha and the fast. Similar has been the case of the movement in Narmada Valley which have seen a combination of Gandhian ideology of Satyagraha and also of the appropriate technologists as reflected in the Nav Nirman programme of the NBA, which envisaged large-scale planting of trees, housing, biogas, soil water conservation, small – irrigation schemes, schools called jeevanshalas (school of life) and libraries.[24] The NBA, an important, constituent of the NAPM (National Alliance of People's Movements) is inspired by the goal of opposing the dominant paradigm of development, working towards egalitarianism, equality, secularism and an ecologically sustainable society.

All the three ideologies which are found to operate in the three environmental movements, which are studied here, provide a definite strengths to the environmental movements. Ramachandra Guha points out that the Appropriate Technologists contribution in presenting before the

[23] Cited, in Susan Visvanathan, "The Fishing struggle in Kerala", *Seminar* 423, November 1994.
[24] Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Democracy and the State, Welfare, Secularism and Development in Contemporary India* – OUP, Delhi, 1999.

public an alternative pattern of ecologically viable industrialisation, of the Gandhian in highlighting the cultural and spiritual costs of the present model of development, and of the Ecological Marxist analyses of class exploitation, are each absolutely essential in guiding the movement and as he says, "In the formulation of an ex-peasant who at times wasn't that, far from being an ecological socialist himself.......'.)

The ideologies which operate in the environmental movements manifest themselves as strategies as well. It is indeed difficult to comprehend them as illusions or deceptions without any rationality. Such an understanding of ideology makes it difficult to comprehend how environmental movements in India are determined by ideologies in action, strategies and goals. As a result ideologies must be understood as an authentic political understanding which is central to the serious consideration of the nature of the political reality which a social movement represents. The reality of the environmental movements which involves the different ideologies is evidence to the 'ideology' operating as "a genuine sense of understanding human relationships" and this understanding has a place in all political activity, regardless of which ideology it is. Whether the liberals, or the Marxists, ideology as such has been assertively dismissed. While liberals have viewed ideology as "a set of value-judgments that have not been subject to rational scrutiny", Marxists have dismissed ideology as "soul destroying 'false consciousness'".[25]

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[25] D.J. Manning and T.J. Robinson *The Place of Ideology in Political Life*, Croom Helm, London 1985, Preface.

The Marxist Concept of Ideology

Marx and Engels, in their book, The German Ideology, distinguished ideology as false knowledge, as against science which they believed to be true knowledge. Science is true as it is based not on ideas but real forms of existence, which is 'materialism'. Marx and Engels found a material basis which described social and economic relations, while the philosophers viewed ideas as determining human relations and course of history. This meant that ideas and thought were dependent on the history of material relations. They wrote,

"Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence."

(Marx and Engels 1979 : 47)

Ideology for Marx and Engels meant "the collection of ideas that are merely the product of thought and that have no material basis."[26] Ideas thus came to be understood as abstractions from the experience of material relations. While knowledge from practical activity generated science, ideas were generated from ideas, thus being based on speculations. From the Marxist viewpoint, ideology presented the systematic attempt which demonstrates the rationality of the existing pattern of distribution of wealth and the utility of the social order in which position of power belong to people who have wealth.[27] Ideology was thus the articulation of experience of the rich class and created deceptions. The bourgeois ideology for example, helps working men believe that they might have a chance to improve their material

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[26] Dant Tim, *Knowledge Ideology and Discourse*, Routledge and KeganPaul London, 198, p. 58.
[27] D.J. Manning & T.J. Robinson, *The Place of Ideology in Political Life*, Croom Helm, London 1985 p.2.

condition by competition with their fellow workers, when, in the long run, the latter could yield only impoverishment. Ideology is thus false as it provides a distorted account of reality that helps in maintaining the inequality in material relationships and also in the power of knowledge. Idealist knowledge is false knowledge because it leads to mistaken knowledge based on an incorrect account of determinate relation between reality and ideas. This reality is presented in Marxist thought by the social being, which Marx equates with 'the mode of production'. In his preface to the critique of political economy, Marx wrote, "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being but on the contrary; their social being that determines their consciousness." [1968 : 182) For Marx & Engels the failure of 'ideological forms' depend on their operation of on idealist epistemology, and they find an epistemological alternative in materialism or science.

Marx embarks on two pronged attack on ideology. Firstly, he finds ideology to prescribe a conception of the mechanics of social, economic and political change which are rendered obsolete by the changes that inevitably follow from man's having subjected his practice to his guidance, because, at a past stage of economic development, it was temporarily an understanding offering a beneficial guide to action. Secondly, ideology cannot be defended against the charge that it is a spurious justification for the human suffering that attends the chaos that is the result of action based upon it when it has become a materially baseless or archaic view of experience. Thus ideology disqualifies in disguising class-distinctions, which in marxist theorization

leads to man's alienation from his 'species being' or 'true-self', and thereby misrepresents reality. This leads to ideology becoming the intellectual suspect, and morally condemnable.[28]

Mannheim's Concept of Ideology

Karl Mannheim makes a distinction between the two different ways in which the concept of ideology may be used. The first is the 'particular conception of ideology', which according to him, "denotes that we are skeptical of the ideas and representations advanced by our opponent. They are regarded as more or less conscious disguises of the real nature of a situation, the true recognition of which would not be in accord with his interests." [Mannheim 1936 : 49] Mannheim suggests that the distortions differ widely, from conscious lies to unwitting disguises, from well-chalked-out attempts to self-deception. Thus particular ideology may be held by the group but is still reduced to the psychology of the individual. The second is the 'total conception of ideology', which is more inclusive by character. In this case the ideology exists at the level of the total structure of the mind of this epoch or of the group. It thereby calls into question : "the opponent's total weltanschauung (including his conceptual apparatus), and attempts to understand these concepts as an outgrowth of the collective life of which he takes part. [Mannheim 1936 : 50] The common point in these two different variety of ideologies is that neither relies on the opponents' version as to come to an understanding regarding his real meaning and intention. Here the opponent is understood in terms of his social situation to arrive at his

29 [28] Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, in Selected Works, one volume, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1970.

