

Study of Social Movements on Water in India

**Study co-ordinated by
SOPPECOM**

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We do hope that this report is able to generate some interest and debate around the much under researched area in the water sector.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Water sector crisis and the changing water sector discourse in India

There seems to be a near consensus amongst all concerned with water in India – practitioners and civil society organizations (CSOs), academics, policy makers, lending institutions and so on – that the water sector in India is going through a serious crisis, though the characterization and detailing of this crisis may differ. The wider context in which this crisis is located has also been changing since the 1990s and especially since the beginning of the 21st century. How to address the challenge of meeting the growing demand for fresh water while maintaining ecosystem sustainability has been one of the important collective concerns in different national and international forums. The effort in this section is to unravel some of the important dimensions of this crisis which are multiered and multilayered and also the type of changes that are taking place in the discourse as a means to examine the role of social movements in the water sector.

Water sector crisis in India

In the post independence period, India witnessed unprecedented investments in water infrastructure to meet its domestic water, irrigation, industrial and hydro-power needs with an emphasis mostly on large dams, storage structures and canal networks. These investments in water infrastructure helped in meeting the growing food requirements of an expanding population by providing assured irrigation to some areas, a priority focus of the Green Revolution.¹

However, in spite of the massive public investment estimated at more than Rs. 120,000 crores, only about 55 mha of cropped land has been brought under irrigation so far accounting for little more than 30% of the cropped land in the country. Of this, more than 50% is under well irrigation. The number of bore/tube wells and dug wells has grown manifold since the 1960s as has the extraction of groundwater for irrigation. However, it must be highlighted that groundwater irrigation is driven by private not state investment.

¹ For a recent discussion on the water sector issues in India, see Water Resources Division, Planning Commission, Government of India, 2009

This last point apart, the Parthasarathy Committee, which reviewed watershed programmes under the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), succinctly highlights some of the critical issues and problems of irrigation in India: 1) irrigation facilities have been concentrated and restricted and vast areas have remained outside the purview of irrigation; 2) in 170 most backward districts in the country – the poverty geography of India – rainfed agriculture is practiced; 3) for the first time since the mid-1960s food-grain production has grown at a slower rate than the population in the 1990s; 4) growing unemployment in the rural areas and farmers' suicides are symptomatic of the growing agrarian crisis in the country; and 5) irrigated agriculture seems to have hit a plateau (Parthasarathy Committee Report, 2006).

Irrigation development, in other words, has been both unsustainable and inequitable. The over emphasis on large storages has led to problems of displacement and environmental unsustainability. Overdraft of groundwater has led to depletion of groundwater, the increasing number of “dark” watersheds is a sign of this, and problems of salinisation, arsenic poisoning and increase in fluoride levels in water. The lack of effective governance in the groundwater sector has deepened the drinking water crisis in rural areas, the impact of which is largely borne by the rural poor and women. There is a growing urban-rural divide in terms of access to safe drinking water. More and more villages are running out of water (Shiva 2002, Sengupta 2006, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c) and for women water scarcity means traveling longer distances in search of water (Joy and Paranjape, 2005) leading to serious health problems (Charles (ed.), 1990); Swaminathan, 1997; Seaforth, 2001 cited in Joy and Paranjape, 2005). With growing industrialization in the country the demand by industries for water has also steadily been growing, having possibly serious implications for the agriculture sector and especially for food security. Apart from the regional disparities in the development of irrigation – in Punjab about 80% of the cropped area is irrigated where as in states like Maharashtra and Orissa it is only 15 to 17% – access to irrigation has been inequitable. The expansion of irrigated area has been much faster on larger sized farms compared to small and marginal farms. There is, however, very little disaggregated data to show how this inequitable access to water maps on to caste and gender.

The estimated annual per capita availability of water has also been decreasing quite steeply in India as elsewhere² – in 1951 it was 5,137 m³/capita/year, but by 2000 it had reduced to 1,865 m³ and by 2005 further reduced to 1,342 m³,³ much lower than the global per capita average availability of about 2000 m³ (Paranjape and Joy, 2004).³ There are also studies that show that a sizable population in India could face “absolute water scarcity” by 2025 (Seckler *et al*, 1998)⁴

Coupled with the issues of scarcity and inequitable access to water are questions of low efficiency of irrigation water use, decreasing productivity of irrigated agriculture, the vicious circle of low quality service-low cost recovery-low maintenance of the system, increasing levels of pollution, decreasing groundwater levels and unregulated extractions, increase in the frequency and intensity of droughts and a growing number of villages which do not have access to safe drinking water.

Water scarcity has tremendous implications for agricultural production. Farming in India is a means of livelihood for the majority of the population and not just a sector that produces food. Thousands of farmers have committed suicide the last few years in India in response to low crop production, low prices and heavy debts. Though hard figures, especially at the national level are hard to come by, studies show that between 2002 and 2006 17,500 farmers committed suicide every year (Patel 2007) and state-wise reports indicate that the trend still continues. While the reasons for these deaths are still debated, scientists and social science researchers have noted that suicides might well be linked at least partially to a drop in agricultural productivity which can be partially attributed to changes in state agricultural policy and to water shortages, particularly for small farmers.

The severity and diversity of this “crisis” is reflected in the increasing number of water conflicts in India of varying intensity, types and scales. Water conflicts now reach every level; divide every segment of our society – nations, states, regions and sub-regions within states, districts, village communities, political parties, castes and farmers. Though the doom’s day

²Several countries around the world are facing an increasingly severe water crisis (see for instance Xiaogang 2004, Olivera 2004, and Shiva 2002). Water-abundant regions have become water scarce, and water scarce regions face water famines

³ Two caveats are in place here: 1) these figures only show potential availability and not actual access. Actual access is much less as it is mediated by many constraining factors; 2) these are average figures and average figures often hide extremes. There are many areas where availability would be even much less.

⁴ Of course the issue of scarcity is further confounded by inequitable distribution. Those who talk about scarcity do not often talk about distributional inequity. The issue of water scarcity is a contested terrain. Water scarcity is often seen as a social and cultural construct (Mehta,2005; Jairath, 2008)

predictions of 'water wars' may not have taken place – at least not at the scale of a world war – water is radically altering and affecting political boundaries all over the world, between as well as within countries and communities. In India, water conflicts are likely to get worse before they begin to be resolved. Till then they pose a significant threat to economic growth, social stability, security and ecosystem health. And under threat are the poorest of the poor as well as the very sources of our water – our rivers, wetlands and aquifers.⁵

Water sector reforms and changing discourse in India: Responses of state and civil society

As mentioned earlier, since the early 1990s, and more significantly over the last 10 years, the water sector discourse has been drastically changing in India and other parts of the world. Many new concepts, terminologies and governance structures have come into the discourse. Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), participatory irrigation management (PIM) and co-management are new institutional solutions. In addition to these new types of approaches, there has been emphasis on water users' associations, irrigation management turnover, water privatisation, river basin organisations, multi stakeholder platforms and processes, and independent regulatory bodies. The World Water Council (WWC) and the Global Water Partnership (GWP) are supra-national bodies and the GWP has national and area partnerships spread all over the world. The World Water Forums, organised primarily by WWC and GWP once every three years, seem to be directing the policy discourse on water the world over.

Both state and civil society have tried to respond to this crisis in a myriad of ways⁶. Kameshwar Choudhary describes most of the responses and broadly categorises them – either as statist or state-led, NGO/civil society led or market oriented (Choudhary 2000). Both state and society have shaped each other's responses. As far as the state is concerned we see that its language has changed and so has its thrust. From the earlier largely technocentric model, the state has moved on to approaching the crisis from an economic and institutional perspective. After the Dublin Principles of 1992 the discourse around water

⁵ For a synthesized understanding of water conflicts in India see Joy et al, 2008, "A Million Revolts in the Making Understanding: Water Conflicts: A Compendium of Indian Experience" in Joy et al (ed) 2008. This edited volume, *Water Conflicts in India: A Million Revolts in the Making*, has tried to capture different types of water conflicts in India. The World Commission on Dams talk about conflict between rural and urban populations, upstream and downstream interests, agricultural, industrial and domestic sectors, human needs and the requirements of a healthy environment (World Commission on Dams, 2000).

⁶ State and civil society

changed primarily to considering water an economic good. Clearly the thrust for a certain period moved away from investing in infrastructure to managing the resource through smart governance. Institutions and pricing thereby became the key words with the state showing eagerness to move out of provisioning of water. The state has proactively focused on taking steps, mostly at the instance of multilateral donors, to put forth rules and policies for supposedly better management of 'scarce' water. Broadly speaking, the state has taken the following steps to address the crisis

- Formulate laws and policies
- Institutionalize reforms
- Create water entitlements
- Build partnerships between users, private interests and the state

We also hear increasingly about public-private partnerships, about making water rights tradable, the role of private service providers in irrigation management and about social vs. economic goods characteristics of water. The policy push towards economic pricing of water stems from this. There is also talk about virtual water transfers across national boundaries and water has already been brought under the purview of global trade by including it in the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS). All these and many other developments in the water sector (and also developments outside the water sector) seem to indicate that the water sector is being impacted significantly by the Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG) regime unleashed in the country since the early 1990s. There is also an increasing feeling that global lending organisations such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) are dictating the water policy of the country and of the different states.⁷

Within India, Maharashtra seems to be leading the pack in ushering in most of these reforms. The recent policy initiatives in Maharashtra – the Maharashtra State Water Policy (2003), Maharashtra Management of Irrigation System by Farmers Act (2005), and Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority Act (2005) – all reflect this. In fact the timing of these reforms makes the motivation of this policy initiatives suspect. Moreover, reforms have coincided with the huge loan that the government of Maharashtra has

⁷The World Bank has decided to play a much larger role in the water sector in India. The World Bank's outlay itself is going to rise from \$ 700 million over the previous four years to \$ 3200 million in the next four years. World Bank lending is tied to its recipe for water sector reforms in the country (see Brisco and Mallick 2006).

negotiated with the World Bank as part of its irrigation sector reforms. The World Bank has sanctioned a loan of US\$ 325 million to assist the Government of India with the implementation of the Maharashtra Water Sector Improvement Project in Maharashtra. No wonder the World Bank has hailed the type of reforms that have been unleashed in Maharashtra especially fixing entitlements, appointing independent water regulatory authorities and so on (Brisco and Mallick, 2006).⁸

So how have civil society initiatives been different? Has civil society offered an alternative way forward? Civil society initiatives are diverse in their very nature and spread. They range from what may be seen as short term campaigns run by concerned individuals or NGOs to large scale political and non-political mobilisations. These civil society initiatives have initiated research, struggles, campaigns and activities which have ranged from contesting inequitable water sharing, prioritizing certain water uses over others, highlighting water quality issues, critiquing the privatisation of water and illustrating means of water conservation and water resource development. These responses could also be categorized as follows: (1) supporting or implementing state reforms/policies and programmes; (2) challenging the existing frameworks of reforms/programmes in the water sector either through an oppositional mode or in the form of piloting and (3) suggesting alternatives.

Each of these civil society responses has created different kinds of impacts in addressing the larger concerns in the water sector. Civil society initiatives around water do get documented and written about, though largely in terms of ‘outcomes’. There is little understanding about these initiatives from a social movement perspective. For example, over the last few decades many social initiatives and movements around water have emerged. A few illustrative examples include the Pani Panchayat movement and the more recent South Maharashtra movement (Pani Sangharsh Chalwal) in Maharashtra that address the issue of equitable distribution and sustainable use of water, the water parliament movement led by Tarun Bharat Sangh in Rajasthan that has stressed self governance; and the Swadhyaya movement in Gujarat that has stressed recharging of wells and groundwater. Similarly, mass mobilisations that have taken place around large scale displacements due to dams have created unrest among the submerged populations and brought new meanings to their lives.

⁸ For a detailed critique of water sector reforms in Maharashtra, see Joy and Kulkarni, 2008. This is a report of a study commissioned by National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS), Pune; forthcoming publication from NCAS

These movements have an impact not only on the local politics around water, but also on the macro level discourse on water and more specifically on water policy. These initiatives have been talked about in the water sector due to their widespread impacts, but little is known about the making of these social movements/initiatives. Matters of strategy, rationality, organising and mobilising is often left to our imagination and all we know or hear of are the outcomes described in terms of success or failure.

Over the last 20-30 years, efforts have also emerged from within civil society, challenging the dominant paradigm of development in the water sector and creatively engaging with and responding to the challenges posed by both the crisis, and the changes that are taking place. Alternative strategies are being put forward that focus more on sustainable, equitable and democratic management. The innumerable struggles against dams (against displacement and submergence), mass mobilizations around equitable water distribution, innovative experiences in participatory irrigation management (PIM) that go beyond efficiency and address concerns of equity, sustainability and democratization, struggles against water privatization of various types, multi-stakeholder platforms and processes to resolve conflicts around water pollution, successful watershed development experiences throughout the country, struggles by farmers against water being increasingly taken over by industries and many such positive experiences are all part of the efforts by non-state actors to find answers to the multi faceted and multi tiered water crisis. It is our belief that looking at these experiences from a social movement perspective will add value to their analysis and help find a pathway for re-structuring the water sector in more equitable, sustainable and democratic lines.

The Study: Social movements around water

As should be clear by now, our interest in the study on social movements around water comes from our location as academics, researchers and activists concerned with the water sector. The study is driven by an interest in examining civil society initiatives around water through a social movement's perspective. Besides the obvious interest that such a study would have, it is our belief that social movements root social actions and issues more deeply, have an impact that is often much wider and much more sustained if they are successful than more localized initiatives of an NGO-type. If this possibility is accepted, exploration of issues related to the possibility of the emergence of social movements around water issues and the factors that are responsible for their emergence, growth and decline should provide important learning in respect of charting a pathway of overcoming the crisis in the water sector.

Though there has been a considerable amount of academic work on social movements in India there has not been much systematic and rigorous work done to critically analyse and understand social movements around water in India. This lack of attention partly comes from the way water is conventionally understood- a resource linked to land. Although water is recognised as adding value to land, it has never been acknowledged as an independent means of production the way land has been. Struggles around water are therefore understood as a subset of an essentially peasant movement or as part of an environmental movement and efforts to understand the relationship between social movements and water issues have remained isolated attempts (for example, the review by Kameshwar Chaudhary and the IWMI study of the Swadhyaya movement)..

This study is an attempt at understanding both the 'why' and 'how' of social movements around water. The emphasis is on exploring how movement issues emerge, what dominates the strategies and actions of social movements and what comprises the making of a social movement. It is important to know why collective action has emerged, how collective action has evolved and been sustained in ensuring equitable allocations, democratizing water governance and adoption of water saving technologies in India. Very little or no systematic research examines these issues.

By creating rules and institutional arrangements, moreover, collective water management may ensure sustainability and equity. Such organized collective action varies in emphasis,

scope (geographic/region), organizational form/structure, participation/involvement of local people, strategies adopted, and mechanisms created and adopted for using and saving of water. Moreover, movements have been influenced and shaped by contextual factors like indigenous knowledge, and local social structure.

These movements also have an impact not only on the local politics around water, but also on the macro level discourse on water and more specifically on water policy. Thus, it is important to critically examine some of these social movements around water in India – the factors that contribute to the rise and development (and sometimes even collapse) of such movements, their impact on both the immediate context – both in terms of time and space – of these movements and its interaction with the larger context of the policy discourse on water. Finally, what alternatives do these social movements put forward in terms of water distribution and use and in terms of water governance?

Typology of Social movements around water: Contestation as a defining feature

Social theory is a highly contested terrain in terms of basic definitions, methodologies, meanings and viewpoints. It was therefore important to arrive at a working definition of the basic terms so that the scope of the study would be bounded and collaborative work could be initiated.

Often a distinction is also made between protest movements and constructive or positive movements. This distinction, however, is not useful. Protest movements and the constructive or positive movements, need to be seen as positive movements in that they seek to replace norms and practices that they are protesting against with different norms and practices. Moreover, they often bring new ideas into the realm of discourse, especially in cases where earlier discourse often results in exclusions to which the discourse itself is blind. In other words, every movement is characterised by a particular kind of contestation of dominant discourse or practice. We therefore define social movements as collective actions of fairly large scale – with non-local scope, involving a constituency or participation that covers at least a few villages or a region – initiated and sustained over a period through common approaches/ideologies and which have not only a formal organisational structure and process but also non-institutional ties and processes that embed them in their social contexts.

Nevertheless, there remain other grey areas, especially in relation to state action and in relation to progressive social change. State initiated action backed by social mobilisation (like the polio vaccination drive or the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), or similar NGO led or civil society action (many watershed development projects could fall in this category) for limited objectives but backed by social mobilisation could also be characterised as some kind of social movement. There is little work done on typifying movements around water. Kameshwar Choudhary's work mentioned earlier is one of them. It broadly typifies civil society responses as collaborationist, confrontationist or autonomous based largely on the mode of actions. Collaborationists are those which engage with the state and confrontationist are those which protest against the state and autonomous are those which independently pursue their own agendas. Choudhary talks of possibilities of shifts from one mode of action to the other. However there is little discussion on how these shifts take place or how in fact more than one mode of action is employed by the civil society initiatives at the same time.

For the purpose of this study we suggested a rough typology that tried to capture the spectrum of variation from largely state-driven initiatives to non-state social movements. We detail these different types of movements as follows:

- a) State action (for example, Participatory Irrigation Management Acts and policies)
- b) Civil society initiatives – limited in time, space, objectives and participation (for example, small campaign groups, PIL groups with little mass participation)
- c) Scaling up of state actions and civil society initiatives without social mobilisation (for example, NGOs and/or the state setting up watershed development networks)
- d) Social mobilisation for replication of promising state and civil society initiatives (for example, Swajaldhara or Pani Roko Abhiyan)
- e) Social initiatives which do not necessarily aim at radical social transformation (for example, Swadhyaya Movement, Palamau initiative, Tarun Bharat Sangh)
- f) Social movements aimed at mobilisation around explicitly water issues – say for access to water but within an agenda of some kind of radical social transformation (for example, Pani Sangharsh Chlawal, Pani Panchayat, Ek Gaon Ek Panavatha)

Within this spectrum, the study concentrates more on the social movements described in e) and f) respectively as these fall best into the definition we suggested earlier.

Selection of Cases

With our classification in mind, we set out to select cases that would broadly qualify under e and f categories respectively. An open call was sent out through different e-groups and through word of mouth. There certainly was not anything close to an overwhelming response to the call, something that needs to be investigated further. We received fifteen proposals and many were of NGO led initiatives which did not classify as movements and therefore could not be included. Others were not selected either because they did not operate at a mass scale or because they were not engaged in a contestation of any kind. The rest could best be described as network activities which did have mass involvement but which operated largely in NGO mode with considerable external financial support.

The final list of selected cases broadly covered issues of water quality and pollution; equitable sharing of water, priority of water allocations to industry over agriculture, water resource development and conservation and finally one that explored collective action around social identity using the medium of water. Of the fifteen proposals received the core team selected seven:

1. Study Of Social Movement On Conflict Over Water Diversion From Hirakud Reservoir , Orissa
2. Kengrehalla Rejuvenation Movement: Restoring water affluence in Western Ghats, Karnataka
3. Palathulli (Many drops) Movement of Malayala Manorama for Water, Kerala
4. Megh Pyne Abhiyan's (Cloud water campaign) Initiative in Bihar
5. Social Movements against Industrial Water Pollution: Lessons From Bhavani River Basin, Tamil Nadu
6. Pani Sangharsha Chalwal (Water Rights Movement), Maharashtra
7. Ek Gaon Ek Panavtha (One village one water point), Maharashtra

The first case study listed above is around the Hirakud reservoir which is the lifeline of Orissa. The case study discusses the evolution of the movement keeping as a backdrop the neoliberal reforms in the water sector, which prioritised industrial water allocation over agriculture. The case discusses how an agitation for better prices for agriculture transforms into a water movement.

The Kengrehalla Rejuvenation Movement (KRM) in Karnataka began over water sharing between Sirsi town and the farmers in the Kengre watershed region. Increasing urban water

needs were being met through construction of an unsustainable dam over the Kengre stream. This was consistently being opposed by the farmers in that watershed region and after a successful movement against the dam it made a transition to resource conservation, development and management. It is this transition that is relevant for the purposes of this study in terms of how organisational forms change with a reframing of an issue.

A well-established local daily newspaper, Malayalam Manorama (MM), started the Palathulli (many drops) movement. This movement aimed to increase the water awareness of its readers through training manuals and tool kits given out along with the newspaper and aimed at promoting conservation and roof top harvesting. The movement had a state-wide impact. The case study is of relevance to us due to its novel approach where the media plays an important role in appealing to the people.

Megh Pyne Abhiyan (MPA), literally Cloud's water campaign, is at the same time a campaign, involving people around the issue of water, and a functional network of grassroots organizations. The campaign is spread across five districts of North Bihar - Supaul, Saharsa, Khagaria, Madhubani and West Champaran, by the network of five separate grassroots organizations. The study was relevant due to its significance in critiquing mainstream thinking in flood management and relief work.

The Bhavani River basin case study from Tamil Nadu is about increasing industrial pollution in the basin affecting the water quality and thereby the livelihoods of the people living there. This is the only case study on water pollution and again highlights the possible perverse impact of prioritizing industrial growth over household water needs.

The South Maharashtra movement or what is popularly known as the Pani Sangharsh Chalwal (water rights movement) was formed around two decades ago by labourers who had returned after a textile strike in Mumbai in the early 1980s. The movement spans over 2 decades and is still actively engaging with the question of equitable water rights.

Ek Gaon Ek Panvatha or One village one water point was a campaign initiated in the early 1970s by Dr. Baba Adhav and primarily looks at the dalit identity issue and caste discrimination through the medium of water. Although the movement is no longer alive, the case study was selected because of its current relevance from the point of view of dalit identity and water rights and the newer forms of caste discrimination.

Conceptual framework and methodology

The whole body of literature on social movements can be understood as a response to two broad theoretical traditions of structural functionalism and Marxism which were dominant in the American and European scholarship respectively. Very briefly, structural functionalism or the early American school has understood social movements as a response to a relative deprivation and talks of collective action as crisis behaviour. Marxist tradition understands social movements in the context of the worker capital relationship and essentially explains all conflicts through a class analysis. Both these schools were confounded by the emergence of new forms of political participation and a shift in issues of conflict in the 60's. The post 1960s period was significant in several ways across the globe as it saw the emergence of the women's movement, environmental movements, race and other identity movements that could not be adequately explained within their frameworks. The European school referred to these as the 'New social movements'. Both these schools sought to explain the emergence and the significance of these movements from their respective locations and theoretical traditions. The American school increasingly felt that the emerging social processes cannot be explained in terms of the discontent of individuals alone and needed to integrate with the structural theories of social process. The Resource Mobilisation theory emerged as a response to counter the earlier view on collective action as irrational behaviour due to rapid social transformation emphasising that mere existence of disequilibrium or discontent did not lead to a movement. Moreover they also pointed out that in traditional studies of collective behavior the object of analysis was not the social movement itself but the system's sources of disequilibrium which led to the rise of collective actors. Resource mobilization theorists, for their part, made social movements the object of analysis (Canel, 1997). The resource mobilisation theory (RM) focuses on the variety of resources that a movement requires to organise and sustain itself. These include among other things linkages with media, institutions etc and the interaction among other movement organisations. While RM theory does dominate the American school its major critiques came in the form of its lack of understanding of a broader political and cultural context. Its later variant called the political process (PP) model tries to address some of these critiques.

In a nutshell these two main currents within the American school talk about the following

- the structure of political opportunities and constraints that face movements

- the form and structure of organizations that are available or are shaped by participants and resources available or generated
- the “collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action” (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996: 2)

These three factors are referred to as political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes. Political opportunity structures refer to “consistent - but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national - dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from using collective action” (Tarrow 1994: 18). By framing, we refer to the special category of cognitive understandings - collective action frames - that relate to how social movements construct meaning (Snow and Benford 1992). Mobilizing structures refer to “collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action” (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996: 3). Political opportunities shape movements based on the meaning that groups attribute to opportunities which also influence the type of mobilizing structures through which groups seek to organize. In addition, the gendered nature of movements influences the meaning as well as form of mobilizing structures (Taylor 1996).

The European school questioned the Marxist tradition of reducing everything to class and seeing the industrial working class as the vanguard of social change. The New social movements (NSM) analysis, which grew out of the critique of the traditional Marxist perspective talks about constitution of new collective identities and emphasises the cultural nature of the NSM.

Some of the major advocates of New Social Movement paradigm are Habermas and Offe, who are rooted in German critical theory, Touraine and his sociology of action and Laclau & Maouffe with their synthesis of post-structuralism and neo-Gramscian Marxism. Though there are internal variations in the manner in which they look at social movement phenomena, as Canel puts it, ‘they all explain the emergence of SMs with reference to structural transformations and long-range political and cultural changes which created new sources of conflict and altered the process of constitution of collective identities’ (Canel 1997).

In a nutshell the NSM perspective

- a) questioned the Marxist understanding of reducing all conflict to class analysis and emphasised the cultural nature of the new movements with struggles over meanings and

identities that went beyond the class position and in its extreme form suggested a complete discontinuity with the old movements

b) They brought the entire discussion on SMs in the terrain of civil society, thus leaving the role of the state rather diffused

Both these schools barely seemed to engage with each other theoretically. While the predominant thinking in the NSM theory emphasised the need to move away from the Marxist understanding, the RM and PP models in fact saw continuity between the old and new actors but emphasised the political processes and the mobilising structures that shape action.

Need for an integrated approach

In our study of social movements around water, we would attempt to draw on the various theoretical frameworks that we discussed. Whereas we would draw from the NSM tradition to understand the broader ideological stances of the movements we feel that a micro understanding of the movements themselves in the form of the organisational dynamics, leadership patterns and the external influences that are exerted on them would come from the RM and PP models. Although the individual studies are not conceptually grounded, they address some of the issues raised in both these models.