version. Consequently, ideas of the subject are a function of his existence. The difference between the two kinds of ideology thus relate to the fact that while the particular conception of ideology is understood at the psychological level of the opponent, the total conception of ideology attempts to recover the outlook of the opponent from his socio-historical setting. Nevertheless in both cases the opponent's position is ideological because it provides an incorrect account of reality. The sociological approach to the conception of ideology does not evaluate the holders of ideology since ideology is not viewed as a function of a failure in consciousness but as a characteristic of the presuppositions based on a social context.[29]

Marx and Mannheim share certain similarities in their conception of ideology, but Mannheim's ideas are distinctively different from the Marxist perspective in as far as the latter is dominated by Hegelianism. The Hegelian tendency in Marxist thought meant a resistance to recognising the account of ideology as being applicable to all political thought. No identification of the socio-historical location of the knowledge was permitted. In Ideology and Utopia (1936), attempting to break with Hegelianism, dominating the Marxist notion of ideology, Mannheim wrote:

"The sphere of ultimate reality rested in the economic sphere and the social sphere for it was to this that Marxism in the last analysis, related all ideas and values; it was still historically and intellectually differentiated, i.e. it

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[29] Tim Dant, *Knowledge Ideology and Discourse*, Routledge and KeganPaul, London, 1991, p. 28.

still contained some fragment of historical perspective (due largely to its Hegelian derivation). Historical Materialism was materialist only in name; the economic sphere was, in the analysis, in spite of occasional denial of this fact, a structural interrelationship of mental attitudes. The extant economic system was precisely a 'system', i.e. something which arises in the sphere of the mind (the objective mind as Hegel understood it).

(Mannheim 1936 : 229)

However Mannheim's concept of ideology has certain similarities with Marx as well. Mannheim accepts ideology as a practical view of reality which comforts those who have a vested interest in the maintenance of the existing social order and ideology cannot serve as a basis of rational action' by the underprivileged sections of society. In this regard, Mannheim's view of ideology is conservative and it cannot undertake radical action, which he calls utopian thought. Unlike Marx, Mannheim believes that all ideas about human nature and the human world are intelligible only in context of a given historical experience, which project the aspirations of men who would create a new social order. (Manning and Robinson, 1985:4) Mannheim and Marx's conception of ideology are similar as far as the objectivity of the evaluation of the truth of ideology is concerned.

Ideology is not False

If ideology is to be understood from the writings of Marx, Engels or Mannheim, then clearly 'ideology' as a concept cannot be accorded much respect. Ideology is found to be dismissed for being unable to determine rational political conduct or to provide a genuine form of political

communication. In such a case if ideology is so denigrated then how do we justify the fact that the Gandhian ideology or that of Ecological Marxists or Appropriate Technologists have provided the rational path for political communication, the result of which have been the environmental movements in India ; all of them taking the shape of organized political action as well. Thus it is important to show that ideological thinking is not necessarily mistaken about the world, their way of thinking not false or harmful. Ideological thinking and understanding need not be intellectually defective but as seen in the environmental movements can be often intellectually sound in thinking about human circumstances and activity, and can provide for improvement of the underprivileged and their relationship with others. Ideology is thus required to be understood as a form of thinking association and activity. Manning and Robinson (1985) writes that the role of ideology in political life lies in the constitution of institutional relationships between persons that gives political reality its peculiar historical identity, because it determines, in the minds of the politically engaged, the sense in which there exists a right to rule at any one time. They suggest that it is the existence of this sense of right, which is of crucial importance in making political conduct rational in the circumstances of that reality. In the next section, the effort will be to show that ideology is a genuine form of ethical understanding and not derived from theoretical reasoning. To prove the case, the discussion involves rationality and causality as categories of explanation and a distinction is made between the activities of 'doing' and 'making'

Saving 'Ideology'

Rational action is one which is effective in achieving the purposes which it is intended to achieve, i.e. the means are appropriate to the ends. The term 'rational' thus commends the performance of action and also the relevance of rules. To suggest an action was rational, two things are meant. Firstly, that there were reasons for the action and since 'rational' is a normative expression, the reasons for action were indeed good ones. Thus as an example, one can say that there were reasons for the fisherfolk in Kerala to take strong action in terms of a protest movement against the capitalist trawlers and their reasons for protest were good ones as the intrusion of capitalist ventures led to the fisherfolk's loss of livelihood and the depletion of marine resources. As rationality is a normative concept both actions and rules can be explained and justified by it. Here, in context of the example, action refers to the movement and the rules may be stood as those of non-violence, satyagraha etc. Explanation and justification may be distinguished clearly. If the fisherfolk's movement is explained by the reasons which led to it, this means that the explanation under the category of rationality is subsumed from the category of causality. Explanation is successful if reference is made to the actual reasons which led to action are stated, while justification succeeds when it is shown that the reasons for which an action is performed were good ones. Thus justification falls within the category of explanations, while the latter and former are not co-extensive. Thus it may be concluded that explaining an action is not necessarily providing a justification for it.

While such a consideration makes it appear that justification always follows explanation, it may not be the case. Manning and Robinson explains this taking help of the economic principle that relative advantage implies relative wealth.[30] This principle was so formulated by John Hicks, 'The consumer, who acts according to the Economic principle, chooses his purchases so as to maximise utility'. They suggest that as the adoption of such a principle enables theoretical representation of activity, the procedure fails to distinguish between explanation and justification and identifies that which is to be explained as the maximisation of utility.[31] Thus an economic reason of action in this case becomes the good reason for action as well. Further if an explanation is made on the basis of the theoretical representation of activity, it attributes a general identity to the action. However generalisations admit falsification which in the present case is not so. That is, it may be found that people do not generally zealously pursue profit, and so the economic principle does not apply to such activity, which does not make it false. Against this it may be objected that it is necessary that a consumer maximises utility when he makes purchases. This objection brings forth the distinction between explanation and justification. It is the coming together of explanation and justification which creates the possibility of representing activity theoretically. Thus the economic principle cannot be treated as an empirical generalisation but as a definition which constitutes economic inquiry. Such a proposition cannot be tested but sets up possibility for inquiry involving testing.

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[30] This explanatory framework is used by Manning & Robinson, 'The Place of Ideology in Political Life, Croom Helm, London, 1985, p. 21.
[31] Ibid., p. 21.