An integrated approach that meshes the postulates of RM, PP and the NSM therefore becomes important. Here we find the work of Canel useful where he argues that though there are basic differences between the two paradigms, both agree that the transition from condition for collective action to collective action itself is central in formation of any social movement and this passage is mediated by different factors such as ideology, political system, resources etc. None of these paradigms can on their own offer a complete understanding of social movements. The NSM and the RM/PP approaches differ in the factors that mediate this passage, but in many ways they can complement each other in a richer understanding of social movements.

RM theory proposed that the passage from condition to action was contingent upon the availability of resources and changes in the opportunities for collective action (Tilly, 1978: 99). While the NSM perspective focused on the primacy of ideology over other organizational concerns, it did not recognise the integral linkage between identity development and interaction with other institutional and organizational concerns. For

example the NSM approach talks of structural, historical, political and ideological processes in the context of SMs but does not discuss the processes by which individuals and groups make decisions, develop strategies and mobilize resources or the role of leadership in effective collective action and its sustenance.

The NSM theory explains the origins of social movements with reference to macro-processes and identifies the structural potential for social movement activity, precisely the processes which cannot be explained by the RM theory. In contrast however RM theory focuses on a set of contextual processes that fall in the realm of resource management and organisational dynamics that are actually instrumental in realising the structural potential.

Given the complexity of the interaction between the macro, meso and the micro contexts it emerges that an integration of these different bodies of work becomes critical to our study on water movements in India. Moreover the developing world context further calls for a far more nuanced application of these different perspectives on social movement studies. For us the central question might be how class is addressed within the identities of gender, caste, environmental concerns etc. Does water resource conservation or development struggle subsume the concerns of allocation and distribution across class, caste and gender or does it play out quite differently for each of these categories? From our point of view it would be useful to examine the ideological positions of water movements and the relationship of social and economic identities to the water agenda and the organizational processes therein.

Social movements in India

The earliest work on social movements in India is seen in the work of MSA Rao (1978-9) and Ghanshyam Shah (1977, 1979) Rao's work, further developed by Shah presented a typology of social movements which basically tried to understand the impacts on the social structure. This classification focussed on whether movements were revolutionary, reformist, redemptive or alternative and viewed participants more from a static point of view. Both distanced themselves from this view as was evident from their later work that focussed on a more dynamic understanding of social movements and the significance of organising priorities of the actors shifting over time. Around the same time we see an analysis of peasant and agrarian movements from a class perspective reflected in work of A. R. Desai (1979, 1986), Arvind N. Das (1982) and D. N. Dhanagare (1983).

The dominant model of social movements in the American literature i.e. RM and PP did not seem to have a great deal of influence on Indian writings.

An important piece of work on the changing character of social movements in India is by Gail Omvedt outlined in her book 'Reinventing revolutions'(Omvedt 1993). She describes this shift as conceptual wherein she says that a class of new social movements emerged in the 1970's that defined exploitation and oppression in relationship to traditional Marxism... but had clear differences with it. The vanguard-ship of the working class was repudiated, she states in favour of a more plural organising base located in caste, gender and other socio-economic identities. But for these plural identities too inequality and oppression were the ideas driving organisational momentum (Ray, 2005). In other words, the basic framework that Omvedt has developed is that 'while Marxism has been called the historical materialism of the proletariat, what is needed today is the historical materialism of not only industrial factory workers, but also of peasants, women, tribal, dalits and lower castes and oppressed minorities' (Omvedt 1993:xvi). For example, rural peasant movements are not merely green movements and they cannot comfortably fit into either environmental or feminist movements since they have survival issues, which are primary on their agenda.

In a more recent body of work, Raka Ray and Katzenstein in their book Social Movements in India try to understand the shifts in social movements in India not as a post 60's phenomena alone. They look at shifts in movements across three periods which are a) the immediate post independence era (1947-1966) where the Nehruvian master frame dominated the thinking followed by b) the decline of the Nehruvian model (1967-1989) and c) finally the neoliberal era of the post 1990's.

The late 70's also saw an interest in the understanding of environmental movements that were emerging in the late 70's and early 80's in India. The Chipko movement and the Silent Valley movement are examples of these movements. These movements were in a sense couched in the class framework where inequities in access to resources was challenged, but the discourse went beyond that to challenge the developmental paradigm, impact on ecosystem, sustainability and biodiversity as well. Broadly speaking since then until recently the environmental movements in the Indian context are understood in both their red and green manifestations and the different meanings they hold for the different participants of these movements (Guha 1988, Baviskar 2005).

Overall we find that studies on social movements in the Indian context, to include studies on environmental movements have largely been around the meanings they hold for its participants, broader ideologies they pursue and consequences they have on different participants. Organisational dynamics and the political opportunities that facilitate or constrain movement activity or the way framing of questions have affected mobilizing structures have received little attention.

Moving into our terrain of study on water movements, we see little of the literature that we discussed above being applied.

Movements around water have received attention only in the context of displacement, but mobilisations around distribution of water, its access mediated through class, caste or gender, or those in the terrain of conservation and resource development have not been systematically studied from a social movement perspective. Much of the literature on water related initiatives has centred on outcomes, and left the matters of organising strategies, ideologies or political opportunities that were drivers for these outcomes to our own imagination.

Our enquiry: Research questions

Going by our conceptual methodology we pursue our research questions at the macro, meso and micro level factors that affect the formation, emergence and sustenance of social movements. The first area of enquiry relates to the factors outside of the social movements that trigger the rise of movements and contribute to its sustenance or collapse. The effort would be to try and capture the social, cultural and political contexts in which the movement has emerged and sustained. These include the institutions and the affiliations of those with the movements.

The second area of enquiry relates to the cultural representations or the meanings people attach to movements, ie identification and the posing of the problems to build collective actions. Why do people rally around a certain cause and identify with it as a collective?. Where do the values originate from and how are they cultivated and nurtured. Finally the study focuses on organisational structure and its leadership patterns.

Although this is by no means an exhaustive list it does cover some of the key factors that have contributed to understanding of social movements.

The broad research questions are:

1. How have social movements (SMs) on water emerged and/or been sustained as a collective action response to managing demand for water and/or promoting water saving technologies? How have political opportunities facilitated or constrained collective actions? (Note: macro level analysis meaning taluka, state or national level opportunities and constraints that directly or indirectly influenced the SM in the particular location; meso level analysis meaning issues of mobilization and membership as related to participation). The effort here is to capture the social movement in its historical trajectory and the socio-economic/sociological context in which it emerged and sustained.)
2. How are current institutional linkages set up? (Note: explore role of institutions – external, such as government agencies, academic and research institutions, etc., and local, such as panchayat etc.)
3. How are SMs related to demand for water (irrigation, drinking and other uses) structured? How is leadership organized? (meso level analysis: important for assessing degree of democracy based on say degree of bureaucracy measured as structure of group/organization: authority, rules, incentive structure, how structure evolved)
4. What is the normative framework of the movement- the core promise or the super-ordination principle, its ideas on equity, relation to the State, social change as these have a bearing on the programme and the strategies of the movement.
5. What are the lessons to be learnt from the cases in terms of mobilizing for collective action, promoting participation across social categories (class, gender, caste), and in the ways users develop guidelines/rules?

The study largely depended on secondary literature on these social movements and the socio-political context in which they are located, but also was done with a few field visits and primary data collection on the movement. These field visits were specifically done to understand the organizational dynamics of the movement. At the inception workshop methods handouts were given to the case study writers which basically elaborated on the key questions to be pursued. Similarly notes on the key theoretical perspectives in the study of social movements too was discussed at length and circulated to all.

After an initial methodology and inception workshop, an interim workshop was held to discuss the findings of the study. These were shared before the leadership of the movement; hence feedback on the verities of the cases was possible from the activist leadership itself.

Roadmap of the report

This report is organised into nine chapters. The first is the introduction which discusses the rationale, objectives, and methodology and research questions for the study. It discusses the

key strands in the social movements and water literature that have informed the study and briefly describes the water movements that were selected for this study.

Chapters 2-8 discuss each of the seven case studies of water movements in detail, bringing out the organisational forms and strategies, leadership, goals and vision of the movement. The final chapter concludes the study by making an attempt to elaborate on the defining features of movements around water.

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Chapter 2

Social Movement against Diversion of Water from Hirakud Reservoir to Industries

Ranjan K Panda⁹

Introduction and methodology

The study

This is a study of the Paschim Odisha Krushak Suraksha Samanwaya Samiti (POKSS), the social movement against irrigation shrinkage in the irrigation command area of the Hirakud multi-purpose reservoir project and the increased allocation of water for industries. The POKSS is spearheading the opposition to allocation of water from the Hirakud reservoir to the industries.

This study looks at the evolution and functioning of that SM along with its relation, scope and potential for replications. This study also tries to look at how and what level people are involved in the movement and with what intensity and also on how it evolved and where the movement is heading. The study also looks at its organizational characteristics to judge its strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis launching a sustained campaign. In addition, the study also tries to take stocks of the nature of the SM, i.e., whether it is contributing imbibe positive action for better water management in addition to its core thrust area.

The study also would explore how the movement has been able to impact micro politics of the area in terms realignment of social forces in the region, forcing a different type of developmental politics and so on and the macro level in terms of raising issues and forcing the state to take serious note of the issues raised.

Methodology

This study looks at the social movement from a sociological perspective mainly using a qualitative research approach. The following tools have been used for collecting data and information and to capture the perceptions of the different stakeholders:

- Interviews with leaders of the SM, leaders of the other stakeholders groups like intellectuals, media, industry, politicians and so on

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- Groups discussions with farmers, students and women
- Visit to villages within the command area and other strategic places like the locations from where the industries sourcing water
- Desk review of existing literature – available print and electronic material, internet, government decisions, etc.
- Participant observation¹⁰

Efforts were made to collect diverse opinions about the movement to make an independent analysis of the SM. Separate checklists were used for the interviews and discussions with different stakeholder representatives.

Locating the movement: agriculture vs. industry

The Hirakud dam: the location of the conflict

Overview of water resources and agricultural production in Orissa

It is said that Orissa is one of the few states of the country endowed with abundant water resources. The average annual rainfall of the State is 1,452 mm which is significantly higher than the national average. Orissa has 11% of the water resources of the country though it accounts for only 4% (2001 census) of the population in the country. Even with such stated abundance of water, Orissa is one of the most drought ravaged state in the country. More than 58 percent of the state's main workforce works in the agriculture sector and is the principal source of livelihoods for nearly 80 percent of the people of the state. Orissa, with 39.9 per cent of rural people living below the poverty line, is the poorest State in the country (NSSO, 61st round, 2007). The average annual productions of all major crops have seen sharp fluctuations. For example take the case of paddy, the most prominent crop of the state. In 2001-02, the state produced 71.49 Lakh Metric Tonne (LMT) of paddy, but the very next year the production came down to a mere 32.44 LMT to rise again to 67.34 LMT the next year. Sometimes there has been also a declining trend. The average annual production of paddy has seen a 6.7 percent drop over a decade (Panira, 2007). Fluctuations and drop in agricultural production – especially in paddy – have further accentuated the rural poverty.

¹⁰ MASS, the organization that the author belongs to, was sympathetic and supportive to the social movement

Apart from the quantity of rainfall, agriculture production in Orissa depends quite a lot on the rainfall pattern. Many scientists have already pointed out that Orissa's rainfall is undergoing major changes – rainfall days have been declining and days with very high intensity rainfall have been on the rise. In the South-Western parts of Orissa rainfall days are decreasing by a day in every five years (Mohanty *et al*, 2003).

With the changing rainfall pattern, irrigation is quite vital for agriculture and in turn for the development of Orissa and its people. The total irrigation potential created in the states comes to 2,763,000 ha accounting for about 44 percent of the total cultivable land. However, the annual production fluctuations and persistent poverty show that the created irrigation potential has not been able to stabilise the agriculture production and enhancing incomes of the people agriculture dependent people.

It is in this context assured irrigation sources like the Hirakud irrigation system assumes significance. The Hirakud command area is the most intensively cultivated area of the state. This is the only region in the state with a rather developed paddy marketing system. Bargarh district, with substantial part under irrigation cover from the Hirakud command, provides highest paddy to the state's granary.

The inception of the Hirakud multi-purpose project

The Hirakud dam was conceived primarily to reduce incidence and severity of floods in the Mahanadi river system (Orissa Gazette, 1962). Flood is almost a perennial problem in the Mahanadi River as the drainage basin is very small compared to the catchment of the river (see Fig 1). The catchment lies directly on the south west monsoon track and as such receives heavy rainfall during monsoon. Besides, the catchment area close to the sea is prone to heavy rain brought about by the cyclones generated in the Bay in September – November. Thus the catchment has the potential of producing very high flood (Orissa State Water Plan, 2004). But reducing severity of flood in the Mahanadi river system required a major dam and large reservoir. In fact the plan to tame Mahanadi floods through the construction of a dam was first thought of in 1855 when a major flood in the Mahanadi river system devastated the state. Though the expert suggestion was to construct three main dams across river Mahanadi, only one dam and reservoir could be constructed and that was at Hirakud. The planners also thought it would be a gross under-utilization of the dam if it was used only for

flood control. Thus, began the concept of a multi-purpose dam across the Mahanadi in the form of Hirakud dam (Mahalik, 2005).

Salient features and objectives of the Hirakud reservoir project

The dam intercepts water from about 83,400 sq. km of catchment which is about 59 percent of total catchments of the river. This is the first post-independence major multipurpose river valley project in India. The project was inaugurated by India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in the year 1957. The reservoir was designed to have a net utilizable storage of 5,818 Mm³ and a gross storage of 8,136 Mm³. The most important objective was to provide flood cushion in the lower Mahanadi, especially the 9,500 km² thickly populated delta region in the coastal parts of Orissa. It was envisaged to utilize the vast reservoir storage to control flood water inflow from the upstream and this required the reservoir to be kept empty during peak rainfall time. Hence it was planned to keep the reservoir empty for a majority part of the monsoon months. Thus, the primary objective of the reservoir was to moderate downstream flooding.

However, the multipurpose dam has other objectives too, mainly irrigation. While flood cushioning required the reservoir to be empty to absorb the floods, the other important purpose of the project, namely, irrigation depended on the stored water. The designed *ayacut* (command) area of the reservoir is one of the highest in the country – 153,750 ha in Kharif and 76,875 ha in Rabi. The command area, spread over three districts, gets irrigation supply through three main canals, mainly, the right bank canal (RBC) Bargarh, the largest canal of the irrigation system and the left bank canals (LBCs) Sasan and Sambalpur (see Fig 2 and Table 1).

Besides this command area, the water released through the tail race (of the power generation units) provides irrigation to another 436,000 ha in Mahanadi delta. Thus the reservoir – directly and indirectly – provides irrigation to about 589,750 ha of land where intensive agriculture is being practiced. Also, the release of water after power generation facilitates water flow in the down stream of the dam.

The third important objective of the Hirakud reservoir is to generate hydro-power. The initial installation capacity of the project was 307 MegaWatt (MW). There are two power houses at Burla Chipilima. The Chipilima power house, located some 22 kilometers downstream, utilizes part of water released from the Burla power house situated just below

the main dam. To further boost the power generation capacity of the projects two additional turbines were set up at Burla power house. The present total installed capacity of the project is 347.5 MW. Though the project meets a major portion of the power demand in the state, the share of Hirakud to total power generation in Orissa has been declining because of two reasons: one, other power plants, especially thermal, have come up in large numbers; two, the capacity of the Hirakud reservoir has been declining. The project, expected to produce about 11.74 million units of electricity every year, has been able to generate even less than 10 million units in eight out of the last ten years (see Table 2).

The reservoir also supplies water to urban areas and is the primary source of water supply for Sambalpur, Hirakud and Burla towns. The Greater Sambalpur Water Supply Scheme, covering Sambalpur, Burla and Hirakud towns, has an installed filtration and supply capacity of 40 Million Liters per Day (MLD). Of course, considering the size of the reservoir, the demand for urban water supply is very insignificant.

Of late, industries are emerging as a new and aggressive user of Hirakud water. A few industries, including an aluminum factory at Hirakud and a steel refractory at Brajarajnaragar, had come up in the 1960s, soon after the Hirakud project was completed and they did not consume too much of water. Major industries came up in large numbers especially since the second half of 1990s and more so during the last 10 years. Most of the industries are mineral based and consume very large quantities of water. The Hirakud reservoir has been the most sought after source of water for the new industries.

Reservoir operation

Though flood protection is the most important objective of Hirakud project, ironically, no transient storage has been kept aside exclusively for the absorption of flood. The Full Reservoir Level (FRL) and Maximum Water Level (MWL) are at the same height of 630 feet (State Water Plan, 2004). In other large reservoirs which have a flood control objective, the gap between the FRL and MWL is utilized for transient flood cushioning. As the FRL and MWL are same in the Hirakud reservoir, there is no transient cushioning and flood control objective relies entirely on long term judicious thinking by dam managers. Earlier flood protection was accorded the topmost priority and the then manual to guide reservoir operation had suggested keeping the reservoir empty till the end of August and then starting

gradual filling up so as to get the reservoir full by October 31 (Superintending Engineer, Hirakud Dam Project).

This manual was based on the normal monsoon rainfall pattern. The monsoon normally reaches Orissa during the first week of June and retreats by the end of October. August and September are peak rainfall months and nearly 70 percent of annual rainfall occurs in these two months. However, since 1988, a 'rule curve' prepared by the Central Water Commission (CWC) governs monsoon water management at the reservoir (Superintending Engineer, Hirakud Dam Project).

The rule curve prescribes a minimum and maximum water level for specific dates during the monsoon months. Many experts consider this rule curve as a major shift in reservoir operation policy as it gives more emphasis on filling up the dam by the end of the monsoon season. While the earlier manual had suggested keeping the dam empty till the end of August, the rule curve suggests quite substantial filling up of the reservoir by the end of August and total filling up of the reservoir by the end of September (see Fig 3). The rule curve has been blamed by many for at least two of the major floods in the last 10 years.

Significance of Hirakud dam for Orissa

The Hirakud dam continues to be one of the most important factors that determine Orissa's socio-economic and ecological status and trends. Hirakud reservoir with a storage capacity of 8.13 BCM accounts for 50% (of the total water storage capacity of Orissa which comes to about 17.63 BMC, taking together the capacity of the present and the ongoing projects (High Level Technical Committee Report, 2007). As discussed above, the Hirakud project is a multi-purpose project and is very significant for Orissa in terms of flood control, irrigation, power generation and industrial water supply (see Table 3).

Flood control

The reservoir is expected to moderate floods in the 9,500 km² vast and thickly populated flood prone delta region in the coastal parts of Orissa. This flood cushion cover accounts for more than 6 % of the total geographic area of the state and 21 % of the total population of Orissa. Besides, the Hirakud reservoir is the only flood cushioning system in the entire stretch of Mahanadi River in Orissa.

Irrigation

The direct and indirect irrigation facilities¹¹ of the Hirakud dam constitute nearly 21 % of total irrigation potential created in Orissa. The direct command area of the Hirakud reservoir alone constitutes 8 % of total irrigated area in the Rabi season. Spread over parts of three districts in the Western parts of Orissa, this command is the trusted rice bowl of the often disaster ravaged state.

A good number of Andhra farmers have land in the command area of the dam. Apparently they were lured into this command area by the Orissa government, when the canals were constructed and the local people did not take to irrigated agriculture. “Over a period of time, these Andhra farmers got integrated into the social life here and they played an influential role in the socio-economic and political dynamics of this area”, says Professor Premanand Panda of the P.G. Department of Anthropology, Sambalpur University. “Ironically most of the people, who have been displaced because of the dam, have not been settled in the command area. They live in the nearby areas as mute spectators to the development in the command areas while their own plight has not improved. They look at the command area farmers as ‘prosperous farmers’ and the canals as ‘symbols of prosperity’, adds Prof. Panda. In fact, the command area farmers have prospered much better as compared to the other farmers of western Orissa and they, including the Andhra farmers, have played an influential role in the local politics as well, informs Prof. Durga Prasad Nayak, a veteran activist and a sympathizer of the ongoing farmers’ movement against diversion of water to industries.

Power generation

For long, it was the most important power generation source of the state and accounts for more than 18 % of total hydro-power capacity installed in the state. Hirakud produces about 12.5 % of total power generated in the state (Orissa Electricity Regulatory Commission, 2007). Though many new coal based thermal power stations are being set up in the state, Orissa still relies heavily on hydro-power, especially on Hirakud power generation centre. This is evident from the example of year 2009 when the state had to import electricity from outside as the hydro-power stations went short of water.

¹¹ The direct irrigation command of the Hirakud irrigation system comes to 153,750 ha in Kharif and 76,875 ha in Rabi. The water released through the power generation units provides irrigation to another 436,000 ha in Mahanadi delta. Thus together it provides irrigation to 589,750 ha.

Industrial water supply

In the original design of the project, industry was not mentioned as a potential user of water from the reservoir. However, M. S. Thirumalai Iyengar, the Chief Engineer of the project, in a paper that he wrote after the project came up, did state that 'Hirakud project will provide water and power for irrigation and industries all the year round' (High Level Committee Report, 2007).

Now, Hirakud is seen as the most important source for water for industries. As of now, the government has allocated 0.350 MAF of water per year to the industries from Hirakud reservoir¹². This is about 26 % of the total water allocation allowed by the government to the industries in Orissa.

Growth of industrialization in Orissa

Orissa is endowed with a lot of important mineral reserves and natural resources. The government has plans to utilize such resources to ride a high economic growth path. Many, including the government, consider 'under development' of such natural and mineral resources as the cause of poverty in Orissa. Enhanced rate of exploitation of different mineral reserves (see Tables 4 & 5) is considered important to improve the financial position of the state and also to generate sizeable direct and indirect employment. In fact, the Orissa government has gone over-board on highlighting such resources as its 'competitive advantage'¹³. It says, 'the state is rich in mineral resources such as coal, iron-ore and bauxite and is poised to emerge as the metals, mining, and a manufacturing hub of the country' (Team Orissa, 2007).

Region-wise, the central Orissa is known for its coal; the Sukinda Valley for its chrome, iron ore and manganese deposits; Southwest Orissa for Bauxite; and the Coastal Orissa has deposits of mineral sands and rare earth. Orissa has 97 % of India's chromites and 95 % of its nickel reserves, 50 % of its bauxite, and 24 % of its coal reserves of India (see Chart 1). Overall, it has an estimated reserve of about 5,923 million tons of 18 minerals (Orissa Economic Survey, 2008).

¹² Based on a reply to a question in Orissa State Assembly on 20/02/2006

¹³ The term 'Competitive advantage' has been used by the government in various newspaper advertisements to allure industries to Orissa. The term also finds mention at the government of Orissa website <http://www.teamorissa.org/#>

Apart from the mineral resources, the government also tried to lure the industries with claims of abundant surplus of utilizable water. Orissa also became a preferred choice for industries because of the availability of cheap labour in the state. In order to expedite industrial growth, the government brought in rapid changes in various policies and processes with regard to key sectors like electricity, water and industry. The significant ones include:

- The Orissa Electricity Reforms Act, 1995 which came into effect from 1 April 1996.
- Re-formulation of “Industrial Policy” in March 1996 with a view to improve the investment climate. A new “Industrial Policy” was enunciated again in December 2001, which further liberalised industrial investments. The Orissa Industries (Facilitation) Act, 2004 was enacted for implementing the Single Window Clearance System and the Orissa Industries (Facilitation) Rules, 2005 was framed subsequently. Orissa Government again came out with a new “Orissa Industrial Policy-2007 (Resolution)” on 2 March 2007, which “aims at reinforcing and further expanding this process (the process of putting in place a robust policy framework for industrial promotion and industrial facilitation in the state, including creation of an enabling environment which was set in motion with the Orissa Industrial Policy-2001)” [Point 1.1 of ‘Orissa Industrial Policy-2007’].
- 0.350 MAF was earmarked for industries from the Hirkaud reservoir. Industrial water allocation was given priority over irrigation in the ‘Industrial Policy Resolution, 2001’ with water tax incentives. New Orissa Water Policy was declared in 2007. It prescribes a definite set of priorities of water use. But the expert committees formed to look into the Hirakud ignored this and justified industrial allocation. For example, the High Level Technical Committee has suggested that power generation can be curtailed to accommodate industrial supply. But power generation is higher in the priority order than industrial allocation. Similarly, if power generation is curtailed then there will be less flow of water in the Mahanadi River which in turn will affect ecological flow and delta irrigation. This is again a violation of State Water Policy as ecology and irrigation have been given higher priority than industry.

All these ‘competitive advantages’ and incentives have drawn attention of many industries, especially the mineral based industries, to Orissa. The government has already signed 80 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up major industries in the steel, aluminum and power sector since the year 2002 with an expected total investment amounting to Rs. 347,776 Crores. Within a span of about five years, the government of

Orissa has signed MoUs for new projects with capacities to produce 26,370 MW of electricity; 75.19 Million Tonne per Annum (MTPA) of Iron & Steel; and 5.85 MTPA of Alumina & Aluminum. In brief Orissa is rapidly becoming one of the most rapidly growing industrial hubs in India.

This push for rapid industrialization led to a quantum jump in the industrial water requirements. On 20 February 2006 the Orissa government stated in the State Assembly that the established industries and mining companies have been allowed to use 1,916,060 Lakh Gallons of water per Year (LKY). Prior to the year 1997, the revenue department had given permission to draw 539,602 LKY to industrial and mining units. Since 1997, the Department of Water Resources (DWR)¹⁴ has allowed the industries and mining units to draw 1377,402 LKY. Thus over a period of 10 years or so, the water withdrawal permission for industries and mining units by the state government went up by about 255%.

This increase in the water allocation for industrial use has also led to widespread protest from farmers and because of this the industries are finding it difficult to use the allocated water. Hirakud reservoir is witnessing such kinds of farmer movement against water 'diversion' from irrigation and industries like the Vedanta and Bhushan are yet to start production from their installations.