The purpose for explanation is truth, while that of justification is a critical relation to its subject matter.[32] As a result it involves reference to an idea (or a set of ideas) which should be observed in activity. Such an idea or ideas may be called a normative conception of activity. For example, we state, the fisherfolk in Kerala went into a struggle. This can be explained as, the fisherfolk went into a struggle so that they could get back their livelihood and survival, which was at stake. (This establishes a rational connection, in that it asserts an intelligible relationship between reason and action). The critical relation to action is that unless the fisherfolk went into a struggle the forces of capitalism under the authority of the state would have left these fisherfolk without a livelihood. Thus the moral conception the moral question in rights to common property resources and livelihood (in context of the above example) forms the basis of justification of the fisherfolk's action. Here the fisherfolk take on the role of a rational agent, who could not have acted otherwise than in struggle and had good reasons for what they did. Thus, the application of a normative conception of what he is doing determines what the rational agent does is good or bad. According to Manning and Robinson, a normative conception may be moral or instrumental in character. By instrumental is meant the normative conception sets out factors which relate to effectiveness, while the moral considerations relate to the good or the bad. Thus it is found that the establishment of the critical relation to activity, which is arrived at by justification, involves reference to a normative conception of activity. Next, the normative conceptions may be informed by theoretical understanding as well.

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[32] Ibid p. 22.

While the rational agent has good reasons for what he does, it also depends on the agents intention in the given circumstances. As a result, the outcome of deliberation in activity is the reflection of the intention in action. The nature of intention informs the outcome of the understanding, which is arrived at in deliberation. At this point, Manning and Robinson suggests that the place of theoretical understanding in normative conception of activity is arrived at from the consideration as to how the intention may be theoretically informed. The form of reasoning involved in informing of intention in making or bringing about something, by theoretical knowledge, is technological in character. It may be noted that 'making' refers to the discrete activity which provides the paradigmatic form of the relation of theory to practice. Thus 'making' means specific causal configurations. Engagement in 'making', the deployment of means for ends, presupposes both the knowledge of causal formulae and the capacity to bring about causal relations. 'Doing' is distinguished from 'making' is that 'making' does not involve values. However the distinction is logical in character. An action involves references to both the categories of 'making' and 'doing'. For example the environmental movements involve peoples protest against capitalist development which results in loss of livelihood and this may be understood in terms of a causal relationship but, the relationship of the ecosystem people to their resources, is not reducible to causal formulae of means and ends. The understanding involved in 'doing' is more 'general' and involves an understanding of rules, whose implication may be ambiguous, as the rules may be not formal ones, but may be specified in valued relationships and believed in identities. Right-doing in activity is

specified by both conditionalities and unconditionalities of relationships. An ideally discrete form of understanding which is doctrinal in a way that it involves commitment not contractually assumed is the one associated with human association which take on a political colour as reflected in the environmental movements. This kind of understanding is called, 'ideology' which is a discrete form of reflection, the object of which is 'doing' in struggles over ecology. The ideologies involved in the environmental movements are doctrinal in character and the doctrine relates to actions / protests in terms of the prescriptions which follow from the doctrines. These prescriptions specify the conditions in which the exercise of power (reflected in hugging the trees in Chipko movement or demonstrating and desiring Jal Samadi in the Narmada Bachao Andolan and thereby helping in several ways to revert the ecological disasters) is sublimated in right conduct.

The argument here seeks to understand ideologies as not theoretically based programmes, classificatory and evaluative in character, but as doctrines which may have prescriptive generality with limits but not explanatory generality, which they often appear to have. Every ideology also seeks an 'end', which is a rational notion. For example, the Gandhian ideology seeks a self-sufficient village community. The 'end' is intelligibly desirable, and the desirability of the end sought is elucidated within the ideological understanding itself, i.e., the evaluation of the end is specified within the ideology. The end as a result is understandable only in terms of the doctrinal considerations of the ideology. As a result the distinction between means and ends set up by the theory of 'making' (involving causal relationships) crumbles down; because the end sought can be desirable only

within the context of ideological understanding. Again, from the view of the category of 'doing', the concern is of the relationships obtained by people in their activity. These relationships cannot be physical as they specify the non-causal identities of persons, which we are non-instrumentally obliged to acknowledge. Within the category of doing the 'end' say 'Ram Rajya' according to the Gandhian doctrine, is a morally coherent set of relationships between people. But what builds up the possibility of such a circumstance is the doctrine which defines man's relation to his environment.

Conduct or action may be understood as a rational notion. The moral evaluation the conduct depends upon the reasons which the agent can provide for his actions. The agent in his deliberations aims at having good reasons for doing what he will. To determine what he will do the agent consults his beliefs. Certain beliefs concern causal relationships, while others belong to the category of 'doing'; beliefs about conditions which are upheld in relationship with ecosystem people and the environmental movements. This relation is of doctrinal understanding and it is the doctrines which formulate the character of movements in terms of power, legitimacy, authority, and deduce beliefs about their conditionality. These beliefs determine rational action in any particular movement. Thus the person's adherence to the doctrine determines how he aims at having good reasons for participation in the movement. These good reasons vary in tune with the doctrine from one environmental movement to another. For example, the reasons for the person the adheres to the Gandhian ideology is distinctly different from the one who believes in ecological Marxism. Doctrinal

grounds differ from one another and both (theoretically) is capable of determining the rationality of conduct. Setting up of doctrines provide frameworks for deliberation towards good reasons for action. Thus the relation between belief and conduct is a rational one, the determinants of which may be deduced from doctrines which are understandings which differ from theories, in postulating adherence.

Finally, ideological understandings prescribe generality and do not explain generality. Ideologies are doctrinal beliefs and the language of generality which it involves is rhetorical in substance and explanatory only in form. From such an understanding, the ideologies involved in the environmental movements are saved from being understood as deceptive or false. On the contrary, ideologies provide rational frameworks with means and ends prescribed within the framework itself. The people who abide by them have sound reasons to do so.