Apart from involuntary displacement due to development projects – dams, industries, mining and infrastructure development – water diversion has become a major concern for Orissa. The social movement (SM) around water diversion from the Hirakud reservoir is one of the major movements in this regard.

The social movement

Movements in Orissa

Orissa has seen many social movements, some of which also have been quite bloody. In the pre-independence period, the state witnessed major movements launched by the *adivasis* in the state. Saheed Laxman Nayak and Bazi Rout are some of the iconic figures and are remembered even today for their leading role in some of the major people's movements in the state.

In the post independent period too the state witnessed many social movements; especially protest movements against alienation (displacement) caused by new industrial and

¹⁴ In 1997 the management of water resources was handed over to the Department of Water Resources.

infrastructure projects (Mishra and Maitra, 2008). Major protest movements erupted against forced displacement in projects like Hirakud, Rengali and Indravati dams. Though these movements did not meet with much success in the sense of stopping these projects, they did result in better compensation packages.

However, the movements against mining and industrialization seem to have been relatively more successful. Some of the projects have either been shelved or their progresses stalled. The movement against Bauxite mining from the Gandhamardan hills in Western Orissa by Aluminum major BALCO was one of the very successful movements. Two notable features of this movement stand out: one, its peaceful approach; and two, the total participation of the local people. The anti-prawn culture movement at Chilika lake, the anti-steel factory movement at Gopalpur are some of the other notable instances where the movements have been able to achieve their objectives.

Though, voicing protests against industrialization by the people is not new in the state, the present ongoing movements are known for their unprecedented unity among the tribal and other toiling masses against both the industrial establishments and the state government, making all the major political parties watchful of the situation to derive political mileage (Mishra and Maitra, 2008). The movements are also getting louder and, at times, even violent and bloody. The bloodsheds have mostly been due to the use of force (and firing) by the state. The movements against bauxite mining and the Aluminum industry at Kashipur resulted in police firing at Maikancha. The death of 11 protestors at Kalinga Nagar against land acquisition for a steel plant by the Tatas was one of the bloodiest in the recent history.

Now, almost every new initiative of industrialization, infrastructure and mining projects are meeting stiff resistance from the local people or the environmentalists. The POSCO project¹⁵, hailed as the biggest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country, has become an icon of such protest. Though the MoU for this project was signed way back in 2005, the project is yet to take off the ground because of people's resistance. Other major projects like the Vedanta Aluminum and Mining at Kalahandi and Mittal Steel at Keonjhar too seem to be meeting the same fate.

Apart from these movements by the local people against forced eviction or unreasonable compensation package, there are also protests from environmental groups against environmental degradation and loss of livelihoods. The protest against mining and

¹⁵ This integrated project consists of mining, a mega 12 LMT capacity steel unit and a mega port.

industrialization at places like Niyamgiri, Kashipur, Khandadhar, Gandhamardan are example of this.

Movement on water issues

There have not been many significant movements on water issues. Of course, disputes over sharing of transboundary river waters have been a major political issue with the neighbouring states of Andhra Pradesh and Chattishgarh. Also, there have been a few environmental movements to maintain ecological flow in the Brahmani River to safeguard the Bhitarkanika Sanctuary and the mangrove forest. The movement over the Hirakud water is the first movement in the state over the issue of contending water uses or allocation of water for different uses. This movement dwarfs all other movements in its scale of organization and impact at the policy level.

Movement around Hirakud water: conditions leading to its emergence

Rising demand and shrinking capacity

The Hirakud reservoir is more than 50 years old. In the meantime it has already lost a lot of storage capacity owing to silt deposit and decrease in inflow from the upstream (see Table 6). The reservoir sedimentation study, by Central Water Commission (CWC) in 1995, shows that the gross and live storages of the reservoir have been reduced to 6,145 Mm³ (4.98 MAF) and 4,934 Mm³ (4 MAF) respectively. The average loss of gross, live and dead storages was estimated to be 0.64%, 0.41% and 1.22% per annum respectively. The loss in live storage in 50 years was estimated to be 20.12% (High Level Technical Committee Report, 2007). Notable changes seem to have occurred in inflow into the dam due to changes in land use, water use in the upstream and climatic changes. At the design stage the average annual rainfall had been assessed at 1381.25 mm. However, the actual rainfall figures from 1958 to 2003 showed that the average annual rainfall had reduced to 1132 mm (Das, 2007). The average estimated inflow of 25 MAF (at 75 % dependability) during the project design stage has been to 16 MAF by the year 2000 (Das, 2007). The average annual flow of Mahanadi River has been reduced from 6.17 Million Hectare Meter (MHM) to 3.36 MHM (Orissa Hydro Power Corporation Ltd., 2008).

Along with the gradual decrease in the river flow, there have been extreme fluctuations in annual flows. The post dam period has seen breach of both the highest annual and lowest

annual runoff records as compared to the pre dam period (see Table 7). Because of this the dam managers are finding it difficult to predict the inflow in to the dam. The high floods of 2001 and 2008 have been primarily attributed to mismanagement of the dam.

The issue of capacity and inflow reduction has been further compounded by the increasing demands on the water from the reservoir. Demands for irrigation, power generation and urban water supplies have increased because of increase in population, intensification of agriculture and urbanization (see Table 8). Irrigation itself demands more water because of bad management of the irrigation system and bad condition of the canals and the distribution system. The installed hydro-power capacity has been raised from 307 to 347.86 MW to meet the growing energy needs. New water supplies are being made to Sambalpur, Burla and Hirakud townships. Urban water supply has increased from 0.006 MAF in non-monsoon months to 0.136 MAF. Most contentious of all users is the industry sector. Though industrial use was not part of the original design, the government earmarked 0.350 MAF for industries in 1990¹⁶. Evaporation loss from the reservoir is also on the rise due to increasing temperatures. The average maximum temperature of the nearby Sambalpur town has increased by 6.6 degree Celsius in a ten year span (Panda and Pandia, 2006).

Increasing allocations for industries

Department of Water Resources (DoWR), formed in March 1994 in place of the erstwhile Irrigation Department, is the lead agency for water development in the state, responsible for planning, developing and managing the state's water resources for irrigation, bulk water supply, drainage and flood control with direct responsibility for implementation of major, medium and minor irrigation projects, along with their operation and maintenance. It is also responsible for ground water exploitation (Department of Water Resources, 2005). The Allocation Committee, formed in April 1997, adjudicates applications for water supply and makes necessary suggestions to the government.

Significant allocation from the Hirakud reservoir has been made after formation of this committee (see Table 9). In the Pre-April 1997 period, water withdrawal permission to industries from Hirakud reservoir was just 71,252 LGY – only 13.2% of total sanctions for industrial water use. After April 1997, this went up to 433,179.2 LGY coming to 31.45 % of total water allocation made by the Committee. So far about 0.316 MAF has been

¹⁶ Government Order No. Irr-III-HKDW-6/90 – 40345/Bhubaneswar, the 26 November 1990.

sanctioned for industries and applications for another 0.183 MAF are pending (High Level Technical Committee Report, 2007). Taken together, it comes to 0.499 MAF, much higher than the 0.350 MAF earmarked for industries in 1990.

Hardening of the stands of different users

Though Hirakud was a multipurpose project from the beginning, sometimes with conflicting requirements¹⁷, there was not much confrontation at the beginning as definite priorities for water use were set. However, since the 90s there has been increasing contestation across different uses, especially agriculture and industry.

Water demand for agriculture increased due to intensification of agriculture – conversion of fallow lands to agriculture lands, increase in the mono cropping of paddy, increase in Rabi area within the command (67% of the command area as against 50% anticipated in the original design) and increase in the area under high yielding variety paddy have all contributed to this (High Level Technical Committee Report, 2007). Deviation from the designed cropping pattern is also cited as a major reason for the increase in irrigation water user (see Table 10). The design of the canals led to massive water logging in the command area. There were other drivers too for the increase in paddy area like non-provision of field channels for micro-irrigation suitable for non-paddy crops and the marketing system that privileged paddy. Finally the state looks up to the command area to feed its vast under-fed people and fill up its empty granaries (Nayak, 2006; Development Support Centre, 2003).

The demand for power has been increasing and the state relies heavily on Hirakud to meet this increasing demand. Municipal uses do not require a very significant quantity of water especially in comparison to industrial allocations. The Bhushan Steel Plant has been allocated 54.5 MGD of water. This is more than the designed capacity of the ‘Greater Sambalpur water supply system’ which provides piped water supply to Sambalpur, Burla and Hirakud townships. Since the industries were not ‘traditional’ users and late claimants they are seen as ‘intruder’ and there is also the perception that the water used by industries do not primarily benefit common people (Nayak, 2006). Since none of the water user groups experienced shortage of water in the early stages of the dam, though, heterogeneity of users existed even before; it did not lead to hardening of stands of different users. Since

¹⁷ Flood control required the dam to be empty; power generation and irrigation required the dam to be full.

there is less supply of water and rising demand, the heterogeneity of users has become an issue of contestation (Panda, 2008).

There is an increasing fear of the 'aggressive nature of the industries' in relation to water. There are three rationales of this 'fear of aggression'. Apparently there are three reasons for such a fear: 1) the way industries were allocated led to a belief that Government is acting in the interest of the industries and are not taking other users into confidence; 2) while the industries have their own intake wells and pump houses, irrigation is regulated by the dam authorities; and 3) the grassroots reality – farmers feel discriminated as the government bars them from using a small pump to lift water from the reservoir or the canal where as the industries do this with impunity (Nayak, 2006). The Bhushan Steel Ltd. ignored all administrative directives to lift soil and built two kilometer long approach road inside the reservoir. This road blocked water inflow into the areas which feed the Sasan canal which was the seen as the primary reason for 15 to 22 days delay in releasing water into the canal in the beginning of 2006-07 Kharif season. In another instance, an aluminum industry tried to carry out water supply infrastructure activities at night even when there was a moratorium on that by the government. One iron and power unit encroached upon the reservoir area and constructed its 'ash pond'. Because of all these the farmers felt marginalized and this fear of marginalization united the farming community as never before.

Irrigation shrinkage

The *Paschim Odisha Krushak Samanwaya Samiti* (POKSS) alleges that about 20,000 ha in the command area does not get water or get very inadequate supply. Independent studies too point at tail end deprivation. Eighty percent of the tail area in the Hirakud command system does not get water for irrigation (DSC, 2003). The government also admits that substantial portion of the command area in the tail end does not get water.

The entire Sasan canal, tail areas of Bargarh main canal and Sambalpur distributaries face large-scale shrinkage of irrigated area. Canal water does not reach nearly one-fifth of the Sasan canal command. Similar was the situation in tail areas of other canals too. Irrigation coverage of the Rabi crop, known as the 'Dalua' crop, shrunk at an alarming rate. Many villages in the tail end areas – the Bhimtikra distributary of Bargarh canal, Huma distributary of Sasan canal and most of the Sambalpur distributary – in the command area failed to get irrigation supply to mitigate drought in critical years. In 2006 and 2007 the release of water

to the Sasan canal was delayed by two to three weeks during the kharif season. The farmers linked the non-availability of water in the Sasan canal to the water withdrawal near the head of the canal for industries.

Emergence of the social movement and the processes

The movement has gone through three distinct phases. The first phase – starting from the 90s and lasting for more than a decade – primarily mobilized the farmers’ suffering due to and anger against gross ‘under rate’ of paddy and succeeded in getting better prices. In the second phase it monitored the Rs. 40 Crore World Bank funded Sasan canal renovation project. It brought to light many design and implementation flaws in the project and also launched a movement to bring the guilty to book. In the third phase it is launching a mega movement against diversion of water from agriculture to industries.

The movement against paddy under pricing

Distress sale of paddy

The movement started with farmers’ protest against distress sale of paddy in the year 2000. Farmers are concerned about the price they get for their produce as the cost of production is very high. Though the farmers had expected the price of paddy to be better in 2000, as it was a drought year, the price of paddy started dipping. The market price for a 75 kg bag of paddy was about Rs. 100 to 150 less than the Minimum Support Price (MSP), about 40 % lower than the prevailing MSP. This led to an apprehension amongst the farmers that the prices are being manipulated by the paddy millers in collaboration with the unscrupulous officers in the administration.

During that time, there was one local level farmer organisation working in Sindurpank of Sambalpur district and there were many such farmer organisations in the Bargarh district. They were mostly facilitated by the Samajbadi Jana Parishad (SJP), with a socialist ideology. Its founder leader, late Kishan Pattanaik was a national level leader of the socialist movement and still an iconic figure in the area. Farmers were the primary political base of Mr. Kishan Pattanaik.

After the incidences of large scale ‘under-rate’, some key farmers, basically from the upper and middle echelons, came together and decided that they will form local level farmer

organisations like the Sindurpank organisation. In the first phase four such local level farmer organizations were formed.

These organizations were centered around *mandis* (market yards) and consists of farmers who sell their produce in a particular market yard. The organizations were built around market yards to ensure at least the MSP is paid to the farmers.

Formation of the Sambalpur Zilla Krushak Suraksha Sangathan

All the local level farmer organisations in Sambalpur district, 33 in all, were brought together under one umbrella – the Sambalpur Zilla Krushak Suraksha Sangathan (SZKSS). The movement against the under rate of paddy was then launched under the banner of SZKSS. At the same time, movement against under rate of paddy was also intensifying in Bargarh district led by SJP through the local farmer organisations. But the movements at Sambalpur and Bargarh districts were being waged independent of each other.

Success of the movement against paddy ‘under rate’

‘Making the paddy procurement system organized and transparent was our one point agenda at that time,’ says Murari Prasad Purohit, a prominent leader of the SZKSS. At that time there were about 65 *Mandis* functioning on paper in Sambalpur district. But not even one was working properly. The paddy procurement system bypassed the *mandis* – the farmers and the buyers (millers) did not come to the *mandis* to sell or buy paddy. However, paper transactions showed that the procurements were being made through the *mandis*. The farmer organizations, led by the SZKSS, resisted this practice and insisted that the buyers should come to the *mandis* and buy the paddy. They organised a massive rally on 19 October 2000 that made the administration sit up and take note. The administration agreed to the demand of the SZKSS. The SZKSS also put pressure on the buyers.

In fact the beginning was slow. The *mandi* system was restored to some extent. First the big farmers came to the *mandis*, but the millers did not pay the MSP as they claimed that the produce was substandard. The procedure then was that the farmers first take their paddy to the *mandis* and then take it to the allotted rice mills. The quality check was done at the rice mills and the farmers had no say in the process. The SZKSS demanded that the quality of paddy be checked at the *mandi* itself. The administration, however, rejected the demand apparently on the grounds of lack of technical manpower. This made the SZKSS more aggressive.

Thousands of bags of paddy started piling up in market yards as the farmers refused to sell their produce to the millers if the quality check was not done at the yards. In May 2002 they also started a relay hunger strike in front of the office of the District Collector. It went on for forty days. It got support from diverse quarters like the Bar Association, the Transporters' Association, the Students' Unions, various Citizens' forums, etc.

The administration bowed to the pressure and agreed to check the quality at the yard level itself. Since members of many of the constituent farmers' organisations were members of the market yard committees, they took active role to facilitate quality check at the market yards. They also ensured that paddy procurement got over prior to the monsoon.

This success led to strengthening of the movement on two counts: one, the farmers started reposing total confidence in their leaders; and, two, the administration and millers too started taking the movement and the SZKSS very seriously. Even a common farmer started getting due respect. To quote the President of the SZKSS, 'previously even a *munsif* (clerk) of a rice mill would deal with a farmer with contempt...not any more... now the owner of the mill comes to meet a farmer.'

The SZKSS did not stop with this success. They toured villages and made farmers aware about maintaining quality of paddy so that they get better price. They also searched for new buyers as the millers were the only buyers till then. They urged the Divisional Manager of Food Corporation of India (FCI) to buy paddy from the yard directly and he agreed. Till then the FCI was only procuring processed rice from the millers. Later other organisations like Markfed, Nafed, etc., too came forward to buy paddy from the farmers. This changed paddy marketing completely. For the first time, there was competition amongst the buyers and farmers started getting higher price than the MSP. This was a big success for the movement.

Though there was a movement against 'under rate' of paddy in Bargarh and Sonepur districts also, it was not as successful as the one in Sambalpur. Still, the overall movement against under price of paddy was successful as it brought in a mechanism which, at the least, guaranteed MSP for paddy.

Efforts to ensure quality and transparency in Sasan canal renovation

The Sasan canal was in very bad shape. After persistent demands by the farmers, the government took up the modernisation of Sasan canal, which was in very bad shape,

through the World Bank funded Orissa Water Sector Consolidation project. The project began in 2003 and involved modernisation of about 82 kilometers of the canal. Since the SZKSS came to know about the inferior quality of work, it decided to intervene.

The first phase of this movement was more technical in nature and involved many intensive studies. The SZKSS sought the help of retired senior engineers like Rathanga Purohit and Karunakar Supkar. They, along with the members of the SZKSS, intensively visited the work sites, studied the designs and how they are carried out. The effort continued from March to April 2003. Their report not only pointed out various irregularities and faulty designs but also suggested various remedial measures. Though the report was appreciated, the government did not implement the suggested measures.

A breach in the newly renovated canal, caused by rain, near Shagunpali village further vindicated the report and also strengthened the movement. This also made the farmers realize that the quality of work is awfully low. The administration, however, saw the breach in canal only as an aberration and took no measures to set things right or bring the culprits to book. The SZKSS continued their demand to involve the local farmer bodies and the Pani Panchayats (Water User Associations). Rabi crop could not be taken for two years in the area served by Sasan canal as the renovation works got completed only in 2005. Immediately after the renovation a large breach occurred on 12 August 2005 and washed away 50 feet of the concrete lined canal. The SZKSS demanded strong action against the culprits and also launched protest campaigns in front of each and every government office in the area which continued for nearly two months – September and October 2005. This period also saw a very innovative way of expressing their demands. The villagers wrote thousands of letters to the Chief Minister of Orissa and the President of India.

The SZKSS started a relay hunger strike from 22 October 2005 and also declared to hold a *Chashi Garjan Samabesh* (Voice of farmer convention) on 22 November. About a hundred thousand people were expected to gather on that day. Since the administration got wind of this it ordered an enquiry into the alleged malpractices just two days before the date of the convention. The SZKSS called off the convention. Though the report of the technical committee, formed by the government, brought out very clearly the inferior quality of the work, the government did not take any action.

This led to another wave of agitations demanding prosecution of the guilty. The government acceded to the demand and in August 2006 announced investigation by the Crime Branch. The investigation unearthed large scale bungling. It arrested and charge sheeted many persons including high level engineers and contractors.

Though the campaign against irregularities in Sasan canal modernisation was a success, the broader issue of large parts of the Sasan canal command area not getting water due to poor quality of works still remained unresolved.

The movement against diversion of water form Hirakud

Till 2005 the movement had not paid much attention to the Hirakud water. This soon changed with water not being released into the canal on the due date of release, June 15. The official explanation was that the water level had reached the dead storage level and hence no water could be released. The situation was still worse in 2006 as the Kharif crop was delayed by 22 days. Farmers found that no water was flowing in the canal though the officials claimed that 600 Cusec (Cubic foot per second) of water is being released from the dam.

Two factors seems to have created this situation: one, the inflow to the reservoir from the confluence of Ib and Bheden river had stopped due to blockade and withdrawal by some industries; and two, with very high sedimentation, especially near the mouth of the canal, the water could not be fed into the canal though the water level was above the dead storage level. Also, during SZKSS visits to the sites, from where the industries were sourcing water, it found that one industry had constructed a two km long approach road that totally blocked inflow of water to the Sasan canal head area.

Movement against water allocation to industries

All these further infuriated the farmers. As Ashok Pradhan says, “It shattered our belief. We became damn sure that we will not get water if we do not start to assert our claims over the Hirakud water”. Thus the focus of the movement completely shifted to industrial allocation of water from the reservoir.

The SZKSS convened a meeting at Maneshwar on 15 August 2006. About 500 people, including representatives from other districts of the command area, participated in that meeting. This was the first time that the SZKSS aligned with other movements in the Hirakud command to intensify the campaign against industrial allocation from the Hirakud. They decided on a coordinated movement at the Western Orissa level and thus Paschim

Odisha Krushak Suraksha Sangathan (POKSS) was born. A co-ordination committee was formed with Ashok Pradhan of the SZKSS as President.

Major phases of the movement

The meeting at Maneshwar on 15 August 2006 decided to intensify the movement and to launch agitations till all water allocation permissions, made after 2003, are cancelled. The meeting also decided on the strategies as it became extremely important to agree on common strategies as the movement was not confined to only SZKSS but had other constituent organizations with differing principles and approaches.

They decided on a four-phase sequencing of the movement with enough flexibility to decide on the next phase as per the success and/or failure of the previous one. This was also the reason to decide not to declare the dates in advance. The four phases were: 1) letter from each family; 2) protests and human-chain demonstration; 3) interactions with policy makers and the public; and 4) civil-disobedience movement.

Thousands of letters were written to the Chief Minister. Though such letters were also sent earlier, especially during the movement against under-rate of paddy, this time round the scale was much larger as letters were sent from other districts also.

The human chain protest on 26 October 2006 was a very innovative one. About 20,000 demonstrators formed a human chain that stretched from one end of the dam to the other end and covered Hirakud and Burla townships in between. The participation, covering different sections of the society, was absolutely spontaneous. It generated serious debates throughout Orissa. The movement proved that POKSS can launch mega protest movements in a peaceful and effective manner.

The interaction with the policy makers was organized at Bargarh on 10 January 2007 in the form of *Chetabani Samabesh* (meaning convention to caution). The objective was to convey to the legislators of the area the concerns of the farmers and also to know the stand of the legislators' on the issue so as to launch a common movement. Though all legislators from Western Orissa were invited to the convention, only one legislator came and he too did not take any firm stand. This prompted the movement to 'Go Alone'. 'We at least hoped that some opposition MLAs will come to the convention, if not the members from the ruling party. It made us to believe that the fight is left to ourselves as political parties and politicians have their own agenda,' says the President of SZKSS.

As all these actions failed to elicit firm assurance from the government, the movement decided to disobey the law. They declared civil disobedience day on 6 November 2007. Though the Hirakud dam area is a prohibited area, thousands of people marched to the prohibited zone. About 30,000 protesters from various parts of Western Orissa converged at the Burla end of the dam and entered the no-entry zone. Police resorted to lathi-charge and many farmers got injured.

The movement post civil disobedience day

The lathi-charge generated instant reaction all over Orissa and also further raised the stature of the movement. The farmers were furious after the lathi charge and would have retaliated against the police. However, the leaders of the movement could calm down the agitating farmers. In fact it showcased the disciplined and non-violent nature of the movement.

After the civil disobedience movement all the political parties vied with each other to be on the side of the movement. The government publicly apologized and ordered an inquiry into the lathi-charge. In the next Assembly session this issue became the single most important issue. The house saw disruptions and adjournments for nine days. The issue of allocation of water to industries became one of the most important issues for the government, for political parties and for other stakeholders.

The government also declared many sops to ease the situation like a) immediate moratorium on allocation to new industries, b) water supply to industries only after the entire designed command area is provided irrigation, c) Rs. 200 crore canal modernisation package, d) capacity enhancement of the dam through desilting, and e) review of the policy governing industrial water allocation.

It also formed a high level technical committee under the chairmanship of Mr. R. Jayaselan, retired Chairman of CWS. The committee was asked to:

8. Assess if water allocated to industries adversely affect irrigation in the light of the issues raised by different farmer's organisations
9. Recommend intake points for various industries for whom water allocation has been made
10. Suggest technically feasible and practical ways for the industries drawing water from the reservoir to create additional storage facilities in the reservoir and/or on the fringes of the reservoir

11. Suggest the quantum and timing of storage to be created by the industries to meet their dry season requirements
12. Estimate hydropower loss, if any, due to supply of water to various industries and recommend ways to compensate it by industries or otherwise
13. Review the water earmarked from Hirakud reservoir for industries in 1990 and make recommendations
14. Suggest if any additional conditions required to be imposed at the time of allocation of water to industries

It was stipulated that the committee should hold extensive discussions with all the stakeholders, including Pani Panchayats, and take into account their viewpoints while giving the recommendations. But this was not so. The committee met farmer representatives only for a couple of hours on 20 July 2007. The farmers also got infuriated when the convener of the committee said that there is sufficient water in the reservoir. The movement representatives disputed this claim and when they were not allowed to substantiate their stand they walked out of the meeting. This was not even mentioned in the committee report. The movement rejected all the recommendations of the committee because of a) the recommendations were based on outdated statistics, b) the committee did not study grassroots realities and c) the committee completely ignored the movement's viewpoints. The Chief Minister (CM) also invited the movement leaders for a series of meetings. The movement leaders met the CM on 7 March 2008 and put forward their case. However, they declined to go for any more meetings with the CM alleging that the first meeting failed to set out a clear roadmap to address the concerns of the movement.

The movement is continuing and is holding meetings to create awareness amongst the farmers. The farmers want total cancellation of all water allocation made from Hirakud for industries. After the Civil Disobedience movement they did carry out some significant protests further intensifying the movement including drawing a no-entry zone through *Chashira Rekha* (Farmer's Line), *Sankalpa Samaves* to intensify the movement and the pledge 'Hirakud's water is ours' on Shaheed Bhagat Singh's martyr day on 23 March 2009. The farmers have resolved to take the movement forward and the formation of a youth wing is part of this resolve (see Box 1 for the milestones of the movement).

The organization

Organizationally the movement can be classified into two broad groups – SZKSS and the farmers' organizations of Bargarh and Sonepur districts.