CHAPTER – IV

DISCOURSE

Environmental movements in India are simply not the struggles of people organized to fight ecological destruction. While ecology and survival based on ecology are definitely at stake and form the immediate reason for the movements, the struggles also address larger and broad-based issues and in their manifestation reflect certain relationships which lie behind the empirical facts, events and occurrences. Infact the environmental movements in India offer significant discourses on power, hegemony and authority. In this chapter my attempt is to understand the three movements, the Chipko movement, the Narmada Valley movement and the fisherfolk's movement in Kerala, as a discourse and try to find out how power–struggles and resistance to hegemony manifest themselves in these movements and how the struggles are led by their leaders which thereby provide a discourse on authority. Before I begin the discussion on the discourses, it is necessary to justify the need for discourse, and what is meant by it.

Tracing Discourse from Signification

Linguistics broke its traditional preoccupation with grammatical rules with Sassure (1974) who attempted to study language in terms of its elements and the structure which the elements taken together presented. He wrote,

"Language is a system of interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others" (Sassure 1974 : 114) Sassure linked meaning with linguistic structure through a concept of the 'sign'. The 'sign' was composed of the signifier (sound – image) on the one hand and signified (the concept) on the other.

However the link between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary and this arbitrariness in their relationship is of importance in Sassure's linguistics. Thus he wrote "The idea of `sister is not linked by an inner relationship to the succession of sounds s-o-r which serves as its signifier in French; that it could be represented equally well by just any other sequence is proved by the differences among languages and by the very existence of different languages."

(Sassure 1974 : 63)

It is observed and understood that while the relation between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, relationships of value occur in the relationships between signifiers and between signifieds,

"Even outside language all values are governed by the same paradoxical principle. They are always composed:

1) of a dissimilar thing that can be exchanged for the thing of which the value is to be determined; and

2) of similar things that can be compared with the thing of which the value is to be determined (Sassure 1974 : 115)

Sassure conceived language as a social phenomenon which was realized not only in the individual act of speaking but `only by virtue of a sort of contract signed by the members of a community" Sassure 1974: 14) – Structuralists made use of Sassure's view of language as an analytical object, and thus structural anthropology and semiology used Sassure's linguistics to study the structural form of meaningful systems. In trying to understand meanings, the structuralists went on further to study not just the apparent or `literal' meaning but the `hidden' meanings as well and thus

semiotics came to applied to the purpose of interpretation of texts as well. Such interpretation initially was made use of by Levi Strauss and Barthes to understand social structure or social form as a language. Levi Strauss analysed myths and Kinship system using such a linguistic analysis in The 'Elementary Structures of Kinship' and 'The Savage Mind'. Later Barthes and Focault went o to show how an object constituted empirically in language could be treated as a system of signifieds i.e., discourse. The transformation of the object of study from the process of signification to that of discourse involves the critique of the sign and also of the structure constituted by the signs. The object may be structured at two levels, that of signification and that of signified. The difference in the structuring of the object creates the discourse.

Barthes was directly concerned with 'discourse' in his collection of essays, 'Mythologies' (1973). Barthes sought to provide an account of 'discourse' where meaning is gathered by moving in and out of the contexts of utterances In Mythologies (1973), he wanted to reveal the "naturalness" with which newspaper, art and commonsense constantly dress up a reality which, even though it is the one we live in, is undoubtedly determined by history' (Barthes 1973 : 11) The tracing of the meanings beyond the utterances or the text began with the identification of the myth as language. Such an identification enabled him to establish the simile that like words will signify concrete things, and relationship between words signify relations between concrete things, likewise cultural artefacts also relate book to the history of culture. Myths for Barthes differ from the myths used by Levi Strauss, as the former could be actions and objects in certain situations as

well, in as much as they form a structure which is meaningful. The actions are rendered meaningful only by relating them to their situatedness, their cultural context in history.

Striptease, for example, is such a myth and the cultural context which it relates to is France. In his analysis of 'Parisian Striptease', Barthes implies its meaningfulness and there is an attempt to drive at the 'real' or 'true' meaning. Further he is very clear that, 'what must be firmly established at the start is that myth is a system of communication, that it is a message.' (Barthes 1973: 109) The system represented by the myth, according to Barthes is a second – order semiological system.' The 'sign' in the first order, of language, is a signifier for the second order i.e., the myth. Barthes explains by the following figure

Language MYTH	1. Signifier	2. Signified
	3. Sign I SIGNIFIER	II SIGNIFIED
	IIII SIGN	

Source : Barthes (1973 : 115)

The second order signification system opens up the possibility of other significatory systems, each of which aspire a larger context from which meaningfulness is derived. While the first order of meaning is readily available to participants, the second order of signification is a 'hidden' level where the meaning is not available readily but is required to be generated by an analyst who knows it is there and so looks for it. The second order is constructed interpretively, while the construction of the first order depends of meaningfulness. In S/Z (1975), Barthes writes that the text is a 'galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds'. He writes, 'To interpret a text is not

to give it a (more or less free) meaning, but on the contrary to appreciate what plural constitutes it.' (Barthes 1975 : 5). Plurality serves twin purpose, firstly, it evaluates the text and secondly, it yields more possibilities. Barthes fragments the tutor text which is Balzac's story 'Sarrasire' and broken into what he calls 'lexias'. The exploration of the lexias for decoding the hidden meanings shows his fascination with interpreting the text. The text, with Barthes, takes on an anthropomorphic form and ceases to be a mere object. The text creates its own history (of the already – read content), it 'plays', 'creates', 'Lies', etc. The active intertextuality of the texts occurring between the reader and the tutor leads to the formation of discourse. The discourse is not restricted to words and thereby takes a determinative role.

Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) points out that Foucault's conception of discourse is, in effect, knowledge, but knowledge with its claims to truth and meaning bracketed.[1] To concentrate on discourse is to take as the object of study a material form and study it without prior presumptions of reality. In his The Archaeology of Knowledge (1972) Foucault treats discourse as an apparently amorphous mass of statements where the archaeologist discovers a regularity of 'dispersion' with the horizon available for orienting and unifying analysis being a pure description of discursive events. (Foucault 1972: 27). The 'statement' is Foucault's unit of analysis and he understands the 'statement' as a series of signs which possess meaning within the discourse. Foucault's writings enable analytical reduction of action to discourse.

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[1] Foucault's 'How Is Power Exercised?' appeared in translation as an 'Afterword' to Michel Foucault: *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (University of Chicago Press, 1982).

The above discussion thus brings out the conception of discourse and how it is determined. As Foucault has shown, discourse is knowledge and thus the attempt in this case is to show that important knowledge develop from the discourse that the environmental movements in India provide. The discourses which the environmental movement provide emerge from the second level of interpretation, from re-reading the events and action in Garhwal, Narmada valley and Kerala. Consequently what apparently is ecological movements, may be interpreted as movements and struggles of and against power, hegemony and authority. The ecological problem thus gets a second interpretation which translates and diversities it into a problem of power, hegemony and authority. In the following sections the attempt is to understand the discourses on each of these problems and thus derive at the greater issues that the ecological movements communicate and are based on.

Power in Ecological Movements

The struggle over ecology and related survival, against technology and the ever increasing domination of science assisted by the capitalist urge for generating wealth which culminate in the environmental movements are also essentially resistance of the people against power. This power is one of capitalism, technology, bureaucracy and the state, all of which work together in developing a kind of knowledge which seeks to conquer all free spaces, of nature and the freedom of living in nature. This power which traditional knowledge fights in course the movements is not exercised by individual or institutional agents, i.e., it is not just the Symonds company of Allahabad or

the U.P. Government which the Chipko volunteers fought against or for that matter the government's decision to build the dam in Narmada valley, is the institution that the people are resisting. What the state decision, corporate and capitalist interests in procuring wood for manufacturing sports goods or marketing prawns to homes in USA and Japan all represent, is really an elaborate structure of power residing in the social system. It calls into question India's pattern of development which prioritised industrialization along the western model, the historical background of two hundred years of British rule, the state of the Indian economy, and the imbalances in the Indian society, with almost 40% of the population in the backward category. Global forces of domination like capitalism, science and technology thus make such locales easy prey for conquering and thus their power percolate the system gradually bringing the society in accordance with their order their discipline. Foucault calls such power as intentionality without a subject, which may be described without attributing particular subjects as their conscious intentions. He writes,

"Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it. The fact that power is so deeply rooted and the difficulty of eluding its embrace are effects of all these connections. That is why the notion of repression which mechanisms of power are generally reduced to strikes me as very inadequate and possibly dangerous." (Foucault 1980 : pg. 89) Structuralist determinists are given to the idea that the agents are not true causes of events[2] Foucault overcomes the structuralists' limitation as regard to whether the agent is capable of acting differently or not. For him the technology of power only

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[2] David Cauzens Hoy, "Power, Repression, Progress: Foucault, Lukes, and the Frankfurt School", in *Foucault: a Critical Reader*. (ed.), by David. C. Hoy, 1986, Basil Blackwell, Oxford UK, p. 153.

generates the possibility of actions and are given to choice in reacting. Foucault writes, 'Another power, another knowledge.' (Foucault: 1979 : 27-30).

Foucault is not of the view that power is simply possessed by those who exercise it. In 'Discipline and Punish' (1979) he wrote, 'power is exercised rather than possessed'. The fact that power is not a possession implies that it is not a property, possession, or privilege. Power is not the possession of the dominant classes. Foucault understands power as a strategy, which is executed on the common social matrix. Both the dominated and the dominating are a part of this matrix. Foucault locates power at micro-levels. He calls this 'micro power', which permeates society taking over the state apparatus. This taking over of the state apparatus is different from a coup or a revolution or even a change of party in power democratically. The power is every inch past of the state apparatus and becomes a necessary feature of it and what it represents.

Foucault explains the nature of power as the disciplinary force and regulatory mechanism in both of his books 'Madness and Civilization' (1967) and 'Discipline and Punish' (1979). In the first book he looks at madness, the central plot, in terms of two significant events. The first is the great exclusion in the middle of the seventeenth century which resulted in locking up of the deviants and building mental assylums. Later in the period of the French Revolution, there followed a time of spurious liberation. A new body of psychological know how devised war ways of tackling the mentally-ill people. Foucault suggests that in the old mental hospitals, the

mad people were left to themselves in all the horror that implied. Yet the horror was comparatively better than the solemn destruction of the mad by committees of expert with their changing manuals of nostrums. Similarly in 'Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison' (1979), Foucault writes of the new architectures of prisons, schools and hospitals where discipline is to the maximum. The judicial machinery is backed by a new crowed of experts who are specialized in testifying the mental health of the prisoner. Discipline is reflected in the factory as well as the hospital constructed to correcting the prisoner. The working men's dwelling places were also disciplined with the rooms being divided and morality being ensured.

The new kind of power is different from the one executed by the sovereign. The new power creates not just discipline but new conceptions of 'truth' and 'false hood' as well. This power is the creation of bourgeois society. This power is the creation of bourgeois society. This power operates like a technology, but does not originate with any identifiable person or group. Individual tactics are however developed for particular needs. For example, prison architecture is modified to make it essentially difficult for prisoners to hang themselves and the building of a prison is so designed to make the enforcement of power still stronger. The prisoners themselves are also classified and rearranged and discipline rules their life as well. As a result, 'a complex play of supports in mutual engagement, different mechanisms of power' come about. Foucault writes, 'Let us not, therefore, ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes

which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours etc. In other words, rather than ask overselves how the sovereign appears to us in his lofty isolation, we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts etc.' (Foucault 1980 ; 97)

The constitution of the subject with the purpose of dominating him/her as outlined by Foucult is reasonably similar to the subjection of the peasants and forest folk in the Garhwal or the fisherfolk in Kerala. In the first case, gradually the government has sought to conquer the forests and sell them for commercial purposes, this resulted in the men folk being forced to go to the plains in search of livelihood, which led to their being gradually inducted into the commercial ways of the city and they were to an extent less attached to their forests which had previously been a part of their being. As a result some of the men folk had even agreed when the government wanted to open a potato cum horticulture farm on a part of the oak forest region in Dungri – Paintoli. The very fact that some of the forest people had agreed to this venture suggests their gradual subjection, as Foucault says, with the growth of 'energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc.' The desire for easy money, a different life-style, less of hard work, increasing need for security and stability coupled with the commercial interests promoted by the state together with the capitalist enterprises interested in commerce from the forests, lead to the transformation of the forest-peasant of the hills into a 'subject' of the forces of power operative there. However the constitution of the subjects in the Narmada Valley, the victims of displacement have not

been the result of their own needs for material desire, but that of other, like the owners of the sugar mills to be opened along the Narmada canal or the state which hopes to improve the life styles of the'few' at the expense of the masses and also generate electricity revenues at the same time. Subjection thus occurs slowly progressively and is meant to work for the forces of power and dominate the subjects.