Analysis of SZKSS

Its composition

SZKSS is an umbrella organization of 33 local level farmer organizations which are directly linked to different *mandis* (see Chart 2). Each local organization is named after a local deity – *Jayadurga Krushak Suraksha Sangathan* at Hirakud is an example of this. The general body of SZKSS is comprised of the Presidents and Secretaries of each member organization and another eight members who are prominent at the district level. Office bearers include President, General Secretary, Treasurer and four Vice-Presidents.

All the member organizations have their own byelaws as they are registered. The SZKSS, which is not registered, has no written byelaw but operate on the basis of a definite set of principles. One of the important principles is that if any member becomes office bearer of any political party then he/she will not be considered as an office bearer of SZKSS.

The SZKSS is not affiliated to any political party but most of its leaders belong to the socialist ideology. In fact many office bearers and important functionaries of different political parties like the Congress, the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Biju Janata Dal and the Communist Party of India are also members of the SZKSS. “The sitting MLA from Bargarh, Prasanna Acharya, belonging to the Biju Janata Dal, started his political career from this movement. Most of the political leaders from Bargarh, who are now in different mainstream political parties, started their political careers from this socialist movement led by Kishan Patnaik”, says Saroj Mohanty, a leading activist of the region.

Leadership of the SZKSS

The present President of the SZKSS is the Delhi University educated Ashok Pradhan. He belongs to Kulta caste, a hard working farming community. Though his family has a thriving business, he chose farming. He tills his lands himself with a power tiller. He is basically a Gandhian and does not belong to any political party. He does not impose his own ideology on others and has been binding force within the organization as it has members with differencing political backgrounds. His continuous re-election as President of

SZKSS since its inception in 2000 is an indication of his popularity within the organization.

Prashanta Nath and Dolagovinda Mishra are the present General Secretary and Treasurer respectively. They all are also involved in farming, well educated and known for their integrity.

The movement gets professional and intellectual support from various quarters. The technical study done during the Sasan canal modernization with the help of very senior engineers is an example of this. It also gets support and solidarity from other likeminded leaders and organizations like Praful Samantray of the famous Kashipur struggle, BALCO activists, and so on.

The social base of the members

The local farmers' organizations were formed primarily by relatively big and medium farmers. As discussed earlier, the movement emerged from distress selling of paddy at artificially lowered prices. Majority of paddy sellers are big and medium farmers as the small farmers consume most of their produce. Thus farmers who had marketable surplus became members of the local organizations. This was the condition till the beginning of the movement on Hirakud water in 2006. Since then there has been a rapid change in the membership as every person – including small and marginal farmers or even non-farmers – became part of the movement.

Though women participated in large numbers in all the actions, none of them were in decision making positions; nor were there any women office bearers. Though the leaders claim that they made efforts to bring women into the leadership, there has not been much of a success. Prof. Panda attributes this to the prevalent social structure. According to him, “This is a pure agrarian society where the Brahmins and Kultas – two of the dominant agriculture communities – are taking the lead. Unlike the tribal communities, women are not active in these communities”.

Decision making

Decisions within the organization are taken collectively. General body meetings and public meetings are convened to discuss and decide on the future plans and actions. The meeting venues and dates are decided by the office bearers in consultation with the office bearers of the local organizations. The meetings are held at different places of the district or at the

residence of the President which is also a makeshift office of the SZKSS. The members also keep regular touch among themselves through phone or personal meetings. **The decisions of the SZKSS are carried out by the local level organizations.**

The leaders do not participate in meetings or negotiations with officials alone. All representations are done collectively. This is a conscious decision to avoid any scope of influence of certain individuals on the movement and also to avoid scope for personal gains and compromises.

Resource mobilization

The SZKSS does not have any source of income as of now and depends on its constituent local organizations. The local organizations collect one to two rupees from the farmers for each bag of paddy sold through the market yard. On an average about 30 to 35 lakh bags of paddy is procured from Sambalpur district and most of it is procured through the market yards. Thus the local organizations earn quite substantially from paddy procurement and are not required to mobilize from other sources.

The local organizations take care of major programmes at the district or regional levels and also fund the SZKSS to meet some of the expenditures. There is no definite formula for providing funds to the SZKSS and depends on the requirements. The contributions to be made to SZKSS by the local organizations are decided in the meetings. The treasurer keeps record of all expenditures and presents them to the general body. The SZKSS does not have bank account and the cash is kept with the treasurer.

The local organizations have a transparent system of finance management. Records are kept by the treasurer. The transactions are made through their bank accounts. Though the finances are not professionally managed or audited, the accounts are regularly presented and discussed in general body meetings of the organizations.

Most of their resources are spent on improving marketing infrastructure and spreading awareness among the farmers. In comparison the expenditure on the movement itself is quite less. The office bearers of the SZKSS meet their own costs of travel and other expenses. The participants for various meetings and demonstrations are expected to come on their own. Arrangements for food and shelter are made by the SZKSS through the local organizations.

Modus operandi of the SZKSS

The SZKSS carries out its activities through consultations and meetings. The SZKSS does not have a fixed office and the activities are carried out from the offices of the local organizations or from the residence-cum-office of the President. The programmes are organized on a shoe-string budget and most of the expenditure incurred on events like the human chain movement or the civil disobedience movement was on providing food and water to the participants. Traveling is a big expenditure; however the SZKSS does not arrange vehicles to ferry the protestors. Often the office bearers contribute from their own pocket to the travels and other logistics.

Great deal of preparations is made before each major event like the human chain formation, the civil obedience or the Chetavani Samavesh. The leadership makes extensive tour of the villages – sometimes on cycles to cut down on costs – to campaign for the events. Senior activists like Medha Patkar and Rajendra Singh have also accompanied the movement leaders in such campaigns.

Though all members collectively take decisions and implement them, senior members of the movement take responsibility to guide and monitor various activities. The President is seen as the chief monitor and guide. The leaders make frequent visits to villages, and interact and motivate the people. They supervise the activities done by the local organizations. The evaluation of programmes and finances are done at the general body meetings. No external audit of accounts is done at the movement level. Every member is expected to carry out the task entrusted to that by the SZKSS in a self regulated manner. It seems that the prime mover of this mechanism is their high motivation and the confidence they have on their leaders.

Campaign material

The movement has produced an audio CD of songs on the Hiraikud water struggle named *Paen Talar Juye* (meaning the fire beneath the water). It has also brought out a book on the Hiraikud struggle explaining the rationale for the farmers' claim over the Hiraikud water. In fact thousands of people marched singing the songs from *Paen Talar Juye* during the civil disobedience agitation. All important meetings also start with these songs.

The Paschim Odisha Krushak Suraksha Sangathan (POKSS)

The POKSS comprises of farmer organisations of Sambalpur, Bargarh and Sonepur districts. The SZKSS is the dominant force as most of the actions are carried out in Sambalpur area of the Hirakud command. The Samajbadi Jana Parishad (SJP) facilitated farmer's organisations in Bargarh district too are a major constituent of the POKSS. Hence, the leaders of the SZKSS and SJP are co-conveners of the POKSS. The SZKSS and the SJP also differ in many ways. The SJP is quasi-political party with a socialist ideology. It talks of 'alternative politics' and an equal society. They contest the elections or campaign for likeminded parties or candidates. The SZKSS, on the other hand, keeps a distance from mainstream or any other kind of politics though many of its members are active politicians or are important functionaries of different parties. However, when it comes to the movement, they set aside their party ideology and affiliation aside.

The POKSS was formed primarily on the issue of diversion of Hirakud water for industries. Prior to this both SZKSS and SJP had vigorously led movements against paddy under-rate. However, their approach and strategy were very different. The SJP resorted to more militant methods like aggressive blockades of roads and strikes, the SKSS never blocked roads or resorted to public strikes. The SJP even blocked the NH 6 for 48 hours. The SZKSS, on the other hand, held silent protest dharnas, hunger strikes and lobbied hard with the government. The SZKSS even actively participated in the market yards and regulated market committees.

There is also a major difference in the strategy for resource mobilization. The constituents of the SZKSS are involved with the market yards and raise funds form this. The SJP distanced itself from the procurement procedure. While the SZKSS never mobilizes fund from external sources, the SJP is totally dependent on external funding especially from sympathizers and other 'friendly' sources.

Though the movement is fought on the basis of a common strategy, POKSS seems to have more influence on the movement especially in terms of the various activities and strategies. For example, even during intense struggles, not a single road or train was blocked; nor did they call for a strike. This may be also because of the location of the major actions. Most of the industrialization is taking place in the Sambalpur side of Hirakud and the Sasan canal, the most affected, also lies in the Sambalpur side.

Though the movement largely has been smooth, there had been moments of tensions amongst the constituents especially during elections. For example, though Lingaraj of SJP has been contesting the Assembly elections he has not been accepted by several leading members of the movement in Bargarh. Of course these tensions have not affected the movement in any way as the members are primarily committed to the issues/causes of the movement. In Sambalpur district there does not seem to have any such issues. The influence of Andhra farmers in the Bargarh district is quite significant and they have emerged as a powerful lobby. “These farmers, though well integrated into the local community, still have feelings of insecurity being a ‘minority’ group that has come from another state. Because of this they very often align with the mainstream political parties and not the socialist parties like the SJP which fields Lingaraj for the elections”, argues Prof. Panda. “Lingaraj is still an accepted leader amongst the farmers of the movement as he does not force the farmers to follow his political ideology”, says Saroj.

Assessment of the movement

Strengths and weaknesses

The strengths of the movement are its: a) leadership, b) political neutrality, c) positive approach to safeguard farmer’s interest, d) strong public support, and e) strong bargaining capacity. The weaknesses include a) lack of a common ideology, b) lack of a dedicated cadre, and c) dependence on the top leaders. The movement also does not seem to have policy issues.

Relationship with other stakeholders

Pani Panchayats (PPs)

The SZKSS has excellent relation with the PPs and many of its members are associated with the PPs. This is the main reason why the PPs in Hirkud command are amongst the most active and vibrant PPs in the state. For example they cleaned the Sasan main canal themselves in two days which the irrigation department would have taken about ten days. Further, the quality of work in Sambalpur, as part of the recent canal modernization, has been far superior than other parts of the command area. The relationship between SZKSS and Pani Panchayats has been mutually beneficial.

The government

The relationship with the government has not been very cordial as the movement sees government as a primary conspirator behind the allocation to the industries. However, it does not see the government as enemy either. When the Chief Minister invited them for meeting they did go for it; but did not participate in the latter meetings as they felt that the government was not taking decisive actions. Similarly, they met the high level committee; but walked out of it when they realized that their voice was not being heard. The movement has never taken steps which would make returning to negotiations with the government impossible.

Industries

The movement does not have a cordial relationship with the industries and views them as intruders. However, the movement has never opposed new industries coming up in the region; nor has it opposed them violently; it opposed only the allocation of water. The relation might deteriorate in future as the movement alleges that the industries are trying to break the movement by creating dummy movements. *Samaleshwari Krushijeebi Mahasangha* (SKM), discussed under 5.3 below, which came up in 2008, is an example of this.

Other stakeholders and organizations

The movement has excellent relation with the local media. They also get support from important organizations and groups like the Bar Associations, Citizen's Associations, university students and intellectuals.

Threats to the movement

There are numerous threats that may derail the movement. The political parties are trying to hijack the issue, though so far they have not succeeded. The industries are growingly becoming intolerant. Since 2008 a new organization, *Samaleshwari Krushijeebi Mahasangha* (SKM), is raising the same issue and even called a parallel meeting on 13 January 2009. It transported people in hired vehicles and gave sumptuous food. This is being perceived by many as an industry sponsored process to derail the movement led by the POKSS. However, SKM denies this allegation and claims to be the true representative of the farmers. According to Saroj, "The SKM was promoted by the Congress and BJD leaders of

Jharsuguda to support Vedanta's case of drawing water from Hirakud. The farmers stopped Vedanta's pipeline at "Chashir Rekha" but Vedanta is still drawing water from the reservoir". SKM does not have any ongoing activities and one would get an impression that it is already dead. However, it is capable of organizing counter movements to that of the POKSS and hence the POKSS is very vigilant. Presently the POKSS is involved in building up its grassroots strength. "To fight with a government like that of Naveen Pattnaik, which has been ruthless to people and their movements, the only way is to show physical strength and despite the strength this movement has, the parallel movements will succeed to some extent to make it look weak", argues Saroj. The administration and the ruling parties have also been making efforts to get their followers elected in Pani Pachayats and take up all the canal renovation works that involves money.

Sustainability of the movement

It seems that the movement will continue as long as the issue of water allocation is alive and would also gain strength in future. However, the movement needs to build up its capacities. Presently the SZKSS has no source of own funding and depends entirely on the local organizations or personal resources of the leaders. They are now working out a formula on fund sharing between the local organizations and the SZKSS. Further, the movement needs to carry out broader independent study of the irrigated area and shrinkage, use of water by the industries and other aspects of Hirakud water in a more rigorous and comprehensive manner.

Conclusion

The movement has achieved substantial success. The Hirakud water allocation has now become a political issue and the movement succeeded in raising a debate at the policy level. The issue of water allocation to industries has stayed at what it was on 6 January 2008 and succeeded in staying any further allocations. However, it is yet to achieve its main demand of cancellation of all allocations made to the industries from the Hirakud reservoir.

The movement still functions informally both especially in terms of activities and finances. The type and nature of the resources available explain the tactical choices made by movements and the consequences of collective action on the social and political system (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Edwards and McCarthy, 2004). This movement seems to have decided on its strategies within the limits and available resources. **The movement also shows**

that an informal organizational setup can bring together diverse constituents to fight a common cause.

One notable feature of this movement is its progression from issue to another – starting with the issue of paddy under-rate and then moving to the Sasan canal renovation and then to the issue of water allocation from Hirakud to industries. Though the movement has contributed positively to the development and strengthening of PPs and regulating the *mandis*, it has not taken many efforts to address the issue of irrigation efficiency. Apparently there are indications that efforts will be made to motivate farmers to go for less chemical-based farming and also shift to System of Rice Intensification (SRI).

There are also certain limitations arising out of conflicting interests among its constituencies and the inequities within the command area. Many of the leaders of the movement are not direct farmers and/or are large farmers who have also taken small farmers' lands on lease. They also have access to other sources of income. These farmers, since they are rich, also play important roles in other political parties too. Thus the strength they provide to the movement can also turn out to be a threat sometime later.

The movement is known for its non-violent nature even in the face of extreme provocations. Credit for this goes to the leaders. This is not an easy task. The peaceful nature of the movement has definitely contributed to its success so far. The grassroots mobilization of the movement is very strong at the moment. However, the huge money that is being spent on canal repairs and the assertion of the mainstream parties to control the PPs could also be a threat to the movement.

Another problematic area, that needs careful handling, is the relationship of the movement with the non-irrigated farmers around Hirakud command area. The struggle against diversion of water to industries had got tremendous support from farmers of the non-irrigated belts, especially inhabited by the displaced people of Hirakud dam. They are still fighting to get irrigation while the command area farmers are already benefiting from irrigation. Unless the movement expands its scope and coverage to address this issue, these non-irrigated farmers may turn against the movement. With the present character and composition, the movement would find this an uphill task. Unless the movement can go beyond the present slogan of 'no water to industry' – this is the super ordination principle that has brought the command area farmers together under one umbrella – and frame the issues in a more inclusive and open manner, it would not be able to address other substantive issues like

equity in water distribution (including the huge tail ender deprivation), water use efficiency, shifting to more sustainable cropping patterns and systems and within rice cultivation shifting to low external input, sustainable agricultural practices like system of rice intensification and so on. This is important if the movement has to retain its support base – especially amongst the farmers within the command who face tail ender deprivation and farmers who are outside the command or the dam oustees who do not get access to irrigation – as well as its relevance.

Tables

Table 1: Main Canals of Hirakud Irrigation System

Sl. No.	Name of Canal	Length of canal (KM)	Full supply discharge (Cumec)	Bed width of canal (m)	Full Supply Depth of canal (m)
1	Bargarh Main Canal	84.28	107.6	45.7	2.68
2	Sasan Main Canal	21.79	17.8	16.67	1.49
3	Sambalpur Distributary	18.08	3.4	4.57	1.06

Source: Chief Engineer, DoWR, Orissa (2008)

Table 2: Power generation from the Hirakud project

Year	Power produced (in MU)
98-99	1062.638
99-2000	1119.259
2000-01	552.315
2001-02	990.725
2002-03	746.574
2003-04	1022.2
2004-05	793.486
2005-06	949.321
2006-07	862.4
2007-08	975.4

Source: Annual Reports of Orissa Hydro Power Corporation

Table 3: Orissa depends heavily on Hirakud

	Orissa Total	Hirakud Benefits	Hirakud's share (in %)
Flood Control (in Sq km)	155,700	10000	6.42
Irrigation (in ha)	2763228		
Direct command	2763228	153,750	5.56
Total command (Including delta)	2763228	589,750	21.34
Average Power Generation (In MW)	2776	347.5	12.52
Industrial Water Allocation (in MGD)	781.6	236.2	30.22

Source: Based on Water Plan, 2004; Annual Report of the OERC 2006-07; DoWR Annual Report 2007-08 and Orissa Vidhan Sabha

Table 4: Extraction of major minerals

Mineral/Ore	Extraction in various years (in Lakh Tonnes)					
	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Coal	435.4	448.1	478	520.3	602	675
	(0.16)	(2.92)	(6.67)	(8.85)	(15.70)	(12.20)
Metallic Minerals (Iron ore, Bauxite etc.)	172.4	198.1	227.2	311.1	434.1	121.5
	(4.87)	(14.91)	(14.69)	(36.93)	(39.54)	(21.10)

Source: Directorate of Mines, Orissa

* Figures in bracket indicate extraction of total reserve

Table 5: Rising rate of mineral extraction

Ore/Mineral	Extraction in various years (in per cent of total reserve)					
	1998-99	1999-00	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Iron ore	0.33	0.34	0.47	0.62	0.72	1.1
Chromites	0.72	0.92	0.96	1.8	1.13	3.08
Coal	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.1	0.12	0.11
Bauxite	0.16	0.17	0.21	0.28	0.28	0.32

Source: Source: Directorate of Mines, Orissa

Table 6: Shrinkage of Hirakud reservoir storage

Storage	Storage capacity (in MAF)		
	Original	Year 1995	Year 2000
Gross storage	6.6	4.98	4.74
Live storage	4.72	4	3.91
Dead storage	1.88	0.98	0.87

Source: High Level Committee Report, 2007

Table 7: Runoffs in Mahanadi

River Flow	River Flow (in MHM)	
	Pre-Dam	Post-Dam
Average annual runoff	6.17 (1926-46)	3.36 (1958-2006)
Maximum annual runoff	8.62(1919)	9.09 (1961)
Minimum annual runoff	1.84 (1902)	1.14 (1979)

Source: Orissa Hydro Power Corporation Ltd. (2008), Downloaded from http://www.ohpcltd.com/hirakud/salient_features/burla/hydrology.htm

Table 8: Growing demand for water from Hirakud

User Group	Original Plan	Current status
Kharif irrigation coverage (in Ha)	153,750	159,100
Rabi irrigation (in Ha)	76,875	106,820
Installed power generation capacity (in MW)	307	347.86
Urban water supply (in MAF)	0.006	0.136
Industrial use (in MAF)	Nil	0.35

Source: Panda R & Pandia B (2007), *Panira Dagara*, Water Initiatives Orissa, Sambalpur

Table 9: Industrial allocation from Hirakud

<i>Period</i>	<i>From Hirakud reservoir*</i>	<i>From All other sources in the state*</i>	<i>Share of Hirakud reservoir (in % of total)</i>
Pre April, 1997	71,252	468,350	13.20
Post April, 1997	433,179.20	944,222.40	31.45
Overall	504,431.20	1,412,572.40	26.31

Source: Analysis of reply given to the State Assembly on 20.2.2006

* In Lakh Gallons per Year (LGY)

Table 10: Cropping pattern variation – design vs. actual

Crop	As per Project Report (1952)	Existing pattern
Kharif*		
1.Paddy	70	98
2.Sugarcane	10	1.3
3.Cotton	5	0
4.Other crops	15	0.7
Rabi*		
1.Paddy	33	60
2.Medium Rabi	8	3
3.Light Rabi	7	7
4. Other crops	52	30

Source: Chief Engineer, Mahanadi Basin, Sambalpur (2007)

* In per cent of total Culturable Command Area (CCA)

Box**Box 1: Major milestones of the movement**

Date	Event
<i>First Phase: The phase to ensure good price for paddy</i>	
Year 2000	Formation of local farmer organisations and integration under the 'Sambalpur Zilla Krushak Suraksha Sangathan'
October 19, 2000	Farmer rally to protest 'under-rate' of paddy
May, 2002	Relay hunger strike to demand 'quality check' of paddy at the market yards instead of the mills
Year 2003	Successfully demanded local representation and broadening of voter base for 'Regulated Market Committees'
Year 2004	Lobbied with Food Corporation of India and other firms to increase paddy buyer base
<i>Second Phase: The phase to ensure quality of work in Sasan canal modernisation activity</i>	
March & April, 2003	Detailed study of the designs and implementation of the renovation work in Sasan canal
September 5 to October 7, 2005	Protest demonstration against government departments to demand inquiry into substandard works and pilferage of funds in the Sasan canal renovation
October 22 to November 15, 2005	Relay hunger strike to demand action against the culprits; participants from other districts also join in
November 22, 2005	Call for 'Chashi Garjan Samavesh'; Government declares investigation; the convention was called off
Year 2006	Investigation found irregularities and initiated prosecution of the guilty
<i>Phase 3: Movement against allocation of water to industries</i>	
June, 2006	Protest as the irrigation authorities failed to ensure water release from June 15; the Chief Engineer gives assurance but fails to keep; the diversion issue becomes the most important issue for the movement.
August 15, 2006	Meeting of 500 people from Sambalpur and other districts; forms 'Paschim Odisha Krushak Suraksha Sangathan' and a unified campaign begins
September, 2006	Each household writes letters to the President of India and the Chief Minister of Orissa
October 26, 2006	Formation of a 22 kilometer long human-chain; more than 20,000 farmers, sympathizers, students and civil society members participate
January 10, 2007	'Chetabani Samabesh' organised at Bargarh in which thousands of farmers from Sambalpur, Bargarh and Sonapur district participate

July 20, 2007	Walk out from the meeting of the High Level Technical Committee led by R. Jayselan
September, 2007	Rejects the Jayselan committee's report
November 6, 2007	Civil disobedience movement
November 11, 2007	Drawing the 'Chashira Rekha'
March 7, 2008	Meeting with the Chief Minister
March 23, 2007	'Sankalpa Samavesh' – pledge to sacrifice everything to protect the right of the farmers over Hirakud's water
November 6, 2008	'Smaran Divas' - Anniversary celebration of the civil disobedience movement
January 13, 2009	'Prastuti Divas' - decision to start a youth wing to take the movement forward

Charts

Chart 1: Minerals in Orissa

(in percentage in relation to India)

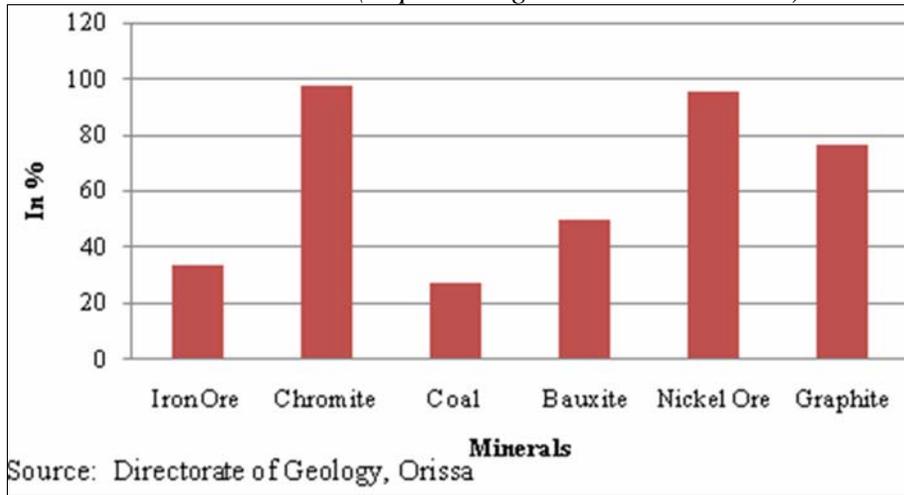
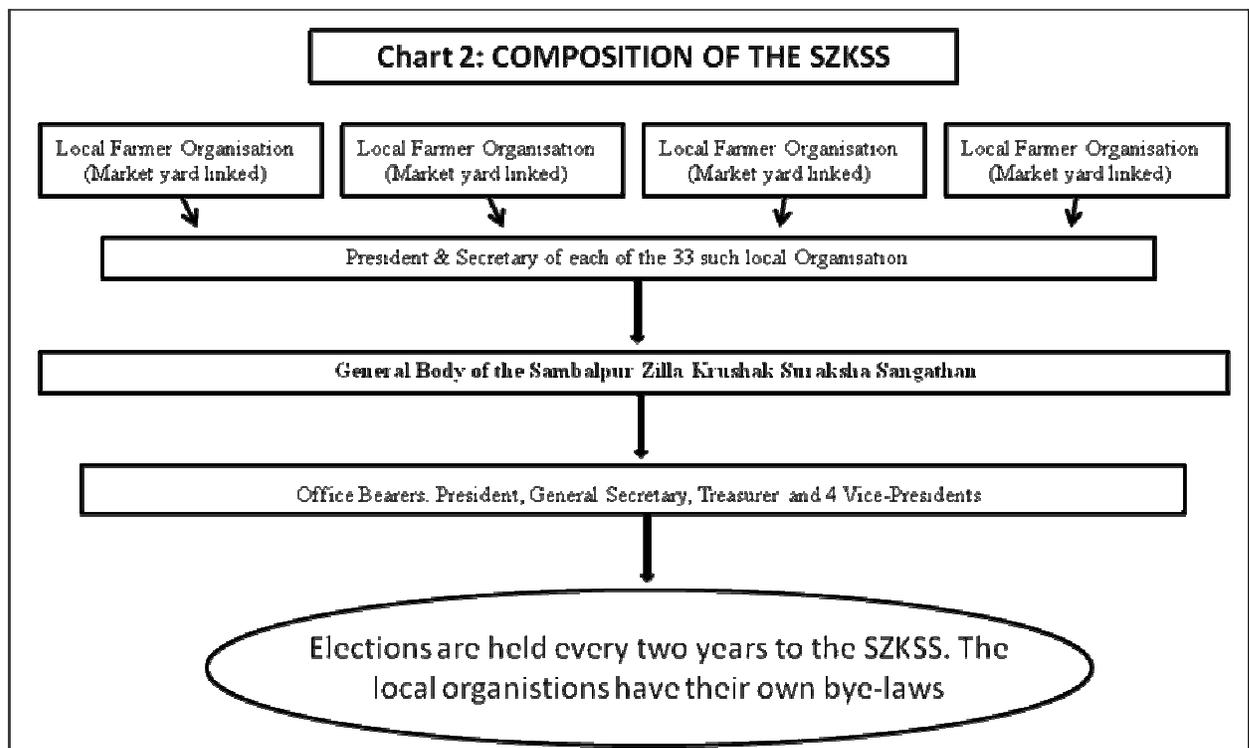


Chart 2: Composition of the SZKSS



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Fig 1: The Mahanadi River Basin

Fig 2: Hirakud canal and crop intensity

Fig 3: Rule curve of Hirakud

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Chapter 3

Kengrehalla Rejuvenation Movement: Case study of a social movement from the Western Ghats in Karnataka

Anitha Pailoor¹⁸

Introduction

Sirsi is a small town in the Western Ghats region of Karnataka. It falls in the Uttara Kanada district of Karnataka. Sirsi town is blessed with a lush green forest and is known for its several water falls. In fact its abundant water sources prompted a rapid rise in the habitation in Sirsi. Every house here has an open well. This rapid expansion of the town brought in undue pressure on the town's water resources due to which it increasingly started depending on external sources for meeting its water requirements. One of the sources was about eight kilometers away from the town. This source was also the lifeline for many villages. Things had not heated up until 2002 which is when the town needs started encroaching upon the rural agricultural water requirements. Struggle for water between Sirsi town and the village reached its peak in 2002 when Sirsi Municipality decided to extract more water from Kengrehalla which is a small stream on Aghanashini River.