What Foucault describes in his books 'Madness and Civilization', and 'Discipline and Punish', reflects the 'humane' face of power, which is only more coercive. The shift, from 'atrocious' torture to humane 'correction' do not in reality reflect humanitarianism or recognition of the autonomy the person. Indeed this human-faced' control is a more effective mechanism which spreads its web of power in the everyday life of the social body. The real, point of the penal system, Foucault feels is not moderation in the punishment, not to punish less but to punish better; to punish with an attenuated severity perhaps, but in order to punish with more universality and necessity; to insert the power to punish more deeply into the social body' (Foucault 1979 : 82)

Power operates as an open-ended network where everyday practices continue to overpower people progressively into the network. To chart the micro-power reveal the general terrain of the larger social battles which occur.[3] Thus power enters from the micro-level, 'the smallest elements of the body', and finally spread to more general mechanisms of global domination.

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[3] Ibid., p. 143.

Such a nature of power is clearly visible in the locales of the Chipko movements, Kerala and Narmada valley as well. For example, in Kerala, the Norwegian project began as an experimentation for modernization of the fisheries sector, sponsored by the state. But what began as an experiment finally ate into the fishing economy with the large-scale operation by capitalist trawlers and purseseiners. The movements by the fisherfolk is thus directed to the network of technology, capitalism and the state which seeks easy profits at the cost of marginalisation of a whole lot of people. The operation of this network at the particular sites of the movement is reflective as to how the powers make their feel as 'micro powers'. Basically the contest in each of the ecological movements chosen, are in protest against this global domination of the networks of technologies, capital and state. It also shows clearly as to how this network seeks to enter our lives and rule every aspect of it, so much so that a person is rendered nothing but a toy in the subjection of this network. While the manifestation of this network of power in this particular case takes the context of ecology and ecology related domination, the latter only shows how this global network of domination, a phenomenon of modern bourgeois culture, is gradually set to conquer free spaces, of nature and of those who freely tend to reside in nature.

Contesting Hegemony

The network of power which finds itself contested in course of the ecological movements assumes a hegemonic form in so far as it is exercised by groups of elites and individual leaders to enforce rule over the population of the respective societies. The form of power exercise is hegemonic, as the modern Indian intelligents has greatly supported and endorsed modern

western science viewing as it a liberating and modernising force which was chosen to build modern India.[4] The elitist support to science & technology and the capitalist interests affected the people partially through compliance and consent even though passive in nature. The state thereby play effective role in convincing the people that selling oak trees in the Garhwal Himalayas would improve the forest economy and that the electricity generated from the damming of Narmada would light homes of the poor as well. The real implications of the disasters that struck the peasants in the Garhwal or outsees in Narmada valley or the fisherfolk in Kerala were felt gradually after much distress had been caused.

The concept of Hegemony is used by Gramsci to describe the form of relationship between a leading group and social class and the subordinate groups and classes where means of consent have acted to ensure domination. 'The Prison Note Books' conceive both the state and the civil society as exercising hegemony, and the state is finally presented as operating not only as 'the apparatus of government, but also the "private" apparatus of "hegemony" on civil society'[5] Barry Stuart, commenting on hegemony writes that it "contributes to or constitutes a form of social cohesion not through force or coercion, nor necessarily through consent but most effectively by way of practices, techniques and methods which infiltrate minds and bodies, cultural practices which cultivate behaviours and beliefs, tastes, desires and needs as seemingly naturally occurring qualities and properties embodied in the psychic, and physical reality (or 'truth') of the

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[4] Following Gramsci – hegemony is not related to coercion and regulation through police and military means. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Note Books* (ed.), & translated by Hoare & G. Nowell Smith, London : Lawrence & Wishart, 1971.

[5] ibid., p. 261.

human subject."[6] what happen in a hegemonic situation is that government operates according to 'the way in which the conduct of individuals or groups might be directed."[7] Such action is in most cases dictated by the elite interests and the achievement of the government is equivalent to that of hegemony. This governmentalization of power relations in which security apparatuses and 'insurantial technologies' have predominated, become 'rationalized and centralized in the form of, or under the auspices, state institutions'.

Such nationalization of governmental of power relations may very well be found in the Indian scenario as well. Science gained a moral legitimacy through these modernizing elites in India, writes V.V. Krishna.[8] Science as the path which would lead India towards material prosperity and economic development. On the lines of the west, thus the Indian intelligentsia regarded scientific industrial development as India's road to well being. In the CSIR, Science Reporter, (Nehru Commemoration Number), Nehru is quoted as, "It is science alone that can store the problem of longer and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people"'. The Gandhian alternative of the village – based development Sarvodaya was thus sidelined to Nehru's socialism. The official discourse during the first two decades after independence was jubilant in hailing the role of modern science and the

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[6] Barry Smart, "The Politics of Truth and the Problem of Hegemony," in David Couzens Hoy (ed.), 1986, *Foucault : A critical reader*, Basil Black well, Oxford, UK,

[7] Foucault 1980, *Power / Knowledge : Selected Interviews and Other Writings* 1972-1977, ed. C., Gordon, Brighton: Harvester Press.

[8] V.V. Krishna, "Science Technology and Counter Hegemony: Some Reflections on the Contemporary Science Movements in India" in *Sociology of the Sciences*, Vol. 19, 1997, p. 380.

effort to enable the development of a scientific temper in the country. Criticism of the official discourse adopted by India began only after the oil crisis in 1972. Incidentally this is also the period when the environmental movements in India started with the Chipko movement in the Garwal Himalayas. Strikingly, V.V. Krishna notes, the grass-root level amidst the oil crisis saw the development of the concern for environment and ecology, the rise of alternative and aprpopriate technology groups which drew inspiration from the Gandhian perspective and philosophical orientations which sent the signal of the emergence of a contesting constituency for modern science and technology protagonists.

Frankfurt School Marxism provided a critical theory which confronted the social role of knowledge as reflected in science. Adorno, and Horkheimer have criticised the ideological role played by science for changing man's relationship with nature. The liberation of humans from nature have resulted in the domination of the latter by the former. But the process did not limit itself at that. Domination of nature resulted in the creation of a dominating mentality, one which led them to dominate each other in the name of technological reason and scientific rationality. Scientific rationality leads to both enlightenment about nature on the one hand and also alienation of human beings, 'through the social relations consequent upon the domination of nature.'[9] Domination of nature is replicated in the domination in social relationships, of one class on another.

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[9] Tim Dant, 1991, *Knowledge Ideology and Discourse A Sociological Perspective* Routledge, London and New York,

Herbert Marcuse brings out the hegemonic character of technological reason when he writes, "the technological controls appear to be the very embodiment of Reason for the benefit of all social groups and interests – to such an extent that all contractiction seems irrational and all counteraction impossible." (Marcuse, 1972 : 22) Marcuse explains the legitimation of domination by increase in production. Social control is no longer affected by political repression or the open domination by upper elite classes. Instead the creation and satisfaction of needs of the people, makes the social control effective. Writing on the penetration of technology in our lives, Marcuse notes, "The means of mass transportation and communication, the commodities of lodging, food and clothing, the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industry carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the Producers and through the latter to the whole." (Marcuse 1972 : 24) Habermas explains the scientific hegemony by incorporating the role of the state. The process of development from liberal to advanced capitalism was accompanied by two significant factors. Firstly, the state took the role of intervention in the relations of production for controling the dysturctions of capitalism and secondly, the intervention of the state in the forces of production by organizing science to generate technology is called the 'scientization technology by Habermas. He wrote,

"Thus science and technology become the leading productive force, rendering inoperative the condition far Marx's labour theory value. (Habermas 1971 : 104)

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Advanced capitalism thus sees social evolution being determined by science and technology. State intervention and the scientization of technology create the basis for the evolution. This is precisely the kind of situation we have in India and which made its presence felt in each of the ecological movements that finally led the people to protest against the scientization of their life which did not result in their betterment but marginalisation.

The ecological movements reflected local-level resistance to the scientization which armed with capitalism and backed by the state brought into question the very survival of the people and the survival of the ecology which enabled their suvival. However the protest against such hegemony which made its presence felt in couse of the movements in the 1970s, took place around the same time when the science and technology choices of the country was coming into review. The optimism of the 1950s which was made in favour of science and industrial capital underwent a socio-economic critique by different publics. The fallacies of the government sponsored development, which had led to considerable impoverishment led to intense scrutiny of the benefits and progress which the country was projected to be achieving. Marginalisation, discounted, poverty continued to grow and the involvement of the scientific principle whether in agriculture (in course of the Green Revolution) or industry, turned out to be unable in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor and that inequality was found to be growing.

The disenchantment in the leading rote of science in bailing Indian society out of its social-economic crisis grew yet stronger with the realisation

of India's failure in institutionalization of the relevant social organization and management structures within the ambit of technological systems per se and the context within which they operated[10] The Bhopal Gas Tragedy which claimed ovr 4000 lives and affected yet many more was just another example of the failure of technology in the industrial sector. All these related causes led to a public opinion by professionals, social activist, political actors, scholars as protest groups with grass root connections, against life threatening technological systems, with the life of the poorer being exposed to a still greater threat.

The environmental movements have been mobilized primarity by the people directly attected by the shifts in the environments. Yet the very fact that the protestors were provided a hearing space, inspite of being located in far-off, marginal areas at the national level and also to international audiences is evidence of not only the movements generating a discourse on able authority leading the movements but also the significant role of the allies who helped in developing the scope and horizon of the movements. Harsh Sethi classifies such mediation into two basic categories.[11] These are organizations, both voluntary and political which work with the affected people or in their areas. These include the organizations like sarvodaya organizations in Garhwal which associate leaders like Chandi Prasad Bhatt, the Dasholi Gram Swarajya Sangh (Dass) associated with the Chipko movement, non political unions like KTSMF, in Kerala, the Arch Vahini and Narmada Bachao Andolan in the Narmadavalley. Other category of

[10] V.V. Krishna "Science Technology in Counter Hegemony : Some Reflection of the Contemporary Science Movements in India" in *Sociology of the Sciences* Vol. 19, 1997.
[11] Harsh Sethi , "Ecological Struggles in India", in Ponna Wignaraja (ed.), 1993, *New Social Movements in the South : Empowering the People*, Vistaar Publications, New Delhi, 1993.

actors involved in the ecological movement as allies include journalists, film – makers, people related to the media, celebrity writers like Arundhati Roy, for example, who have helped in developing a discourse which contests the hegemony which the marginalised people hit by environmental shifts have sought to fight against. The Narmada valley project was opposed at the international level by groups and agencies outside India which helped the struggle to stop the world bank funds for the project. Thus the discourse on the movements. provided by the allies have played supportive role in doing away the hegemonic nexus of science, technology and capitalism.

Authority in Leadership:

The environmental movements despite their spontaneity of protest have been provided able leadership in all cases which have been responsible in organizing the movement. The leadership which helped to get the movement together provide a discourse on the nature of authority which helped in these leaders to establish their authority over the people. Max Weber defined domination ("authority") as 'the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons'[12] while such authority does not refer to all kinds of power or influence over others (persons), it definitely implies a certain amount of minimum compliance on part of those who are under the authority. In course of the ecological movements, it has been the case that the primary actors of the movements i.e. the people affected by the environmental destruction have expressed faith in the authority of their varied leadership.

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[12] Max Weber, 1922, *Economy and Society: An outline of Interpretive sociology*, New York : Bedminster Press, 1968, translated by G. Roth and G. Witlich, Originally called, Writschaft und Gesellschaft, p. 213.

The leadership in certain cases been been individual leaders, while also along with them organizations (Political or Otherwise),. working towards the same end. The concept of authority which I used to classify the observed forms of authority in the movements are traced to Max weber and his classification of ideal types of authority.