The present case study discusses mainly the struggles around conflicts arising out of increasing pressures on rural areas to meet the water requirements of the urban areas.

The struggle started around 2002 when Sirsi Municipality decided to meet its water needs from the Kengrehalla stream by damming it. Farmers from the neighbouring villages protested, by putting pressure on the Sirsi municipality to withdraw the project. After several months of struggle farmers managed to halt the project and the municipality had to give in to their demands. After this victory, the struggle enters its new phase wherein it looks at the long term sustainability of the water resource of the region.

The Kengrehalla Rejuvenation Front, which was formed to fight the interest of farmers, went ahead with an objective of soil and water conservation and creating awareness among both the villages and city dwellers on water conservation and use.

This case study looks at the situations that lead to the initiation of the movement, the geographical and social context in which it is located and details out the process through

¹⁸ Anita Pailoor works as a freelance journalist in Karnataka

which it made a transition from a protest to a constructive mode. The case study argues that the key factor responsible for the spread and sustenance of collective action in the region, is the transition it made from a purely protest mode to one that looked at resource management and development as well. It is this long view that held the movement and its participants together.

Context

The main source of water for Sirsi town is the Aghanashini River. The township dates back to about two centuries ago and then the settlement was about 350 houses. There were fourteen lakes that met the requirements of these houses. The forest and agriculture in this town was well supported by these water resources. The town has grown big and as per the 2001 census has a population of 65000. The changing landscape of the town has encroached into the forest area and cut down on its agricultural land as well.

Reckless expansion of the city concealed major portion of catchment area of two prominent rivers in the region Aghanashini and Shalmala. Extensions like Ganesha Nagar, which is home to the lower middle classes, were made without providing basic amenities. They posed problems due to a poor drainage system which has now affected the quality of water in about 300 open wells that are a drinking water source for the town.

Traditionally the housing pattern was such that each house had an open well which would meet its entire domestic water needs through the year. However with the rapid expansion the ground water level went down and quality deteriorated too. Most of these wells now go dry and in summers these households thus have to depend on municipal water supply. The new and developing areas do not have wells, so depend primarily on municipal water supply through the year. Sirsi is also a tourist place so the commercial establishments too consume a lot of water.

All in all the unplanned expansion of the town has destroyed its rich water sources as well as its forest base. The responses from the State have only made matters worse as is evident from the big forestry programmes which are only moving towards mono-cropping and the biodiverse forests of the Western Ghats which had diverse local species are now slowly being replaced by Accacia and Casurina.

Emergence of the movement

As a response to the growing water demands the Municipality proposed to build a six meter high dam on the Kengre stream which is at a distance of eight kilometers from Sirsi. This proposed dam was planned under the drinking water scheme of Asian Development Bank (ADB). The total outlay of the project was 64.38-crore of which 30.32-crore was earmarked for construction of a dam and necessary pumping system. The catchment area of Kengre stream is 8600 hectares. Annual rain fall in the region is 1800 mm. Twenty one villages with ten thousand population and nine thousand cattle depend on this stream and its sub streams. The area also includes 800 hectares of areca plantation and 500 hectares of paddy.

Since 1969, Kengrehalla has been supplying water to Sirsi town. Till 1991, a pumpset with 90 hp (horse power) capacity was used to draw water. With increase in the demands the capacity of the pump was increased to 175 hp. Every day 12-lakh gallons of water was supplied to the municipality from Kengrehalla. The process of extraction of water continued without giving any thought to its regeneration. During summers the municipality would bring restrictions on the farmers water use by breaking the check dams and stone bunds built by them. These farmers were from different castes and tribes and primarily of the sheeliga tribe. This practice of damaging such structures that were an important source for the rural people started in 1997. After 2002 the municipality unilaterally disconnected about 16 pumpset power connections of the farmers in the summer months to continue with water supply to Sirsi. The discontent among farmers was thus rising and the final blow came in the form of the proposal to construct a dam across the stream. The original dam was planned on the Aghanashini River at a village called Baleghar which is about 16 kms away from Sirsi. However the farmers of Baleghar opposed this and the site was shifted to Kengre. The Baleghar residents were influenced by the opinion of a local water expert K.M. Hegde who advocated the construction of a dam on the Kengre stream rather than at Balghar. He also argued that Kengre was closer to Sirsi than Baleghar. Following on his advice the municipality decided to forgo the earlier plan of creating a temporary structure by elevating a one meter barrage (a temporary structure using sand bags) and instead building a permanent structure seven meters high on Kengre.

All these events further antagonised the farmers of the Kengre catchment.

The temporary structure would have cost the municipality Rs. two lakhs for maintenance every year. Villagers had no problem with a temporary structure. They knew that they cannot afford having a permanent structure.

All these events heated up the situation and triggered a lot of discontent among the farmers in the Kengre catchment.

Launch of the movement

Most of those who drew water from the river through pump set - also worked as agriculture labours. Only few had legal approval to draw water from the stream. They shared their agony with Hosmane Hegde family, where some of them were working as agriculture labourers. Hosmane family was a socially active family. M N. Hegde one of the three brothers of Hosamane family decided to take up the issue and contacted Shivananda Kalave who was known in the village as a journalist and also an activist. Both of them roped in few more influential and committed persons.

On 15 June 2002 they arranged an emergency meeting in the village school campus. A pamphlet that described the entire case was distributed among all the affected villages. The meeting was attended by villagers from fifteen villages which were in the catchment area of Kengre watershed development programme. At this juncture, Yuvaka Mandalas ¹⁹(youth associations) actively took up the responsibility. They made sure that the message reached all the villages. Yuvaka Mandals of Kalave, Balegadde, Honnegadde, Hunasekoppa, Sannalli, Kalagara, Nirnalli and Shigehalli organized the meeting. Before the meeting another pamphlet was distributed which gave the statistics and clearly stated that a positive mode of action needs to be formulated. The pamphlet says that “Kengre watershed area consists of many waterways. And these waterways are the major water source for farmers who grow coconut, areaca and paddy. Ninety percent of the farmers here depend on surface water for irrigation. Construction of a dam would submerge villages within two kilometers range. As we oppose any attempt to further enhance water supply from the source, we should also take up water conservation methods in our farms and forest.”

¹⁹ Yuvaka mandals have become an integral part of the villages in this region. They form a strong cultural and social base. Youth irrespective of their caste and social status discuss the requirements and prospects of the village. They also organize cultural events. The village comes together at such programmes and this helps strengthening their bonds.

The message was thus clear that while the struggle to oppose the dam is crucial, it should not stop at that and should also focus on enhancing water resource base through watershed based development.

In the same meeting an association was formed called as Kengre Watershed Protection Committee (KWPC). Around five hundred villagers participated in the meeting. The core team consisted of Neernalli Sitaram Hegde, M.N. Hegde Hosmane, Raghavendra Hegde Balegadde and Shivananda Kalave as President, Treasurer, Secretary and Coordinator respectively.

Kengrehalla Watershed Protection Committee gave a memorandum to the municipality and sent a message to the public through pamphlets. Press reports and exclusive stories written by Shivananda Kalave spread the message.

Organisational structure

Shivananda Kalave says that they didn't even think of getting the committee registered. He says, "We thought that it would be a one-time struggle. It was an opportunity for villagers to come together. We would share the responsibilities among ourselves as per our capacities. When it comes to an organization, the working style is different. It requires lots of time, energy and also money. It will not be 'our work', but organisation's effort. We have a letterhead for official communications. There was also a committee with designated office bearers. We as a group have a vision for this region, which we are trying to achieve through various activities."

Organisational activities: Transition from protest to constructive mode

The campaign was triggered by the proposal to construct a dam on a small stream and thus was visualised as a short term campaign to oppose this construction. But as new issues emerged the campaign grew into various dimensions transforming it into a movement for resource conservation and development. Most of the organisational activities thus need to be seen from that perspective. The activities are discussed in two phases the first which broadly can be described as the anti dam protest phase and the second as the resource conservation and development phase. The two are overlapping so in that sense a discussion of the activities would also overlap to an extent. The reason why the discussion is made in two distinct phases is to also point out how organisational strategies and forms change when such a transition is made.

Phase one: Protest against the construction of dam

In the initial phase activities were focused around the protest. So meetings with villagers, press coverage, rallies were some of the activities that the KPC took up to register their protest. During these meetings and interactions with the farmers in the region, the leadership realised that farmers too were equally responsible for exploitation of groundwater.

Bridging the classical rural urban divide

Opposing the dam clearly meant building of a conflictual relationship with the town dwellers of Sirsi. City people particularly business persons were angry with the villagers who as they saw were refusing them of their right over drinking water. Traders and business persons from Sirsi planned an economic embargo and declared that they would stop purchasing arecanut from them.

For the district administration and municipality which depended on the revenue of the business houses these troubles were fairly unexpected as they did not expect such kind of actions from the rural areas. In their bid to pacify the urban dwellers they had planned this grand scheme which they thought would be approved unopposed. At one point Municipal Commissioner Mahendra Singh muddled up the entire scene by going public with individual accusations and shallow statements which diluted administration's morale. He in fact threatened the villagers that if they opposed the project, they should not bring their produces

to the city for marketing. This in fact resulted in better bonding among the farmers and helped them identify themselves as a collective. The strength of KPC grew the most during this period.

Verbal struggle continued through press for months together. A First Information Report (FIR) was registered against members of the committee in the police station. But the Kengrehalla Protection Committee (KPC) was firm and through the press it maintained a dialogue with and appealed to the city dwellers to be self-reliant by opting for roof-water harvesting.

The committee utilised media to disseminate and establish its argument. Sirsi is a place where press is very strong and has great impact on the social fabric. A trip was arranged for Sirsi journalists to the area and this had a tremendous impact. All the newspapers published news features with photos of the drying Kengre stream. Media was fully convinced with the case put forward by the KPC and voluntarily published follow-ups and details of their meetings. This helped to create a public opinion amongst the middle classes from the region. Shivananda Kalave's proximity with the local press as a journalist helped immensely. Sirsi has around three local dailies and two periodicals. Most of the state newspapers and electronic media have correspondents in the city. Approximately a hundred related stories have appeared in the press in a period of few months. There were special in-depth stories by Kalave himself. Interestingly the stories were very balanced and done with a good amount of serious research and hence they highlighted the plight of urban water scarcity with equal importance. The stories also discussed possible solutions for both rural and urban areas and among them was the option of roof water harvesting for Sirsi town..

The KPC systematically argued their case with the district administration by showing them that the project was designed with a very short sighted view. They told the administration that the stream actually went dry during the month of February and was therefore only harmful ecologically and would affect thousands of families who are directly or indirectly linked to the stream. This prompted the then District Commissioner Rakesh Singh to visit the place with his officers and listen to the grievances of the people there. This changed the pace of the agitation. DC was convinced by the explanations and experiences of the farmers. These real problems and the adverse impacts the project would have on the livelihoods of the rural poor were the thrust of the argument in the press as well. Finally the town dwellers who were silent spectators until then started responding.

Appealing through the use of religious faith

In another effort the KPC decided to involve the local swami who had a strong hold on the people of the region and who the KPC knew was generally opposed to dam construction. A gathering was arranged in the premises of local Swarnavalli Math Campus. Hundreds of people who represented three different groups gathered there. KPC had all the records that showed the deteriorated water level in Kengrehalla. Their arguments focussed on the overuse of water by the urban areas and specifically the industries in the urban areas at the cost of agriculture that supported the livelihoods of the poor.

As a result of these multi pronged strategies of appealing to the urban dwellers through scientific and cultural methods, the arguments went in favour of the KPC. There was strong opposition for elevation of dam in the area. It was decided to study the water levels in the places and also condition of catchment area. Soon a subcommittee consisting of municipal members from different backgrounds under the chairmanship of Srikanth Taribagilu was formed to study the situation. Unfortunately, the sub committee was dissolved by the municipal corporation within 22 days of its existence.

On October 27, 2002, a meeting was organized in Sirsi city by Taluk Panchayat President G.N. Hegde Muregar. In the meeting the KPC argued that it is unfortunate that the ADB sponsored 22- crore project is in the implementation stage without proper research on the implications of constructing a dam. On the same day, they gave an open invitation to city dwellers to take up water harvesting. Their slogan was 'Give little space in your heart, we will find space for water harvesting.' Some households volunteered to do roof water harvesting. Later Taluk Panchayat came out with a four page explanation for shifting back the ADB project to Aghanashini River. Genuine reasons presented unambiguously with all the necessary data came to movements' rescue. Finally the project was shifted back to original location and there was a sigh of relief. This also meant that the farmers were now spared the annual ritual of disconnection of electricity and the breaking of the check dam.

Talking to Netravathi a tribal woman we could see how happy she was now that the check dam would no longer be broken and that she can have drinking water closer to home in summers. Netravathi belongs to the Sheeliga tribe at Kapparamane. The population of the Sheeligas in this village is around 100. They migrated to this area a generation ago. They have also encroached into the forest in the name of a settlement and agriculture land. Ramachandra Gouda, an elderly person in the sheeliga tribe says that his colony consisting

of six houses owns ten acres of land. A visit to the farm shows that each house has two to three acres of field. Paddy and vegetables are the prominent crops. Small plots of coconut, arecanut and banana are also seen. The check dam popularly known as ‘Sheeligara Oddu’ was a water security system constructed by them. From the storage near the check dam, a waterway is made which then irrigates individual farms through field channels. This storage meets the farming and household water needs of the sheeliga households. This check dam constructed by the Sheeligas thirty five years back is an example of native wisdom. The dam constructed using locally available stone pelts has stood firm for decades of rain and sun. They repair it annually but the dam was never reconstructed.

The lives of this tribe were disrupted when the municipality started breaking the dam every summer. Firstly vegetable cultivation had to be stopped and women now had to walk a kilometer away to fetch water for household needs.

It was only after months of struggle that the Municipality finally withdrew the proposal to construct a dam on the Kengre stream.

Phase two: Resource conservation, development and management

During this period the leadership was continuously interacting with farmers across these 15 villages in the Kengre watershed area. It was evident that the problems for the area would not end with the stopping of the dam. So discussions around current water use and possibilities of harvesting water were continuously being discussed at the local level. The movement then took it upon themselves to build awareness on judicious water usage and also the necessity of harvesting rainwater. The main message was first conserve the water and then earn the right to withdraw it. Discussions were held on the need for water harvesting structures and the decisions were based on local necessity. These efforts spread widely and farmers from other regions also got motivated and joined in the struggle. The support was so overwhelming that in one month at least two huge water harvesting structures get constructed. The administration too had to sit up and take notice of the growing support from the community. As a result almost ninety nine percent of the structures got constructed with the help of schemes from various departments. Shivananda Kalave is now consulted by all the leaders and departments before starting an activity. These leaders hold meetings with farmers in the locality when a construction is proposed. Public participation from across caste and class helped the movement to sustain through all the

hurdles. Its major achievement was that people can rally together in large numbers not for protests alone, but also for the longer vision of sustainable use and management of the resource. A quick overview shows us that the campaign that began to oppose the Kengre dam subsequently evolved and agreed to

1. To create awareness among city dwellers on roof water harvesting.
2. To clean and desilt 13 tanks in the city area which would be useful water resource for the city.
3. To create water awareness in the villages.
4. Bring pressure on the forest department to change the trend of monocropping and plant diverse forest species in the forest area. Also join actively with different departments for soil and water conservation.

This certainly was a holistic and a long term vision and sowed the seed for a much stronger and sustainable base of collective action in the region.

Water awareness programmes were organised. A well known water journalist Shree Padre disseminated water harvesting attempts in different cities. He also discussed the links between the declining forests and water scarcity.

Strong alternatives for urban water resource development too were discussed. In this the KPC pointed out that of the eighteen tanks in the city, only two tanks were in good state in 2002. The need for revival of these tanks thus came by as a major alternative along with creating water harvesting structures to strengthen the water resource of the towns. This strategy went down very well in building the image of the KPC as a serious organisation concerned with water conservation in general. It thus mitigated the divide between the rural and the urban water users and the need for forming a coalition was thus underscored.

Technical support

KPC very actively tried to support the alternatives they were proposing to address the urban water crisis. They organised a group of technical persons who could provide a back up for roof water harvesting. For this purpose a team lead by an experienced diploma engineer Rajendra Hegde was formed. A register was maintained at few shops in different parts of the city. Those who are interested can register their name, address and a fee of Rs. 100. For two years the group made it a part time work, but this was not feasible at a longer run. They couldn't turn it into a full time job. In two years they covered 300 houses. Even if the

technical intervention is stopped, Kalave and his friends are disseminating the concept through slide-shows and public discussions. After four years of consistent effort about a thousand households have set up roof water harvesting structures. . Media publicity has played a crucial role in the spread of the movement.

Rejuvenating the Kengre catchment

Though the agenda was to rejuvenate Kengrehalla, the movement had multi dimensional implications. The leadership of the movement emphasised the importance of locally relevant structures. Structures included small check dams, percolation tanks and also pits. Size of the structures was also proportionately planned so as to cater to the requirement of the region. Local people were consulted while finalising locating the site for construction of a percolation tank or any other structure. This helped villagers gain ownership of the process and in turn they were equally participatory. The entire process was well planned and the work started from Echadi, which is the highest point in the catchment area. Locally relevant structures like trenches, percolation tanks were constructed. Such structures helped both soil and water conservation. Work to repair the older structures was also undertaken.

Under 'Food for Work scheme' of drought proofing work, Rs. One lakh was sanctioned to desilt Shanteshwara tank of Harnalli. KPC handled the project in association with villagers. The committee got Rs. 83,500 for the work. The committee maintained accounts and other details of the work very transparent. At the end the work cost Rs. 53,000. Workers were happy that they got right quantity of grains in time unlike in other places where professional contractors supervise the work. People sat together and decided to use remaining amount to buy utensils for village temple. These huge kitchen appliances are utilised for social functions. A board mentioning the project name and expenditure is placed near the tank.

Mobilising resources: Using government schemes for resource development

Around the time the movement was spreading, several government schemes were introduced in the region and many of these efforts can be described as futile. Under watershed development programme, vented dams²⁰ were constructed in some of the villages namely Hunasekoppa and Hegdekatta. In these projects public involvement meant part

²⁰ A vented dam is a dam which stops runoff water after monsoon. A small window on one side allows water to flow when necessary. So this acts as a water storage system in small streams.

financial contribution and nothing more. As a result of this misplaced notion of participation most of the structures were failures. In fact Shivananda Kalave is critical of the local administration and compares the present vented dams to a bus stop.

Farmers were not consulted when a water harvesting structure was constructed. Local knowledge was also not taken into consideration. Thus both the location of the structure and the quality of its construction didn't help much. Some of them broke up within a year. Naturally most of the structures either failed or were not of any use.

After quick reviews of the status of the watershed structures, Shivananda Kalave urged the farmers to participate actively in the planning of the watershed schemes.

Most of the schools here have encroached into forest area. When watershed development scheme was sanctioned, Kalave and his friends used it for construction of trench with proper checks encircling the school. They also planted local species in the school. This provided a compound to the school at the same time served department's purpose. This way local leader developed a plan for the village and directed government projects accordingly.

For a Village Forest Committee meeting in Kalave on September 20, 2008, each house was represented. Women and educated farmers were more inquisitive. On that day, there was a discussion on the most necessary works to be done in the village on soil and water conservation. People themselves chose the beneficiaries depending on the necessity for a facility. So those who did not deserve a particular structure were opposed by the villagers. The choice of beneficiaries was thus decided by the community at large. A new scheme on drinking water supply was discussed in the meeting. A person said that a bore well is needed in his residential area. But others in the area didn't agree with him. Similarly when a well was sanctioned to Keregadde village, Bagi voluntarily offered the construction space in her compound. This is the mindset created with continued interaction in a group. Bagi is the School Development Management Committee chairperson of Primary School in Kalave. She gives an account of how the movement helped to bring out leadership quality within her. "I had a deep wish to be socially useful. As I involved in the movement I realised the importance of soil and water conservation. More than a protest it was learning for many like us. Now acacia and casuarinas plantations appear alien to us.

The Kanive Kere (huge percolation tank constructed at the base of the hill) built in the valley of the hill has assured better prospects from farm life." This Kanive Kere constructed two

years ago has sufficient water. So the movement with the help of farmers and local administration has planned to heighten the checkdam by few meters and make water potable. Each Kanive Kere constructed in the area has its own utility value.

Leadership

This section looks at the nature of leadership that evolved in the KRM. An elaborate discussion is done here on the nature of leadership for three reasons a) this movement largely centered on a single leader b) to highlight what it is that people look for in a leader c) how the interests, understanding and vision of the leadership plays an important role in shaping the movement goals, strategies and outcomes.

Socially respected families, largely belonging to the upper castes represented the leadership of the movement in the initial stages.

The Hosmane Hegde family that was first approached by the agricultural farmers is a respected, upper caste and socially active family in the region. This profile is important for a wider social acceptability. Hegde's approached Shivananda Kalave who belonged to another village but was a well known person of the area and went on to become the key leader of this movement.

Practice what you preach

Shivananda Kalave, a farmer and a development journalist, writes passionately on forest and water issues of the region. Unlike a city based scribe, a rural journalist has more responsibilities when s/he chooses to write something. He believes that discourse and practice should go hand in hand to grow as a credible writer. People are constantly watching to see if the journalist is practicing what s/he is writing.

Kalave lives in Neernahalli village, ten kilometers away from Sirsi town. He was following the changing agricultural practices in the village. At the same time he also realized that the Sirsi town had grown bigger and required more water. Kalave had a unique passion for discovering the environment and its relation with people and agriculture. As he wrote articles, he sourced proper documents and data to supplement his studies. His diverse skills of farming, forestry and journalism earned him respect both amongst the villagers and also among the administration.

These otherwise small efforts made a commendable impact on fellow farmers who emulated him in many ways. Another interesting development in the area happened in Jaddigadde

village in Sirsi Taluk of Uttara Kannada. In this village more than thirty bore wells were dug in a span of few months and all of them failed. This came as a major blow to the farmers who depended on these bore wells for their agriculture. They hired a Hitachi machine which is an excavator at Rs. 700 per hour (for JCB – 550 per hour) and constructed several tank like structures at the hillock Hitachi is an excavator like JCB but has a significant functional difference. Its chops can turn 360 degrees unlike the JCB which has limited movement. The region consists of hillocks and Hitachi suited the requirements of the region. Each pond in this popularly called ‘pot hillock’ had sufficient water which was siphoned for agriculture use. There were two learnings from the experiment. Water is available in the topsoil for use, but there is no water for exploitation. At the same time usefulness of Hitachi for local soil structure was discovered. Shivananda Kalave used the same machine to construct a huge tank of 44 x 35 x 12 size. Necessary water harvesting was also done to sustain water source in the tank. In the last five years, water level has never scared the family.

Shivananda Kalve was a man who could be emulated. He believed in practising what he preached. He had started water harvesting structures in his farm and also facilitated tree planting and water harvesting in the schools.

Combining research with action

Shivananda Kalave himself was a very keen and studious farmer who applied all his learnings to his own farm. He had been studying the changing patterns of deforestation and monocropping in the Western Ghats and realized how detrimental it was for the eco-system. On his own field which is known as a *betta* (forest land provided as supplementary to agriculture.) therefore he introduced a lot of diversity, by planting cashew, wild mango, cocum and others. He also simultaneously constructed small water harvesting structures one of them is called as the Chandra Barav²¹ which mainly was to supply water for all the 640 saplings.

Social Capital: Relationship with the state, media and the middle class

Shivananda has a wide social acceptability as is evident from his relationship with different groups some of them who are even conflicting with each other.

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He has thorough understanding about the working of different departments. In many instances, municipal officers contacted him for copy of documents. He was consulted even when the tussle was on between him and the municipal corporation. He provided them the old tank survey, relevant water harvesting structures according to past records, area under farming in the catchment of Kengrehalla and others. Now forest department and other departments consult him before taking up any activity in the area. When the agitation was at its peak, officers got statistics on the number of houses with water connection in the city, from Kalave

As a development journalist he had an image in the region. The media also was used very tactfully by the leadership.

Nurturing the young leadership

Initial leaders have earnestly identified strengths of enthusiastic youth in these villages and encouraged their interests. When Bagi, belonging to *Karevokkaliga* community came to Keregadde, soon after her wedding, people laughed at her over enthusiasm on public matters. She was the one who would fight for justice in whatever manner she knew. Shivananda Kalave and his brother Sridhar Bhat noticed her keenness and guided whenever necessary. Now she holds a decisive role in the village activities. May it be water sharing or guarding the forest. An example of her leadership was seen in the way she mobilised for a public well in her village for her community. There were fifty households of the Karevokkaliga community. Only a couple of them own a well. The rest of them depend on the single public open well to meet their drinking water requirements. Recognising the constraints, she led villagers and spoke to several leaders and finally a second public well was sanctioned under the Government Drinking Water Scheme. For this well Bagi offered her backyard and truly showed her leadership qualities.

She also played a central role in facilitating a tank construction in this village.

KRM has also influenced emerging leaders in the region. Bhagirathi Hegde, a Zilla Panchayat member has taken up water harvesting activities vigorously in her village, which she wants to expand to other areas also. In this way the older leadership tapped new talent and nurtured them as the second generation leaders.

How democratic is democratic? Decision making pattern of the KRM

Members of the movement have tremendous faith in Shivananda Kalave. His decision is therefore considered as final. Members have a firm belief in him and his knowledge. People are not scared to talk in front of him and do clarify their doubts but do not question his actions. As Bagi says, “Even if a forest official says that Shivananda Kalave is misguiding us, we would not believe.” This goodwill is built over several decades of social work. Villagers are confident that he will choose the right person for any given task. Kalave says that if a visitor is able to visualize a proper place for construction of water harvesting structure back in his village, then the message is taken.

In matters of planning for watershed activities local people's knowledge and understanding was given a central place. People decided whether the structures proposed were locally relevant or not and had a final say on what they wanted and where it should be done.

Politics and bureaucracy

The spread of Kengrehalla Rejuvenation Movement was not without its share of difficulties. Opinions were polarised and within the KRM there were two groups that were identified with two political parties. It goes without saying that arguments took place over the differences but when the mass is involved, village welfare was given importance. But several of the village elders were not happy with the working of these youngsters and had the practice of opposing whatever was new. But Shivananda Kalave went to their rescue and helped them change their opinion in favour of larger interests. There were also people who advised them not to involve in issues that are not related. But KRM, made it a point to get public opinion before taking any decision concerning the village.

Though all the political parties are active locally, it has not hindered the pace of the movement. KRM's president is a person who is at same distance from all the parties while its coordinator Shivananda Kalave has a leaning towards BJP. So whichever party is in power, it doesn't make any difference to their activities. They have maintained cordial relationship with both local and state level leaders as well. Shivananda Kalave's stature as a development journalist has helped the movement to maintain a good public relation across sections of the society. Even politicians make it a point to participate in all the programmes organized by KRM or other organizations in the village. In fact, local MP has sanctioned Rs. Two lakhs from MP fund for developing 'Rain Centre' at Neernahalli School.

Similarly members of Municipal Corporation and Zilla Panchayat have undergone water conservation workshops in the last four years. Slowly awareness is building up- about their river, stream and other water resources. Even public have joined together to work for water self-reliance. Residents of *Haalubonda* layout in the city desilted a tank in their area and developed its catchment area. Now tank fulfills water needs of the area. A group of water-aware, public figures have formed a group and spare considerable days to participate in trainings and camps organised by Shivananda Kalave. There are many such small but affirming examples for the influence of the water pressure group few miles away. Water awareness is disseminated extensively in different regions of Malnad and Coastal Karnataka.

Membership of the movement

Caste plays a major role in the village system in this region. *Havyak Brahmins*, *Kare Vokkaligas* and *Kotte Vokkaligas* are the major social groups. They live in separate colonies. Though inter-community relationship is amazingly cordial, brahmins have a higher hand in decision making. Newly built houses either after partition in the family or for any other purpose have cut these barriers. Shivananda Kalave family resides outside the village and *Kare Vokkaligas* are their neighbours.

These forms of discrimination certainly play a role in determining membership to the movement and also having a say in the decision making process.

Organization structure and functioning

Meetings of the committee are need-based and not on a regular basis. Hundreds of people gather for the discussion by a message conveyed just through a phone call. Notice is given through pamphlets occasionally, when an important message needs to be disseminated. KPC has made it clear that they look at all dimensions of soil and water conservation in the region. They ensure that villagers participate in all the meetings organised by various projects and departments. A strong emotional bonding among villagers has been cultivated and nurtured in this region which often works to the advantage of all. It has helped them to also bring different caste and class groups together²². These meetings are democratic in nature

²² These villages do follow the caste system to a certain extent. Traditionally each caste has housing colonies placed separately. But the newly constructed houses don't follow this system. Untouchability doesn't exist in this village anymore. Every caste has its unique customs. But Havyak Brahmins, who are considered to be uppercaste draw respect from other castes. Since all the villagers had realized the dangers

and each one has the freedom to raise a question and clarify his/her doubts in the meetings. However the leadership has the final say on the matter, so in that sense the participation is limited to get clarifications.

The movement certainly does not consciously make an attempt to address the caste and gender inequities in the community, but articulation among these groups is certainly visible.

Sustaining collective action: Innovative strategies to engage the group in collective action

After the initial spurt of action to protest against the dam, the KPC continued its activities in the area of conservation and resource development. These activities had in fact kept the momentum alive and for four to five years the movement had spread geographically and also expanded in terms of its activities. Shivananda Kalave was the backbone of the organisation and had consistently planned activities that would sustain collective action. His passion for preserving the biodiversity of the area compels him to look for continued action. He keeps organizing several programmes may it be a native food workshop or a programme on local mango varieties, a swimming competition in the kanive kere. The programmes cater to cross-section of the people – including youth and women. Kalave and his team use such occasions for mutual interaction and keep everyone updated on the recent developments. In a way, such events play the role of regular meetings and strengthening the bonds among villagers. They also help in disseminating knowledge. It feels that the movement and its objectives have reached a saturation point now. Members have taken up dissemination of their experiences. It is on demand. Slide-shows, lecture sessions and training programmes are organized in coastal and Malnad regions. Shivananda Kalave is one of the most sought after resource persons for water awareness campaigns. He has spread the message not only in coastal and Malnad region but also in the dry land regions of Northern Karnataka.

The entire process has made people in this region 'aware' of many schemes and policies. They are also educated to approach the right channel for their problems. Now they know their right and responsibility regarding water and forest. The knowledge gets disseminated to the visitors also.

such a scheme and also were convinced with the actions proposed by the committee, they pinned their faith on them and supported whenever needed.

Village committees are formed and they are given charge of maintaining water harvesting structures particularly huge percolation tanks. They don't possess a working office. Meeting notices, reports, press releases and press reports are the major documents available with KRM. Even when a village maintenance committee is formed there is no written communication. Everything is verbal.

Mobilising finances

All the working members of this committee are financially well-off agriculturists with a social concern. So they need not have to depend on any fund-raising but share the expenditure for travel and communication among themselves. The only bond that brought them together was that they lived in the area. All of them had independent water resources and were not direct beneficiaries like the ones on the banks and tribals who depended on Kengre stream for all the basic necessities. But indirectly, the project would have affected them. For Kalave it was an opportunity to create awareness about water abuse in the region, which he was observing for years.

The movement doesn't have a regular financial backup. The Havyak Brahmins in the area are well-off and they put in their money for the activities of the movement. May it be printing pamphlets or meeting the cost of food for an event. This goodwill also gives them an authority over the others. Shivananda Kalave who has contributed his expertise, energy, money and time for the movement, earns his livelihood from his farm and as a freelance journalist.

Impacts

A detailed impact assessment study was not done for the purpose of this paper as it does not fall within the scope of the paper. But people's own perceptions, observations and experiences clearly indicate a change for the better. A large number of the households have observed changes in water availability.. In the last two years, farmers have observed its impact on their crops. Soil humidity has enhanced thus having a positive impact on productivity.

Whenever a tank was desilted or water harvesting structure was done, farmers in the downstream observed the change easily. Farmers say that moisture level of the soil has increased; this enhanced the fertility of the soil and also the crop. In the paddy fields, water level was maintained naturally. Bagi has a part of her farm at the tail end of the village stream

and her land always suffered due to water shortage. Since last two years, after tank desiltation she is able to grow vegetables after harvesting paddy.

In four years, more than three thousand visitors including senior government officials and people's representatives have appreciated the work done. In the last one year, every week two hundred visitors take back lessons from the area. Shivananda Kalave says that this was a revelation for the politicians and officers that such a work can be done efficiently with considerably low cost. He remembers a zilla panchayat member agreeing that she would sanction eight lakhs for such a project.

Rain Centre

As the movement established itself in the region, there was a plethora of visitors. Even government departments made it a point to bring their self-help groups to this place. Visiting the area provided them opportunity to understand different levels of water conservation. Along with education visitors also expected solution from here. The group decided to float a rain centre in the vicinity. Neernali High School, which was known as Green School for including farming in the curriculum matched the necessities of becoming a rain centre. Thirty rain water harvesting structures relevant to Malnad area have been set up in the 13-acre school campus. Now trip to Kengrehalla region creates awareness as well as guides for further action. Malnad Rain Centre which is a registered body has Neernali Sitaram Hegde as its President and Shivananda Kalave its coordinator. Both of them are also members of School Board. Now this has become major attraction for the visitors.

Strengthening partnerships with the Government

Whenever a project is sanctioned to these villages Village Forest Committee members sit together and discuss work to be done in that area. In Kengrehalla Watershed area for every 10 acres of farming land there is 100 acres of forest land. Forest Department plays a significant role in water and soil conservation in the area. The department under the direction of Deputy Conservator of Forests Vijay Mohan Raj extended its full support to the soil and water harvesting measures in the area. Unlike other regions, KRC demanded for plantation of forest species in the forest. Villagers felt that mono plantation leads to soil erosion and rainwater runs off with out percolating into soil. Forest Department was also convinced with the results. The next step was to adopt water harvesting structures in the forest. Five kilometer length forest border also serves as a trench.

Kanive Keres²³ or huge percolation tanks constructed at the base of the forest have enhanced water level in the particular area. It is evident in the paddy fields, as moisture is maintained for a longer period.

Sirsi DFO Vijay Mohan Raj has a proven inclination towards forest development. Even in his earlier posting in Gadag district he was considered to be a forest-friendly officer. He was instrumental in planting lakhs of forest species in Kapotagiri Hill Range which is an important bio-zone of Karnataka. He says that even if Forest Department is willing to take useful steps to maintain the diversity of Western Ghats, people's response is not proactive. If people don't actively involve in forest development, the plants and plans do not survive. In such cases acacia, eucalyptus, casuarinas become inevitable. He appreciates involvement of movement members and their passion for a greener environment. Shivavanda Kalave maintains cordial relation with him and his subordinates. ACF S.G. Hegde who was an RFO at Sirsi range before his promotion is also in good terms with KPC. These two have played an important role in the enhancing the catchment area of Kengrehalla. Whenever a forest guard or an RFO Munitimma faces some problem locally he approaches Kalave for guidance.

Members of the committee were not sure that work would continue at same pace if the present DFO was transferred. Fortunately Vijay Mohan Raj the present DFO was holding charge till their plans were implemented. Support of a senior person in the bureaucracy has acted as a catalyst for them in many instances.

Water availability and water distribution: Questions of equity across caste, class and gender

Enabling Kengre's flow to stretch for another two months has not changed the situation overnight in these sixteen villages. The movement has made an impact on their thinking of water. Seventy percent of the population has been directly or indirectly benefited by water related activities in the catchment area. The concept of harvesting water has been internalised well by the people, due to continuous water awareness programmes.

Even though water harvesting structures were constructed judiciously, various inequities do exist. Those who own more land have more water sources. Brahmins own more land

²³ Kanive Kere is a unique water percolating structure designed based on the geographical features of the region. Usually it is constructed at the base of hillocks where there is sufficient area for storage. Three sides of the tank will be bordered by the hillock while a wall is constructed to stop the runoff. The height of the wall depends on the catchment area. This design minimises construction and maintenance cost.

compared to other caste people. This ensures them more water resources and its accessibility. Most of them have individual water sources. Such examples are rare in other castes. Some colonies share a common water source. Around twenty houses in Bagi's locality had to depend on two open wells. Now a new *kanive kere* constructed on nearby hill supplies water for domestic use. Since Kanive Kere is situated at a height, they can put pipelines and access water easily, which again asks for collective action. Among Karevokkaligas, land is located at different elevations to ensure proper distribution. Maintaining such pieces of land needs more labour and hard work but after this work they have enough water to meet their requirements.

In Sirsi town more than twenty percent of the houses have opted for roof water harvesting thereby reducing their dependence on municipal water supply. S.G. Hegde, a hotelier says, *"We require twelve thousand litres of water everyday for our restaurant. Bore well is the major water source. In the early years of this decade I realised the bore well was not sufficient to meet the water requirements. Now I have done necessary steps to recharge bore well through rain water harvesting. This is yielding good results."* M.G. Hegde, a resident of Ganesha Nagara says, "I dug a well when I constructed a house in 1996. The well used to dry up in April. As years passed we faced water problem from the month of February. In 2003, I constructed a percolation pit and directed roof water into it. For the last two years, we have two and a half feet water even at the end of May." There are people who store rainwater for use later in the year. Many of the tanks in the city are getting desilted. The municipality too has been relieved of its burden of ensuring daily water supply to all its residents through these measures. In a real sense this has been a community led initiative which has been able to combine protest and construction to address water scarcity.

A popular article made a story on these initiatives and this was titled as 'A village committee brings water awareness in the city'.

All in all the impacts have been very positive and people no longer complain of water scarcity. Water harvesting has been able to bring back the paddy and the sugarcane to the fields, but people are now aware of the sustainable use of water.

However none of the social structures seem to have changed as a result of the movements efforts, simply because there was no conscious effort to challenge that. While the question of rural- urban inequities has been amply addressed by this movement, what it failed to look at was the caste and gender related hierarchies within the village community itself. The

question of equitable access to water irrespective of your land holding was not on the agenda of the movement. Similarly some women were definitely in the frontal leadership, but improving their lot in terms of issues of violence or improved access to land or water was not so much on the agenda. The movement was primarily concerned with the rural urban inequities and then sustainable conservation and use of the water resource itself. So the learnings from this case can mainly be found in these two broad areas.

Chapter 4

Palathulli Campaign for Water Awareness, Malayala Manorama

Jos C Raphael²⁴

Introduction

Social movements of varied nature have played a pivotal role in the social reform process in different spheres of society, including the sphere of water management. They have occurred in different historical periods in India be it in the British period or post Indian Independence period. The confrontationist approach adopted in social movements related to water in the recent period is essentially for modifying the government policy on big dams or lowering the height of dam without questioning the management system where some NGOs are also involved. On the other end of the spectrum are autonomous initiatives undertaken by some NGOs who hold on the efficacy of traditional and smaller structures and people's organizations in water management. (Kameshwar Chowdhary, 2003). Similarly development communications are organized efforts to use communications processes and media to bring social and economic improvements. Development communication becomes an important catalyst for change and development journalism provides people with information on change in their society, and can work at the local level to advocate change. (Melkote, Srinivas 1991). The present article discusses one such initiative around water that has been initiated by Malayala Manorama (MM) a widely circulated local newspaper of Kerala. Pala thulli (Many a drop) was a campaign launched by MM to create awareness for water conservation.

India has witnessed several kinds of social movements around natural resources and they have had a widespread impact on raising the voices of the concerned people. For example the Narmada Bachao movement which is an anti dam movement, or the Chipko movement which was to save the forests from commercial exploitation or the recent struggles around land in Nandigram in West Bengal. Specifically around water we have also witnessed struggles like the Plachimada case in Kerala where the local population fought against the state for allowing their ground water sources to be exploited by Coca Cola for commercial purposes. Some of the movements operate purely in the protest mode and some others

²⁴ Jos Raphael works as a freelance consultant and researcher in Kerala.

purely in the non protest or what can be referred to as the constructivist mode where self disciplining and action are seen as important. A few others combine the virtues of both the protest and the construction mode

The Pala thulli campaign from Kerala state which has a long history of people's struggles is one such initiative which basically falls in the terrain of non protest struggles. So unlike the Plachimada struggle in Kerala, which protested against the state, the MM led Palathulli struggle essentially came to the aid of the state and raised awareness amongst the people for self motivated action.

It is unique in several ways as it is perhaps the first experiment where the role of media has been seen in generating such a widespread impact amongst people around water conservation. Here a local private news paper agency led a campaign that influenced the people change in their mindsets towards water utilisation.

Launch of the movement- Protest vs Construction

The role of the media has been mainly seen to be as reporting events. This reporting may or may not have an impact on policies or programmes or people's way of thinking. Michael Woods (2003) notes about the trawl of newspaper headlines from recent years that quickly produce the evidence of awakening such as 'militant farmers blockading ports, diaries and fuel depots in Britain and France, black farmers rallying in Washington, French radicals dismantling a McDonalds restaurants in protest etc. These news paper headlines are carriers of issues around farmers and related sectors like land, water, food, farmers etc. And such news headlines hit the Indian newspapers as well whether it is the movements against Coca-cola companies or Kentucky chicken. The question is how much of media reporting has actually gone into finding solutions to the crisis they report. In the Kerala context too we see the media divided into those who are reporting events and thus registering protest against the state and thus expressing solidarity with people's movements and those that are proactively moving towards solutions. Matrubbhumi, one of the oldest local newspapers in Kerala was actively reporting the Plachimada case described before. This reporting was mainly to highlight the proactive role of the state in promoting corporate interests in the exploitation of groundwater at the cost of the drinking water needs of the local poor.

MM argued for a shift from reporting of protests to proactively taking on to solutions to the problems. In fact it is this media divide that forms the context of the Pala thulli campaign.

Palathulli water awareness programme was initiated by Malayala Manorama (MM), in April 2004. It aims to achieve water security by way of conserving rainwater by the people themselves in what ever way they can. MM extends its help to do so as a guiding institution. And Palathulli does not set any promise to be achieved in specific time frameworks. Rather MM is willing to express its solidarity with the people to find solutions to the emerging water scarcity through awareness building and providing some technical inputs.

The main trigger for initiating Palathulli was four consecutive years of drought in Kerala, the southernmost state on the west coast of India. Water availability was increasingly getting to be uncertain as the demand for it increased over the years. Ground water abstraction was also reaching alarming levels, thereby aggravating the water crisis in the state. MM saw this as the best time to launch its water awareness programme.

The Malayala Manorama (MM)

Established in the year 1888, MM has around 3000 staff spread over 11 district level offices with printing presses. Its circulation is about 1.6 million. Apart from the staff, there are wider stringers and marketing agents at local level. The present head of MM is K.M.Mathew whose great grand father established the daily in Kottayam district of Kerala. At present the firm is managed by K M Mathew and his five sons and grand children. Its annual Corporate Social Responsibility budget is about Rs. 30 lakhs.

MM has been consistently working for social causes, for example its earthquake relief work in Maharashtra and Gujarat is well known. Most of this money is raised from the contributions of its readers. One of its recent programmes was “hridhayapoorvam” means “with hearts” for free heart disease checkup and surgery assistance for poor and deserving people.

Another such programme that has been in operation is “njangalluntu koode” means “we are there with you” for palliative care. “Sukrutha keralam” initiated in 2007 with water and sanitation focus has been promoted as a social activity of MM. Palathulli is one among the prominent programmes of MM and is specifically focused on Kerala.

Currently, as a follow up of palathulli, “palathulli-jalathrangam” is popularized for water quality issues among selected schools in every district which is joint venture of Central government scheme CCDU and Kerala Water Authority. This was launched in September

2008. MM itself does not have expertise in the various social fields that it contributes to, but it draws on the expertise of its readership and the wider scientific community.

MM and Palathulli

Clearly then the strategy of the campaign is two folded. The first being using its own space to build awareness and provide information for addressing water scarcity and the second is to launch action programmes that would promote rain water harvesting. This is indeed for the first time that the media has taken up a cause so seriously. It is this distinguishing features that interests us in the study which would bring out the potentials of media in finding solutions for emerging water crisis in a particular socio-cultural and climatic setting. A study of this kind focusing on the campaign through a social movement perspective has not been done so far. In many ways this case presents a lot of challenges since it is not a movement that has come from the grassroots and it does not challenge the view/ programme of the state or the corporate interests. It simply hopes to motivate people leaving the politics of motivation aside.

Objectives, Methodology and limitations

The main objective of the study is to understand the role of media in building awareness around water and promoting self motivated action to conserve water through rain water harvesting. While doing so the study hopes to map the context of the campaign and its coverage and the overall impacts it has had on meeting its objective.

The methodology adopted for the study was mainly discussions with MM staff and a field level survey. These field visits where the author was able to meet the people who have done roof water harvesting have helped in the analysis of the campaign.

The author had also done some studies earlier between 2006-2008 which have been referred to for the present article. In 2006, the survey was conducted in Aranattukara village of Thrissur district from 520 sample households. In 2007 a survey had been carried out in the Municipal corporation Wards of Trichur Municipal Corporation mainly to assess the impact of roof water harvesting rules of Kerala government and also to assess the impact of palathulli on society in general. The result of the same study has been incorporated in analyzing the impact of palathulli. Further, 200 respondents from various walks of life have been interviewed to assess the efficacy of this awareness building programme . They include farmers, housewives, the water poor who live in the low income settlement colonies,

government servants, lawyers, elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions, bank personnel, schools and college teachers, students and clergy.

Local water initiatives at various district levels by NGOs, individuals and government systems also has been referred for explaining the background of the paper. Various training sessions conducted by the author to local government members and officials at Kerala Institute of Local Administration and Extension Training Centres of Rural Development Departments of Kerala Government, Water Education sessions at educational institutions and public gatherings on the water conservation subjects ever since the year 2002 has been a base for presenting the facts of palathulli of MM from Kerala state.

Apart from the above experiences and observations, author was a part of its inception from April 2004 in its various activities across the state as a resource person. Author's affiliated NGO, Rain Centre chaired by District Collector, Trichur has been part and parcel of the programme at local level for seminars, phone in programmes and group meetings etc at district level (Trichur). However, the reference period of the study is from 2004 to 2008.

The first section of the study focuses on the context and background of Kerala water resources; the launch and the spread of the programme to the government level. The next section focuses on the linkages that Palathulli had with other organizations in and around Kerala and beyond that helped Palathulli to avail even international recognition in the form of UNESCO Awards and National Environment Awards. Mobilisation of people into Palathulli campaign directly and indirectly fetches the largely unknown beauty of it particularly to water and social science research community. Nonetheless, the impact of the Palathulli effort is more crucial at the field level than rhetoric expressions which are dissected impartially though in limited way out of obvious limitations of the present work in the following section after the people's mobilization. Finally the last section admits the limitations of Palathulli and media effort to mitigate the water crisis while exhibiting the current status of palathulli. The limited time did not allow for a detailed study of the impact of the campaign in terms of the installation of RWH structures or for that matter the changing mindsets of the people. However it did give a view into what role media can play in mobilising people's opinion around water harvesting.

The Contexts and Backgrounds for Palathulli

D D Porta and Mario Diani (2006) underline certain core questions for social movement analysis where social, political, or cultural contexts affect social movements' chances of success. Perhaps the social developments in Kerala in comparison with other states particularly literacy levels might have created congenial environments for the emergence of new movement / campaign in the water sector. And therefore, these contexts are analysed for emerging palathulli campaign.

Multifarious contexts of emerging Palathulli

Kerala is a tiny long state located at the southern coast tip of Indian Peninsula. The geography and climatic conditions are more or less similar to southern Sri Lanka and the Philippines. As per the government statistics Kerala, has 25% of its land area under forest which has drastically reduced to a bare minimum of 12% according to Kerala Forest Research Institute. Land is fertile mainly with red loamy soil with easy permeability. Topography has 3 major types of sandy coastal, midland planes and hilly areas of Western ghats.

Unlike many other Indian states Kerala is so far considered as a water rich state with long green coastal lines. Similarly, human settlement pattern in Kerala is peculiar in comparison with the other states of India with high population density of 813 as per 2001 Census. Generally, Indian human settlements are in the form of cluster of houses in the villages whereas such clusters are not common in Kerala. Here the people have separate homesteads with clear cut boundaries made up of vegetative fencing or some constructions / compound walls. Peculiarly the state has nearly 180 to 200 open wells in a square Kilo Meter. Despite this Kerala faces acute water shortage in the summer. Until 1983 the water situation was not too bad and these homesteads and open wells were able to sustain the people. But consecutive drought and over exploitation of ground water have combined to curtail the water resources of the state. The water scarcity in Kerala can be explained by the changing water use and agricultural practices. Apart from this housing material and structures also have a role to play in conservation of water. Earlier houses usually had cowdung walls which were able to percolate the water and thus allow it to stay in the homestead. More recently houses have ornamental bricks and flush out holes to drain out the rin water. Both these patters have impacted the water availability in the homestead wells Raphael J 2002).