Weber distinguishes three pure types of legitimate domination, the validity to which rested on three different grounds:

1. Firstly, rational grounds of authority, where there is faith in the legality of the enforced rules and regulations, from which stem of authority of those commanding the rules.

2. Secondly, the traditional grounds, which derived legitimization from traditions dated back in time, and,

3. Thirdly, the charismatic grounds, which derived from the character of the individual person to which was attached a standard of sanctity, heroism, and these consequently led people to accept the authority of the individual.

Leadership in the ecological movements belong to either of two categories of rational legal authority or charismatic authority. Of prime importance in the ecological movements is the role of individual leaders, who through their exemplary life of struggle, their sharing of the same life and aspirations of the local people have helped inspire many to the cause of the movements. Included in this category is the authority shown by Sunderland Bahuguna, Baba Amte, Medha Patkar, Nuns like Philomena–Marie who have just not spoken, written or mediated on behalf of the cause,

but have shared with the activists, their trauma, their struggle, their life. There is a definite amount of charisma in the way that the activists look up to their leaders, but what make their reverence unique is the fact that the feel that their leaders is one of their own people but at the sametime above them and worth of both adoration and respect.

Weber describes "charisma" as 'a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, super woman an at least specifically exceptional power or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as as "leader" (Weber : 1922:241) According to Weber, the recognition of the charisma on part of those subject to authority goes a long way in establishing the validity of the charisma. This recognition charisma is given freely by the subjects, with there always remaining a sense of awe, miracle, hero worship and total faith in the leader. Psychologically, the cumulation of these qualities lead to a sort of personal devotion to the possessor of charisma, which develop both in situations of hope and enthusiasms, and despair and difficulty.

Sunderlal Bahuguna is one of the great charismatic leaders involved in the chipko movement responsible for the spread of the message of Chipko both in India and to world audience. A follower of the Gandhian ideology, Bahuguna is well – known for the fasts, footmarches (Padayatras) conducted by him and in the main writing and talking to a variety of audiences. His listeners have included local peasants and forest people, school children,

university students, scientists, professionals and also international forum. Bahuguna tooday is the recognised environmentalist looked upon with great reverential respect by both the national and international community. He lives in his ashram in the Garhwal hills and has been consistently active in the organization of the Chipko struggles.

Similar in terms of personality description is the eighty-two year old Baba Amte, the social worker torved environmentalist who has for several year been a part of the Narmada Bacho Andolan in the Narmada Valley. His full name is Murlidhar Devidas Amte and he also lives on the site of the movement, in his ashram in Chhoti Kasravad a small hillock by the Narmada in Barwani, Madhya Pradesh.[13] A believer in the Gandhian methodology of Satyagrada, Baba Amte has been to a great extent responsible in leading the movement on the one hand and spreading the message of the Narmada across to national and international audiences on the other hand. He has received several international awards including the Templeton Prize in 1990, the Magasaysay Award in 1985 and several others.

Popularly known as Medhajiji (sister), the social scientist term the Tata Institute for Social Studies, Bombay, Madha Patkar, the backbore of the NGO, Narmada Bochao Andolan, which has become synonymous with the movement in the Narmada Valley is looked upon by the people almost like a godess in whom the people have thrusted Their faith. Amita Baviskar writes, `Her charisma part magic, part engineering – mobilizes people, tranforming the equation between resources and collective action. Peoples'

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[13] Gautam Siddharth, Old man and the river, the Sunday Pioneer, July 11, 1999.

allegiance is as much to her personally, as to the changed ideology or collective consciousness of the need to fight that she has brought about.'[14] She has quoted in her book 'In the Belly of the River' (1995), another activist, Sitarambhai as saying. "She is a woman, yet she has so much rage within her, so much magnetism. If the people of Gujarat [those who oppose the dam] could hear her – there is such truth in what she says that they could be compelled to agree. But they are taken up in their dishonesty. Medhajiji has given her life for the valley."[15] The emotions of the people regarding their leader shows the extent to which her charisma operates among the people. Infact in all the cases the sacrifices, sufferings borne by the leadership went a long way in the development of the personal devotion of the activists of the movement towards their leadership.

The other type of authority that may be deciphered among the leadership of the ecological movements of Chipko, Narmada Valley and Kerala is reasonably similar to the pure type of legal authority identified by Weber. The legal norm, according to Weber may be decided in agreement or imposition, being based on value rationality or expediency which brings about a certain obedience among members of the organization. The authority bases itself on established rules, and may be exercised by those who are provided with the power to exercise it. Infact the person who exercises the authority 'is himself also subject to an impersonal order by orienting his actions to it in his own dispositions and commands.'[16] Weber himself

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[14] Baviskar Amita, 'In the Belly of the River' OUP Delhi, 1995 p. 214
[15] Ibid, Pg. 215
[16] Max Weber, 1922, Economy and Society: An outline of Interpretive sociology, New York : Bedminster Press, 1968, translated by G. Roth and G. Witlich, Originally called, Writschaft und Gesellschaft, p. 217.

suggests that his categories are pure or ideal types, and in practice such ideal categories are hardly found.

The authority exercised by organizations like the DGSS, Uttarakhand Sangharsh Shaugarsh Vahini, non-political unious in Kerala like KTSMF, political unions of the fishermen like CITU, INTUC, AITUC Independent Fishermen's Union of the clergy and organizational leaders of the Arch Vahini and NBA in the Narmada Valley in many ways resemble the rational – legal authority identified by Weber. They are so because the leaders derive then authority from the organizational umbrella and are mostly restricted within the contours of the organization's mobilizations. However, the nature of the movements and the kind of people who are associated with the organizations directing the struggle are often people like social workers and others interested for the cause of the struggle and thus their leadership is not restricted within the impersonal boundary that a pure type of rational-legal authority entails. A lot of emotion and sacifice is applicable for eventhe leaders of political and non-political organizations. Nevertheless, their kind of authority is different from that of the charismatic leaders, often with whom a movement is singularly identified.

What emerges out of the discourse on how power – hegemony play in context of the development scenario in India. The need for interpreting how authority is exercised by the leadership of these struggles helps only to move close to that indomitable spirit and strength which inspires the movements and keeps them going.

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