Moreover the nuclear family system fragmented many cultivable lands into small pieces of 0.10 to 0.20 acres. These fragmented lands of agriculture turned housing habitats give reduced scope for the water conservation practice of traditional agriculture. Keralites give less attention for various water conservation measures practiced by their ancestors for the last five decades. (Joseph E J, 2004) The modernisation and government water supply systems made them dependent upon government water supplies. Emergence of dams for canal irrigation prompted people to level off the homestead ponds often to sell off their land or for the use of other purposes. In turn it affected the homestead dug wells badly. Thereafter drinking water supply schemes make the people more dependant upon tap water. Again these dug wells are seen leveled off when the tap water emerged every nook and corner. Thus even perennial open wells often converted to deep toilet pits to accentuate the agony in many parts of Kerala. And no new pond making or new tank space is created. Leveling of paddy fields for house constructions destroyed natural eco systems and this destruction necessitated the uncontrolled sand mining from rivers for house and other construction works. Pollution to the rivers is another threat for dug wells and many drinking water supply schemes dependent upon the rivers. Consequently, open wells near to the rivers depleted and further, leveled paddy lands gave scope for floods as well. This invites troubles for Kerala Waters. Inefficiency in government water supply system is common as elsewhere seen. (James E J, 2006).

Farmer's collective efforts in the form of cleaning ponds, building minor earthen check dams across the streams at the end of monsoons and other similar activities are now termed as the duties of local governments. As local governments have been entrusted with enough powers and funds for such activities, farmers are neither interested in such activities nor do the local governments eventually do it in a timely manner. Like in most high rainfall areas, people here in Kerala too are not used to saving their water. Water scarcity comes on their agenda only during the summers.

Water quality has become an unresolved problem due to the ecoli bacteria formations in the household wells. Small homesteads with open dug wells and toilet pits nearby pollute the open dug wells badly. In the absence of public sewerage system, people construct deep toilet pits to cover the human excreta / black water that easily reach to open dug wells. The studies done by government agencies as well as private agencies assert that 90% of the dug well are affected by ecoli and coliform bacteria. Another water quality issue is the saline

ingress in the coastal belts.(James E J 2006) Unscrupulous pumping along the coastal line from filter points and dug wells easily contaminates the fresh water bodies. Small round ponds seen across Kerala coastal homesteads are rarely seen which are levelled off, so as the practice of traditional agriculture practices for ground water recharge. Apart from the deforestation, soil erosion generally seen across India, cultivation of cash crops like Rubber that has high crop water requirement particularly during summer aggravates the problem.

Political contexts of emergence of Palathulli

Palathulli was initiated in the year 2004 when Indian National Congress Party led United Democratic Front (UDF) was in power at state legislative assembly with more than 70% majority. Political history of MM evinces that it had good association with Indian National Congress and UDF than with the communist government of Kerala state. Moreover, both the then Chief Minister and the Minister for Water resources during 2004 -2006 period hailed from Kottayam district where MM had its main office..

MM being a non communist newspaper, all UDF MLAs had been maintaining a good relationship with MM across Kerala. MM in turn has received a strong political backing for its various programmes, Palathulli being one of them. The state planning board has developed guidelines in favour of rainwater harvesting and water conservation measures through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) which was not there in the former communist rules. Precisely, MM and UDF get along well for mutual interest for obvious reasons. Often UDF members are proud to comment that MM has helped them grow in their political careers.

Networks and Liaisons Mainstreaming Local water initiatives to Palathulli Campaign

The government had introduced several programmes for rain water harvesting before Palathulli campaign was launched. After the launch of the programme, all of these schemes were brought in to mainstream Palathulli. Resource persons and institutions that were identified earlier for rain water harvesting programmes now were to participate in the Palathulli programme to give seminar presentations, phone in programme, face to face meeting, assessment of school level competition etc. at respective district levels. Palathulli benefited from this background that was already laid out through the state government programmes run in partnership with NGOs.

Prominent NGO's and individuals like Shree padre from Kasargode district for example, or the Kannur Water conservation Society led by Pai linked their work to this campaign.

Rest of the media too had to sit up and take notice of the growing popularity of this campaign. Matrubhumi, which in fact was part of the other political lobby, also took up to promoting water literacy in Malayalam. Centre for Water Resource Development and Management (CWRDM) Kozhikode a premier water research institution of Kerala also conducted training classes for farmers and Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) at limited levels. The campaign tied up with NGOs and individuals who had diverse skills in advocacy, training, literacy and implementation of water conservation. TNN Bhattathiripad (TNNB), a retired chief engineer of Kerala Water Authority and chairman of Water Literacy Mission hails from Trichur, and was involved in giving water awareness through news papers. The focus of TNNB was about water literacy ie., demand side as well as supply side of water management in all news papers while acting upon the construction of check dams across Bharathapuzha river. He operates from his own district Trichur. The author got inspiration to work with water literacy activities in Trichur through the inspiring newspaper notes of TNNB. Water literacy mission activities are also undertaken through Rain centre, since 2002 which is anchored by author.

Different left leaning press as well as NGOs too have been contributing to the success of Palathulli. COSTFORD, Thrissur, a left ally of communist government has been assisting the palathulli campaign for several programmes. Welfare Service Society Ernakulam, Kottappuram Integrated Development Society (Trichur & Ernakulam), Changannassery Social Service Society (Kottayam), Malanadu Development Society, Kanjirappilly (Kottayam), Peerumade Development Society (Idukki District) Kuttanadu Vikasana Samithy (Alleppy), and Bhodhana (Pathanamthitta) and Quilon Social Service Society (Kollam) have been doing several water awareness, open well recharging and rainwater harvesting programme for long and all the above said NGOs are led by Catholic Church. Pampa River Protection Society (chaired by N K Sukumaran Nair) near Sabarimala Pilgrim place, has been conscientizing the people and pilgrims across Pathanamthitta district on this issue. This is another collective effort for long on water issue particular river pollution and the formation of Pampa River Development Authority.

Governmental Actions favouring Palathulli ignition

The government too was not far behind in joining in the campaign. The state planning board, ground water department, Central Ground Water Development Board, Kerala Water Authority, Hydrology Division of Water Resources Department (World Bank project) and other water related departments initiated water awareness programmes from the funds available from central and state government funds as a result of International Year of Fresh Water 2003 India operations. State Planning Board Members' effort (led by C. P. John, CMP²⁵ activist) for watershed activities and rainwater harvesting in the year 2004 summer resulted in series of training programmes to PRIs at Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), Trichur. TwoMillion rain pits programme initiated by KILA through voluntary labour resulted in news and action programmes in PRIs at grassroots. Preparation of CD and booklets helped the PRIs to popularize the subject.

Alphonse Kannanthanam IAS (resigned from service and elected as MLA, of Indian Communist Party led Left Democratic Front - LDF) former Kerala Land Use Board Commissioner, had organized massive water rallies (Jal Yathra) from the northern Kerala to southern tip of India during December 2003 to January 2004. Land Use Board recruited nearly 500 Water Warriors (Jal Mitram) across Kerala in the year 2004 - 2005 and deputed one Jal Mitram each for two grampanchayats. They were to visit each house and institution to study the water problem and suggest solutions to the problem.. This has made the subject more popular in Kerala²⁶. CWRDM, Neyyattinkara Unit, Trivandrum had organized trainings for activist and those interested in watershed and rainwater harvesting in the beginning of January 2004.

Several laws around water were in place in Kerala around that time. One of the interesting developments in the same period was an order issued on March 17th 2004 by the Kerala government to implement Rain water harvesting in urban local bodies. Any new

²⁵ Communist Marxist Party (not Communist Party of India, Marxist) is a coalition partner of Indian National Congress led UDF government of Kerala. In the similar way, there are coalition partner with LDF from Kerala Congress led by Joseph Group

²⁶ However, Jal Mitrams were the part of government system on contract basis. They were controlled by Kerala Land Use Board Department and their former Commissioner Alphons Kannanthanam who is presently a left wing MLA in the Kerala State Legislative Assembly. (Kannanthanam IAS resigned from service and contested in the state legislative election). Land Use Board took up the subject at their level in joining the campaigning. But the service of Jal mitram was not easily available for MM though they were adopting water solutions suggested by palathulli.

construction in urban areas will now have to abide by this order.. Later this was extended to the entire state of Kerala in 2007. The neighbouring state Tamil Nadu had initiated the process and Kerala learned from its experience. Similarly the environment was fertile since public opinion was mobilized through the Plachimada struggles and citizenry was keen on acting.

MM capitalized on these developments and decided to launch its programme Palathulli. The leadership in MM called for a high level meeting attended by Government, press, scientific community and other respected citizenry. Different suggestions came in the form of solutions, but importantly all of them expressed their solidarity for the cause.

Dr. Bhavani Sankar, former World Bank consultant and head of Sahayoga Bangalore, was invited to study the problem and find solutions. Bhavani Sankar traveled across Kerala and strongly recommended “rainwater harvesting and related water awareness activities” as the need of the hour. The senior level leadership in MM then took on the lead and planned the action programme, designed its logo and the content to create awareness amongst the masses.

Why palathulli campaign is different from other campaigns?

Campaigns or social movements are typically characterized by different opposing factions. There is a contestation taking place, a goal and a collective identity that drives the movement. Palathulli is different from the conventional understanding of movements and campaigns. The main point of departure for this campaign is that its leadership is with the press or the fourth estate. Role of media here is seen not just as a reporter of crisis, but as proactive in seeking solutions to the crisis.

It was a response to the water crisis that was deepening in Kerala over several years, but MM did not contest this with the state, but rather looked for solutions within.

So unlike other movements or campaigns this campaign did not see an enemy in the State or other privileged groups. Contestations that arise as a result of unequal access or distribution across class, caste or other forms of social discrimination did not form part of Palathulli's agenda. The crisis was posed as a purely nature driven crisis and solutions therefore could only come from within one self and through disciplining oneself to conserve water and use it sustainably.

The main strategy to reach out to people and built a sense of collective identity amongst its readers was through a persistent campaign through the newspaper. Few movements are so privileged to get such wide coverage. But Palathulli being the brain child of the MM gave extensive focus and coverage to the issue. As a result it reached over 16 lakh readers across the state and helped in mobilizing public opinion.

So the entire modus operandi of the campaign was different from what is conventionally understood as a movement. Here the leadership rest with the Newspapers which also used support from other technical experts. It did not protest against anyone or contest any current views. Its credibility has also been the reason for the success of the campaign.

Palathulli also does not have an organizational structure or a membership profile or for that matter a well defined or well written constitution or goal or vision

Finally, it's value seems best applicable for favourable context of Kerala with high levels of literacy, climatic conditions, homestead water resources, wide communication and transportation network, rural urban continuum, human settlement pattern etc and for this reason palathulli may not be replicable as it is for other states of India.

Strategies and activities of the Campaign

As mentioned earlier, Kerala state does have an advantage in terms high levels of literacy allowing a wide readership of newspapers. This was tapped and MM circulated its message all over the state. However MM did its press coverage in very innovative ways. In this section the author discusses the different strategies used by MM.

Being a newspaper institution Manorama's first and foremost strategy is to put up relevant programmes of palathulli in the daily newspaper. It tried to convince and convey the need for water security measures to be taken by people in different ways.

As a first step, the editor launched the programme with a self signed editorial on the front page on April 23 2004. This never happens otherwise. Through this page the editor appealed to its readers for solidarity and committed participation for rainwater conservation and protection of water resources. Editor requested participation of all sections of the society whether government or non government or individual groups to join the Palathulli campaign. This note introduced a logo for Palathulli. Citing examples of Maldives, New Zealand and other rainwater using countries the editor invited the attention of Keralites to

conserve the nature's bounty of 3000 mm rainfall for recharging open dug wells and to construct rainwater tanks.

MM followed this up with description of several success stories from the people or farmers who have experimented RWH and watershed techniques. A new technology was launched for RWH which was the ferro cement tanks. There were sufficient takers for this technology as it was comparatively cheap and easy to construct.

MM did not restrict itself to news coverage and reporting, but also launched technical support for those who required it. It came out with a technical manual on the subject. This manual discussed various methods of rainwater conservation that can be taken up by individual households at homesteads and institutions in the form of RWH tanks, open well recharging, percolation pits, agriculture methods, RWH ponds using polythene sheets and other related techniques. It also included the address and contact details of all NGOs at district levels that can support households and institutions. It had a high emphasis upon new technique of RWH ferro cement tanks as a novel idea. The particular technical manual reached all subscribers of Manorama by the end of April 2004 throughout Kerala. This 32 page manual was supplied free of charge to all its readers. Later a modified technical manual focusing more on open well recharging, judicious use of water, vegetative methods, organic farming, vermi-compost etc was supplied in May 2005 from the public places like Railway Station, Public Bus stands, Town Halls, Markets to include more non-malayala manorama readers. The launch of these manuals was often done with fanfare and under political and cultural patronage.

The first manual is more focussed on rainwater harvesting its cover page depicts a deep open well that reflects palathulli. The introduction of this book is given by Editor K M Mathew who appealed to the people for a timely conservation of water. The manual deals at length about suitable techniques that can be adopted at homesteads of Kerala. This hand book has the contact address and phone numbers of 31 NGOs that work for different methods of rainwater harvesting across 14 districts in the state. Thereby the reader can contact these NGOs to avail of technical help to construct their own RWH structures at their level. Apart from giving details of the different techniques of rain water harvesting, the manual also includes the experience from different districts about the success stories of RWH, community initiatives, cost calculations, pictures, sketch etc. The back cover page of the book gives information about the credit facilities available from funding sources like banks,

local governments and agriculture support agencies. The books also supplements forest regeneration and judicious use of water resources, tube wells, importance of wetlands, problems with sand mining etc water connected subjects.

The second manual issued in 2005 titled “a help guide for water conservation” had a greater emphasis on open dug wells which is the precious source of each of the homesteads. It includes 32 colorful pages with eighteen pictures of importance of water conservation. The front cover page is about a struggling woman near an open dug well to fetch water from its extreme depth. The back cover page is the experience of famous film star Mammooty. Apart from this information, it appeals to its readers through discussions from ancient and contemporary history

It gives examples from Kautilya’s Arthasashtra where polluters of fres water sources were penalized and those who conserved water were given great incentives. It also includes commentaries on water saving and conservation by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, former Indian Presidents, APJ Abdul Kalam and late K R Narayanan and Prof.Yaspal, former UGC Chairman for the efforts of MM with palathulli in favour of RWH.

The new manual has some of the older content but a lot of it was modified. Particularlry it had much more practical information on open well recharging.. It also talks of water quality making people aware of the existence of ecoli and coliform bacteria in the open dug well due to the coexistence of dug well and leach pit of the toilet closer in the homesteads. It gives information on government department that would help them in this regard. Experiences of prominent filmmakers too are included. Apart from this it gives the details of role of medicinal plants in water purification, use of vetiver, a plant used for soil and water conservation, traditional water use pot called Kindi, use of rainwater stored in rock quarry, vermin-compost from household, agriculture method of rainwater conservation and land slides. Experience of those who have done RWH from the previous years also is given. It also gives bits of water education on the availability of water in the earth and share of fresh water availability, various days of observations on environment like world water day, world environment day etc. Homestead watershed approach has been given specific emphasis. This book gives 60 contact address and phone numbers of NGOs and government agencies district wise that help for RWH in the state.

RWH being a new subject, there were plenty of doubts for people. And therefore frequently asked questions and answers of RWH are given in another leaflet separately. They were distributed along with Road show.

The second tool was the **phone in programme** about the various water conservation programmes that can be taken up at homestead level. A caller can talk to the resource person located in the district head quarter MM office. Manorama does not have its own experts so they hire or invite expertise as resource person from different fields. And therefore, resource persons and those experienced in the subject from research institution, retired water sector officials, experts from NGOs, engineers of ferro cement construction industry etc were invited by MM. Resource persons were on line for couple of days for clearing doubts in giving information about RWH and water conservation measures. Also there exists a permanent contact number of Palathulli to be contacted at any time for any related queries. This programme took place in all district headquarters and there were heavy rush and call jams. Thus it led to face-to-face meeting with callers / anyone wishing to meet the expert at district MM offices. About six to seven experts sat together in a panel and answered the questions of people on the subject. This programme was conducted across the state at district head quarters during May 2004.

The third in the series of tools was a **Road show** of RWH demonstration model arranged on two trucks . One went to northern districts and the other to the southern districts of Kerala. It went to rural interiors of gram panchayat towns to familiarise the new technique. Flag offs of these demos were done by cultural and political leaders of Kerala irrespective of political parties. These road shows were very extensively covered in the district pages with photos of launches of these events. Various MLAs, MPs were seen inaugurating road shows for Palathulli.

MM covered all of these events through its entire sister publications as well. For example, The week, Vanitha (bi monthly magazine for women), Aarogyam (health), Parpidom (housing), Manorajyam Magazine and Balarama (for kids) It paid for prime time on various TV news and other channels where it gave advertisements about palathulli programme. Goes without saying that it used its own TV channel MM News for this purpose. The liaisoning between the various forms of media fraternity was thus apparent in the Palathulli programme.

A series of seminars and exhibitions were organised in every district with the help of district level NGOs during the monsoons. Author himself conducted 53 seminars in Trichur district. These programmes were arranged on demand from educational institutions or by NGO request or even from some hospitals. Exhibition panels of MM were made use in each district with plenty of big size photos and live demonstration models. Again these were given enough media coverage through its own district levels pages. A few demonstration models were installed in public building such as in Palghat district collectorate which was inaugurated by Sunita Narain of Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) New Delhi. MM also took the initiative to build rain friendly houses in couple of locations (about 20) in the state for deserving communities.

MM also launched a big programme for schools where it launched palathulli awards for schools and colleges with a total prize amount of about Rs.5 lakhs in a year. Each district will have a best school award and from among the 14 best schools, a state topper is selected. In the college sections there are three prizes for best performance. Again there is best teacher effort from among the teachers who have spent effort and time for the total programme. Apart from these, orientation training for teachers and students were given in three regions i.e. in Ernakulam, Kollam and in Kozhikode during Jan 2005 and at two regional level orientation camps at Aluva and Kozhikode during May 2005. All these training camps were flooded with prizes from private sector sponsorship to make palathulli popular. Award for best local government performing in water conservation and sanitation also were given since 2008 ranging from Grama Panchayat, block panchayat and district panchayat.

All of these different strategies were successful in creating awareness amongst the wide readership of MM. News coverage through different media forms was ensured for this programme.

Use of Different water recharge techniques

Through its two manuals MM had already laid out the different methods and techniques that were tried out in the Kerala context. It had also discussed at great length the values of rain water harvesting structures especially the ferro cement tanks. Moreover it kept upgrading its information based on developments from outside of Kerala as well. Vijay Kedia of Maharashtra was invited to deliver the specific water recharge technique using polythene sheets planted in vertical deep trenches for ground water holding.

Homestead watershed method is a traditional agriculture method suitable for mid plain lands particularly where rainwater is not allowed to flow away from the homestead plots. This in turn rejuvenates the unconfined local aquifers and recharges homestead open dug wells. RWH in polythene sheet ponds have been used in the hilly areas even for fish farming. Easiest way to conserve the rainwater is in the coconut basins underneath the tree and through percolation pits and the soil condition in general which is easily permeable except in rocky and water logged areas. Traditional agriculture methods though have been promoting however this depends upon the availability of land in land scarce Kerala.

Linkages

Linkages of movement or a campaign with other institutions and agencies shows its networking and strength in achieving its goal. Palathulli survived mainly with linkages with institutions of government, non-government and private institutions apart from resources person and most respected people from the socio-politico cultural and religious scenario. MM tried to link with high level government agencies from the beginning at the state head quarters. It was possible due to its positive linkages with the then ruling political party in the state legislative assembly. It also linked with two major scientific institutions related to water and land in the state ie. CWRDM and CESS, Palathulli had taken the recommendations from Cochin University of Technology with its Monsoon Study Centre and other related rural technology centre. Former Directors and scientists of these institutions were always behind the palathulli initiatives in giving advice. NGOs mentioned in the section II and many others at district levels were invited to join the movement with red carpet welcome. Rather they were wooed to join palathulli hitherto they were less considered on RWH including by MM till March 2004²⁷. National resources institutions such as CSE, New Delhi, IISC Bangalore, Agriculture Engineering College, Thavannur (Malappuram District) of Kerala Agriculture University, Prof.Yaspal etc also had cooperated with palathulli campaign at different levels. This widepread participation from the State and the scientific community alike brought in a lot of legitimacy for the palathulli programme. Thus they were able to establish their credibility in the state.

²⁷ Author's own initiatives on water literacy and RWH in Thrissur district had never been considered till April 2004 by MM Thrissur office even after repeated request during the year of 2002 and 2003. Mathrubhoomi, another leading Malayalam newspaper daily tried to replicate the palathulli movement through NGOs in 2005 rainy season however did not kick start due to less persuasion from newspaper agency unlike MM.

Apart from this MM also established linkage with religious institutions. This helped in connecting with the religious people as well. The observations, experience and comments of religious heads of major religions of Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities were relentlessly given in the beginning of the campaign that fetch the attention of MM readers. However, the adoption of water saving and conservation techniques is left to the subjectivity of believers than persuading them through religious institutions.

Linking educational sector and political leaderships has already been discussed elsewhere in the paper. As a result RWH and Water Conservation projects of school students in the science exhibitions were very popular and these subjects now have been clearly included in the state syllabus of school text books, probably as an impact of these programmes. Educational institutions were happy because the programme also included a component of having a water harvesting tank.

Mobilisation of People into palathulli:

Looking at the nature of the Palathulli campaign it might be interesting to discuss here as to what factors motivated people to join so whole heartedly in the campaign.

The PP can be divided into two phases. The first one which is from 2004-2005 and the second one from then on to the present.

In the first phase people were a bit wary as they did not know the technical aspects of harvesting rain water. Issues like quality of rain water for drinking, cost of storage, sustainability of the technology etc were central concerns.

What attracted them to this campaign was the fact that individuals can come forward and act for their own water security. People had little faith in government schemes and programmes, so this appeared to be a novel approach. So in a sense there was indirect participation in this phase.

For NGO's PP really brought in great avenues as they had been working towards convincing people, but had found little response so far. The launch of PP had been so widespread and the social acceptability of the issue had risen immensely. The awareness mission therefore became easier than earlier. The efforts of CGWB, Ground water dept, Kerala Water Authority, CWRDM, CESS etc become easy to make people aware. And they offered support and get recognized in the society as well as among ruling regimes or high level bureaucracy.

In the second phase though people had been convinced and were in fact taking the initiative to conserve water through various methods suggested by MM manuals and in other ways. Meanwhile there were several vested interests that benefited from the campaign. Importantly it was MM itself and the political party that gave it leverage. With news about PP flashing every single day, the ruling party representatives were in the eye of the media thus giving them a lot of political mileage.

The other party that has benefited from this campaign is that of the construction contractors who promoted the ferro cement technology and gained a lot of business out of it.

A number of ferro cement tanks and water recharging structures were implemented in public places, schools, hospitals, government institution etc. Though the social contractors may not explicitly express this notion of joining the campaign but may reach the funding targets indirectly. As a result of palathulli and RWH tank buoyancy, there emerged plenty of construction opportunity for NGO social contractors as well as for private construction contractors.

After 2005, it was difficult to engage the readership for long. New strategies were thus tried. The coverage in the news papers reduced, but awards for schools and colleges were introduced. The big prize money certainly attracted a large number of educational institutions. In this phase MM was seriously reflecting on its limitations as a social mobiliser. This does raise some interesting questions on the role of media in leading social campaigns.

Impact of Palathulli

This brings us to understanding the impact of this campaign on different sections of the population. We have already discussed in the earlier section how certain groups had indeed benefited from the campaign. In this section we refer to some of the studies and observations of different groups on the PP.

One of the major impacts of the campaign has been the change in mindsets of people. It is difficult to measure this change, but the mass participation at the road shows, the interest in understanding techniques, the participation in seminars and exhibitions etc are certainly a measure for the changing mindsets in people. In a high rainfall state like Kerala, water was not taken up very seriously and it was never a matter of public and social discussions.

The media coverage on water crisis too remained limited to the summer months of March-May. But PP certainly brought the question of water crisis and water harvesting as a solution to the public fore.

Based on a study by the author it is quite evident that the introduction of new techniques of RWH have made the people aware of multiple uses of rainwater. The case study (Jos Raphael, 2007a) undertaken by author in the author's own village (Revenue Village as per the Government Land Records) during 2006 summer shows that nearly 44% of the people are aware of the usefulness of rainwater and people making use of it for rainy season itself to save power. The survey was conducted among 520 households in author's village showed that people are aware about a subject called RWH. 44% make use of it and remaining 56% either do not require to make use or depend upon own dug well and municipal water connections. Rain water users also utilize the municipal water and dug well water as and when they require.

As part of the present case study a survey was conducted to understand the impact of palathulli. About 200 respondents were surveyed. Among the 200 interviewed 108 (54%) were men and 92 (46%) were women. They include farmers, housewives, water poor who live in the low income settlement colonies, government servants, lawyers, elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions, bank personnel, schools and college teachers, students and clergy. 99.5% of people interviewed have heard and know about RWH. Among the respondents 92% of them have the habit of reading newspapers and 8% do not. Either they do not get time to read the newspaper in their daily life like women employees working in the government sector, lady school teachers or because they are non literate housewives from poor income settlements. Two of respondents who do not read any newspaper have a RWH tank given to them through PRI scheme. Of the 200 respondents 184 persons or 92% persons said that they got the information through newspapers, 79 persons or 39.5% said they got it through TV and 44 persons or 22% said they knew it through radio and 13 persons knew about through classes, own experience of RWH tanks and the RWH tanks in the public institutions. It is evident from this study that media has played a crucial role in raising awareness related to RWH. It is also evident from observation that existences of RWH tanks across Kerala are seen after the summer of 2004. And to the point of popularity of palathulli campaign, 131 interviewed persons (65.5%) know about it through malayala manorama newspaper. Also 77 persons (38.5%) also have the information about RWH

through “Mazhavellam Nammude Kudivellam” newspaper series of Mathrubhoomi. 23 persons (11.5%) said they know about the subject through other newspaper like Deshabhimani, Mangalam and other local news dailies. It shows that people know about this subject not only from their own subscribed newspaper but also from other newspapers sources as such public library, institutions they work with etc. A net 65.5% response about palathulli from the respondents shows the awareness of the subject through the newspaper MM which is substantial.

As an outcome of the efforts of media the respondents were requested to express about their opinion on the impact of such campaigns. 90 persons (45%) opined that these programme has helped in disseminating some information on water conservation to the common man. 130 persons (65%) said that it was specifically information related to rainwater conservation. 27 persons mentioned about their information of District Collector’s RWH initiative on open well recharge scheme called Mazhapolima that appears quite often in the newspapers from the last rainy season. Most amazingly 24 persons (12%) interviewed have RWH tanks at their home which is a remarkable change in the water sector of Kerala. RWH was hardly heard till the summer of 2004 (similar to Tsunami of Dec 24th 2004!). Within 4 years considerable number of people started opting for possible ways of storing and making use of the rainwater.

Further a new subject called rain pit / mazhakuzhi (percolation pit) became more popular since the palathulli initiatives and its multiplier media discourse. 32 persons (16%) interviewed make use of rain pit to conserve rain water. There is no hesitation to go for percolation pit among people unlike in the pre-palathulli period. Earlier the rain pit had a particular political colour as it was being advocated by the Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), an ally of communist government. In fact the author had bitter experience in convincing the water poor communities to go in for the percolation pit due to this reason. Interestingly the PP gave way to some of the initial inhibitions people had to the rain pit.

35 persons (17.5%), genuinely expressed that they do not conserve rain water either due to sufficiency of water from their own open dug well or due to the inadequate land availability to conserve the rainwater at their house plots. Respondents also said that they make use of different traditional water conservation methods mentioned earlier. 26.5% said they do not make use of any water and soil conservation works. 108 responded (54%) that they use to do coconut basin preparation during south west monsoon under each coconut tree that helped

the tree as well as the ground water recharge. Some of the respondents also make use of site specific water conservation technique like terracing, open well recharging through RWH, ridges, burrows, and other earth works. Apart from this survey, observations from visits to areas where ground water tables are low shows that people do not know much about RWH or palathulli or other news on RWH. This realization indicates the pitfall of targeting the palathulli programmes to water stressed areas or critical areas of ground water withdrawal than general awakening²⁸.

In concrete terms palathulli has helped to raise ferro cement tanks in the public and private institutions for conserving rainwater. The private homestead rainwater harvesters have been making use of it successfully where as the RWH system over government buildings remain a dead investment as they are seen less maintained. In Trichur. District collectorate building has two RWH tanks and distribution systems. The field survey observations here show that the rainwater taps are broken by anti social elements where the filter units of the systems are clogged with dust and dirt. Overall it is clear that ferro cement tanks are not the preferred options of the people everywhere. People were using a mix of methods for harvesting their water and recharging their open wells.

The overemphasis on ferro cement also had some negative impacts. For example many of the PRIs which had used up the 30% allocated fund for RWH had done these in lieu of the vegetative fencing they did earlier. These had affected the fish stocks in many areas.

A major impact of PP was seen on other media groups that tried to emulate MM. Matrubhumi which is a competitor of MM launched what it called “ mazhavellam nammude kudivellam” ‘means rainwater our drinking water’ campaign. However this series column was only through news paper without campaign modes. As a competition wave in the media started about RWH, all other journals, visual and audio channels started inserting topics / programmes on water subject particularly on RWH. This is the period when coco cola plachimada issues came to its peak. And therefore it was a convenient climate to mount the water issue to the forefront in the society with newspapers particularly Mathrubhoomi.

Did palathulli help the water policy formulation of Kerala 2008 is pertinent. It certainly did have an impact on the policy formulation process. The policy says “Rainwater harvesting shall be given priority and promoted especially in the coastal and high range regions. Special incentives and support shall be extended to local self governments and institutions for

²⁸ Kerala has 5 critically ground water overdrawn Blocks and dozens of semi critical over drawn blocks.

popularizing rainwater harvesting structures”. The select committee of Kerala water policy 2008 formulations included a resource person of palathulli campaign (Subash Chandra Bose).

Another impact is over schools and colleges. Every year about 1000 schools in Kerala send applications for competing in palathulli award. Wider publicity about schools that perform better and best teacher effort gives glory to schools among readers. This again multiplies the competition of education community.

Palathulli Reflections from the field

To analyse the impact of palathulli, in the urban context a case study was done by author (Jos Raphael, 2007b) in the municipal corporation area of Thrissur. It focuses upon how far awareness campaigns and government rules on RWH helped the adoption of the subject at the field level.

Kerala Government’s initiatives to implement rainwater harvesting in the urban areas completes 3 years by March 2007. As per the government order of local self government department –GO No.677 dated 17/3/04, all new buildings should have either rainwater harvesting tanks or rainwater percolation pits as per the specifications given in the order. Accordingly, Kerala Municipality Rules 1999 have been amended to incorporate the roof water harvesting rules for the new buildings in the municipal area. Building number will be provided only if these rules are fulfilled. As per this, roof top harvesting arrangements shall be provided in all new building constructions such as 1) residential buildings (with the floor area of 100 square meter or more and plot area of 200 square meter or more), special residential buildings, medical / hospital, educational, assembly, office / business buildings and industrial buildings. The floor area to be considered should be the total floor area in all floors. Those buildings having area lesser than the above specifications should have recharge pits.

The minimum capacity of the storage tank of the roof water harvesting arrangement is 25 liters per square meter for residential buildings. And for other types of buildings the capacity of the tank has to be 50 liters per square meter. In addition, spill over water from storage tank has to be directed to recharge the open dug wells or percolation pits. Exceptions have been given for water logged areas and impermeable soil conditions from mandatory groundwater recharging percolation pits.

The said rules exist for more than 3 years in the municipality and Municipal Corporation areas of Kerala. And it is learnt that not much progress is made in keeping the roof water harvesting rules in the state. A survey was held among the new building owners, building contractors, officers concerned and the Municipal Division Councilors from the Trichur Municipal Corporation area. Survey reveals that implementation of roof top harvesting rules is merely rhetoric than in practice though all these buildings have secured proper building number after the inspection of staff from the Municipal Corporation.

Building Owners' Observations:

Interviewed families observed various difficulties in establishing rainwater harvesting structures. Firstly, the land area in the urban area is very limited so people hardly have the space to construct the rain harvesting tanks. However even those having the required space have not constructed these storages. The other constraint is the myth that rainwater collected in the tanks is not fit for domestic uses. People are used to municipal water supply which is often turbid and chlorinated, but find the rainwater questionable. Mindsets have not changed to the extent they need to. Also public water supply system is better in urban areas so there is a reluctance to make in change since water availability is not an issue with them.

For buildings situated near wet lands or paddy fields are water logged in the rainy season. Families observe that officers in charge of inspection insisted the house owners to construct the percolation pits for recharge which is not viable for such locations. Exemptions are given to this category of house owners. This happens due to lack of information to the government officers and also due to corruption.

Most of the house-owners want to evade this as the cost of installation is high, so they try to get a government subsidy although they do not belong to the below poverty line.

Finally some households find the appearance of rainwater harvesting tank in the parts of residential buildings / bungalows as monstrous or looks ugly. This may reduce the aesthetic look of the bungalows.

Irrespective of these indifferent and brainstorming opinions of urbanites, some families understand the worthiness of rooftop harvesting structures. They are very keen to conserve the rainwater they get at their homesteads and also to recharge their open dug well by rainwater. They also feel that terrestrial rainwater tank look like monstrous structure. Hence find difficulty to incur unnecessary expenditure on rainwater harvesting tank Their choice of

traditional wisdom of rainwater harvesting in the homesteads viz. in situ rain harvesting / catch where it falls are undermined by the Government Order which needs serious attention, they say.

What building contractors say?

Some building contractors say that the government order is meant for the flats and not for the houses revealing their gross ignorance about the content of the order hence they undermine it. Whereas some others know that it is required for the houses but clearly understand the officers are not particular about it if they are met with usual informal perks. Some of them connect a PVC pipe line to a pit thus making it as rainwater harvesting structure. And necessary informal perks to the officers will clear sanctions and house owners will get their house number. Some of them are not convinced of the rooftop harvesting. They say that rain water will have impurities whatever filtering system is made use.

On the other side interviews with the Town Planning Officer and Division Council clearly indicates that rooftop harvesting rules are vehemently followed. However this is not what is visible on the ground. Often contractors hire the RWH fixtures on the new building during the inspection of Building Inspectors from local governments and these will be returned after inspection. Recently Water Resources Minister also admitted that roof top harvesting rules are not keenly followed.

Limitations and Current status:

Although MM is a widely circulated newspaper, it does not reach all of the citizens of Kerala, so in a sense it remains limited to MM readership alone. But other newspapers and other forms of media too did take this issue on, thereby overcoming this limitation of PP.

One of the major limitations of a media led campaign is that it cannot go further than building awareness amongst people.

It is defined by its own framework and hence it cannot give it too much news coverage beyond a certain point. MM has a readership with diverse interests and too much of water coverage was already leading to negative feedback on MM.

Its novelty which was the ferro cement tank also turned out to be its negative feature in the later days of the campaign. People thought that the campaign was promoting too much of one type of a technique. It almost came out as a ferro-cement tank promotion campaign. However there was considerable value in the RWH tanks since water quality has been

steadily deteriorating and closed RWH tanks can be an alternative for the water quality problems of Kerala. Currently, Palathulli is centered now around school and college level competition awards. A minimum of 15 schools have applied for the water quality initiative of Palathulli –Jalatharangam award from each district. The schools have been given water quality test kits and training to be conducted in the school levels.

We finally ask the question- Is palathulli Replicable? Its replicability needs to be assessed in terms of the media led campaign model as well as the elements it proposed to counter the water crisis.

We have already looked at the limitations of the media led campaigns earlier. Its own framework and the social position that MM is in prevents it from going beyond creating awareness. Needless to add that since MM had the patronage of the ruling party, it would not contest it in any form. In fact the campaign did not tread into that road of contestation at all. Its own framework did not allow it to critique the government policies and the lack of will in implementing those. The emphasis was on self motivation and not a critical reflection on the state and the inequities that exist within the system.

Palathulli's replicability may not extend beyond the state of Kerala for several reasons. Firstly as we discussed earlier, media does not have as much of a hold on its populations elsewhere as perhaps in Kerala partly because of the high literacy levels here. Secondly the context of Kerala is such that there are individual homesteads with open wells. This situation allows for individual action to take place. In most other places self motivated actions at the individual level will work to be counter productive.

Palathulli certainly was an innovative model with media in the leadership. Its impact was seen in several ways. It provides us an interesting case to understand the potential of media leading the water crisis campaign. Its value is in understanding how media else where could adapt some of the strategies that MM used to reach out to a diverse group of people. As palathulli connotes "many drops make an ocean", respective stakeholders' efforts in the society may join to solve the water crisis at large.

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Chapter 5

The interpretation of a social movement in North Bihar: its context, historical development, definitions, structure, concepts.

Luisa Cortesi²⁹

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to provide a case study of Megh Pyne Abhiyan (MPA) a network of small NGOs working in Bihar, India. The construct of the case study is based on three factors. First, the idea is to offer a humble reflection of the movement I have been associated with, which in turn can be used for its growth. Second, showcasing the conceptual framework of MPA is a way to share its experience with other social movements that are evolving on similar lines. Third, since MPA qualifies as part of the history of social movements around water, this paper can be considered as a testimony of a specific embodiment of certain rural concerns and energies into a social movement.

I will develop the study as follows. In this introduction, I will elaborate about my own authorship, as, before writing this paper, I was professionally involved with the social movement. This fact largely determined the research method utilized for the study. The first chapter sketches the context of the social movement, focussing mainly on the political aspects of social work that provoked the movement and were dynamically determinant in its development. The second chapter focuses on the historical trajectory of MPA, its genesis, its objectives and concerns, its path's miles stones and vision. Concentrating the narration on the movement's conscious volition and normative commitment (Shah, 1990:16), I will try to understand how its members consider themselves in relation to the struggle, what they encompass as the foundation for their work, and how they envisage the social change they are working for. However, my voice filters their experiences, and it is my understanding of their sharing that gets represented. Subsequently, I will look at MPA as a social movement, by drawing on the theoretical literature on 'new' social movements and narrating MPA through the main distinctive features of social movements. Here, I will further expand on

²⁹ Luisa Cortesi is a cultural anthropologist pursuing her PhD and has been closely associated with the present movement in North Bihar

the social movement's identity, ideology, goal and strategy. The dynamics of collaborative networking between four NGOs in order to become a social movement will be also partially investigated upon.

The discussion then turns towards an interpretative outlook. The following part of the document will emphasize more on the form and the content of the social movement, concentrating then on three main aspects, the meaning of social movement and the ways in which MPA is one, the its organizational structure, and its normative content.. First, I will attempt to define a social movement and, projecting this definition on MPA as a transparency, to examine it through its main features. Second, I will conceptualize the diverse dimensions of the social movement as a network of grassroots organizations and as a campaign group, drawing from the literature on the analysis of contemporary rural movements and organizational processes. In the light of the position theory, I will look at the network in terms of three categories, power, decision-making procedures, resources that will guide my interpretation of the network structural organization. The structural form of campaign will be instead considered from the point of view of peoples' involvement, participation, and change. The underlying question here is to perceive the extent to which the structure is relevant for the work of the social movement and which ideas and principle embodies. Subsequently, the next part concentrates on the conceptual normative aspects of the campaign following the idea expressed since the beginning of the paper that the movement is characterized by a particular kind of contestation of dominant discourse or practice, through a specific conceptualization of power and knowledge. The chapter will explain the ways in which water is ideologically represented, its overall objectives, its conceptual set up in the light of people's involvement and change.

From a review of the literature (Rao, 1978), I will embrace the following definition of a social movement, (i) an organized attempt (ii) on the part of certain actors (iii) to react to certain status quo to bring about a partial or total change, (iv) through collective and more or less structured mobilization, (v) based on a certain ideology. Moreover, I would add few more features that are essential in my understanding of a social movement, and will be the *leit motiv* of this paper. The significance of the social movement's endeavour to promote change is not in the impact, but lies in the process itself, as mentioned by Alvarez (*et al.*, 1998), who understand the process as started by the need of a group of actors to build alternative ways of organizing the society; hence my outlook will overlook the impact

achieved by the social movement, the people involved in its social base, the external actors that support the movement from outside. Instead, my starting point is that the social movement derives from the actors' sense of justice and injustice as situated in a particular context, and when this sense takes shape in the sphere of 'the doable' becomes an ideology. This ideology is expressed both by the structure of the movement and by its conceptual stands, areas where concrete embodiments of power and knowledge take place. In fact, a social movement is an interesting combination of structured and unstructured configuration and concepts, organization and ideology, decision-making procedures and objectives. The interdependency of those components (Shah, 1990), which are influencing each other, is what I wish to look at.

As an introduction to this study, it is essential to specify about the author's voice. As a social anthropologist specialized in water management projects of social development interventions, I coordinated MPA at the state level for almost two years, until December 2008. As a consequence, the point of view of this interpretation has been embedded into the object of study. While being aware of the insights I benefit from, I am also attentive about the consequences and dangers of an insider's outlook. However, apart from the fact that the rigorous anthropological disciplinary approach has been emerging from similar contradictory situations since the development of the discipline, there is another decisive factor which particularly enables me to conduct a study on MPA. In fact, MPA had decided to take on board an anthropologist in all the phases of the project cycle in order to embed anthropological research methodology in the project design and implementation, and to provide the movement with an outsider analytical look. As an overall description of my position, MPA and the conceptual unit of its partner Arghyam required me to be the critical conscience of the movement, questioning the movement's conceptual stands and practices. In this regard, MPA is one of the few but increasing numbers of organizations valuing anthropological expertise, where the involvement of an anthropologist is not only kept for pre-implementation feasibility studies and for quick post-implementation evaluations. I therefore stand that this study is part of the same effort I joined MPA for, and that my research questions represent this effort themselves.

This paper derives from a reflection over the methodology, which considers interpretation as substantially subjective and the observer as intrinsically determining the process of observation. Given the factual circumstances of my long-term involvement in the

movement, I am all the more aware of the complexities in differentiating between the actors' intentions, opinions, wishes, vision, and my own understanding of the social movement, its history, its components, its perspectives. Moreover, my being part of the social movement determined the research methodology, which was primarily based on informal conversations. Not only the research questions leading my work did not require quantitative data, but also, given my level of association with the social movement, I felt there was no scope for structured interviews. Similarly, formal data collection would have reasserted roles and formal distances under a fragile scientific curtain. Moreover, as the intention of the paper lies on an interpretative ground, there is no attempt to provide a detailed, empirically evidenced case study. Nor I am in a position to find room for a comparative representation of other social movements either.

Finally, this paper will try hard not to be normative. The effort and the intent of the social movement to transform society as well as its role in making the political dimension of development visible will be considered without the celebrative attitude that is typical of many NGOs study and publications. I suppose it is due time for researchers to bring a deep and straightforward outlook to social development with the scope of contributing, not reasserting their ability to criticize. The main reasons are the harsh competition for funds in the sector connected with the fact that a large part of donor's agencies, for lack of time or capabilities, prefer 'quick and dirty' evaluations that have hard-hitting implications on organizations. As a consequence, any publication becomes a way to showcase the organizational achievements, within the development 'regime of truth' (Foucault, 1980). I wish this could contribute towards a more collaborative attitude. Similarly, this paper is not the typical academia's anthropologic exercise to showcase the author's critical ability, for which anthropologists are particularly famous.

THE CONTEXT

The social movement which I am going to discuss in this paper has seen its origins from and because of a specific socio-environmental and political context, briefly looking at which is the starting point for this analysis. The aim of this discussion that should be kept in mind is to explain what the social movement has been reacting against.

The political context is broadly represented by the state of Bihar, which the National Human Development Report 2008 portrays as the most backward state of India in terms of human

and economic development. The state is considered as the most corrupted, unsafe, 'underdeveloped' state not only by the representatives of the Indian development sector, but also by a wide-spread understanding, testified through two extremes – national media and national jokes (Nambisan, 2000). In the midst of the political situation, activities of social development have not been obvious. In the 90s, initiatives of short and long term development had to face blackmailing, interruptions, and threatening, while development practitioners were not spared from the institutionalized practice of kidnapping for ransom. As a result of these phenomena, the comparatively few existing brave social interventions in the last couple of decades were having a political overtone of resistance, and, mainly through a right-based approach, were focusing on issues like equity, land rights, governance, upliftment of socially ostracized communities. The picture of the civil society that emerged projected a committed cadre of individuals, inspired and legitimized by the history of revolutions in Bihar, particularly by the total revolution campaign popularly known as the JP movement³⁰. However, I have been told by various sources that the sector of development was not cleaner than the rest of the political and civil society. A number of other actors sparkled in the foggy situation thanks to a generous dose of opportunism, and became the charity wing of caste and power based politics.

In order to understand the region where this movement has spurred, the major setting that needs to be represented is floods³¹, which I wish to present as an interactive playground for socio-political interests more than a natural event. Floods are a recurrent phenomenon in North Bihar. The area is characterized by unruly rivers, mostly flowing from Nepal towards the river Ganga, which, in its run/flow towards the Bay of Bengal, divides the state into two uneven halves. However, the recurrent floods that the area has witnessed are not necessarily a natural disaster, and it is disputable that it has ever been one. In fact, floods are affecting the state with increasing magnitude only since the seventies. The most sound explanation of the worsening of floods impute the change to the very main flood control measure –

³⁰ From its leader, Jaya Prakash Narayan.

³¹ The context I am outlining here is mainly political. Floods themselves are not seen as an environmental problem, and the argument which touch upon environmental factors is headed towards its political aspects and outcomes.

embankment, the construction of which started in the fifties and took approximately twenty years to reach concrete dimensions and impact³².

Thousands of kilometres of earthen walls along the rivers, so called embankments of levees have been built in order to obstruct the river discharge during the monsoon season, and protect people lives and livings from water. Instead, embankments are demonstrated to have been instrumental in the worsening of the frequency, intensity and the duration of floods. Although this argument would require a longer discussion, and partially exceeds the purposes of this paper, I would recall a few extrapolate and elaborate a few considerations, which constitutes the underlying structure of the 'politics of floods'.

- Embankment changed the whole ecosystem, from the drainage system of the area to the way in which humans are living their relations with and within it.
- Due to the fact that embankments prevent the river from discharging the floodwater, the deposit of its silt within embankment results in rising the river bed. As the riverbed level increases, the same amount of water results to be higher and higher as compared with the countryside.
- Embankments at the same time provide with the only elevated place to find shelter on when water is everywhere. Hence, they are at the same time the damnation and the refuge from the damnation itself. Provided that the embankment does not breach, as it often happens.
- Everybody knows that embankments breach. When the pressure of the water is high, the idea of artificially breaching the embankment arises amongst people to minimize the probability of being affected due to a sudden breach. Therefore, fights and sabotages begin in order to breach the embankments downstream. People become victims of the embankment conflict. Official sources state that communities come together due to their common interests to reinforce the embankment wherever it is weak. However, those statements of hope are proven wrong by the very fact that the location of the breach is not predictable, as water in spate is not easily understandable.
- Repairs, rebuilding and raising the embankments costs (Krishankumar, 1999; Sinha, 2002; Tiwari, 1999). While politicians claim, engineers order and contractors gain from operations of 'maintenance', the breaches happen and the deluge kills.
- Is there a need for embankments or not, becomes an irrelevant question as the existing flood control system, based on embankments, triggers two crucial chains of effects. One, under the pretext of continuous maintenance of the system more money is allocated and spent annually. Two, it is difficult to even consider other ways of re-managing the ecosystem.

³² However, the argument of embankments as a flood control strategy does not hold much water since long. In India, the argument has been elaborated by D'Souza (2006) for Orissa, and Singh (2008) for North Bihar. The same argument is present, with reference to other parts of the world, in Van Slyke 1988, McPhee 1990, Shallat 1994, Barry 1998, Cioc 2002, O'Neill 2006.

While the system of embankments constitutes the main effort in flood management from the government side, the response to the disaster adds on to the picture of shorted vision and long-term instability and in addition plays a pivotal role in shaping the political and environmental setting around floods. The typical response to flood has been relief, that means short time and money-intense emergency intervention, whose efficiency, and most important, whose impact has rarely been assessed. From the social movement point of view, the most visible impact in the field is the reliance and dependence on relief that has been created among the flood affected population (Prasad, 2007).

Similarly to what Pigg (1992) argued about the ‘underdeveloped’ in Nepal, my understanding in the area has been that the inhabitants of the area where the social movement developed learned to be flood affected in at least two ways, one, they learned to adjust their identity in order to match the expectations of relief interventions, two, they learned to rely on nothing else than on the ‘most wanted’ relief. In other words, they learned to portray themselves as the perfect recipients, until they become collectively dependant on their own representation as ‘recipients’, who are unable to find (and maybe even search for) any solution by themselves. In addition to that, the recipients are not a homogenous group, as they are often represented. Communities learned new ways in which they can rearrange the distributions of benefits following the old power lines, electoral constituency, patronage relationships, caste based vassalage, etc.

Two correlated issues are important to be discussed in order to dynamically sketch the socio-politics of flood at the level of the civil society. First, part of the learning comes distinctively from ‘teachers’ of national and international stature, through electoral-type discourses by governmental and non-governmental interventions. Second, the way in which the shower of money that accompanies a good flood restructures dynamics of power and create new ones, with several actors taking advantage from the situation.

Only a few external organizations followed up relief with longer-term plans. Those organizations are generally based somewhere else, and work in Bihar through local partners, as it is a common and often ‘best practice’ of development. Often though, decisions and money have the same source – the organization headquarters. My understanding has been that the local organization is selected on the proven capability to deliver services, to be the ‘hand’ of the decision-maker, the executer, and the vehicle for aid to be dispensed.

Therefore, *in situ* capacities in terms of competencies and organizational structures are not necessary, not encouraged, most often even conveniently discouraged.

In fact, the ability of a grassroots organization to understand and vocalize its understanding has proven to be a good enough reason for dismissal from the donors' side. Consultation meetings are held frequently in Patna by Indian and international NGOs actively looking for executors who do not question authoritative 'best practices' and are willing to focus on organizational financial turnover. On the donors' side, money is 'the factor': having handled considerable amount of money is considered enough to prove capacity of handling more. Financial accountability is the main positive characteristic donors seem to look at. Moreover, funding agencies do not want to get involved with organizations, which have parallel ideas than the typical disaster relief plans or have the ability of being vocal about it. Instead, there are powerful ways to keep the civil society institutions away from questioning floods as a disaster and its management, for example spreading rumours about the inability of the organization to handle funds properly.

At the same time, a customary NGOs' role is to use the power of patronage to reproduce or substitute the politics of caste and feudalism, benefitting from recreating a dependence on political and temporary solutions. Bihar has a rigid system of hierarchical and caste based social relations, where bonded labour and caste, based violence are widespread attitudes. Water, as in other parts of India, is a historically significant ground for political patronage (Mosse, 2005). However, 'water management development projects' are designed and funded on a routine basis, without any understanding of the political significance of the issues that are being triggered.

Moreover, in the last couple of years and particularly since 2008, when disastrous flood finally showcased in the media, working in Bihar has become prestigious and even necessary for Indian and international NGOs. The war for territory has been played in coordination meetings, when competition for districts and territory was called 'duplication avoidance'. Related competitive forms of patronage and dependence have been further legitimized through the relief distribution processes.

This civil society's organizations have been fostering a particular type of knowledge, with rights and wrongs, technologies, priorities, best practices applied from anywhere else, material symbols and consequences. The scarcity of water for drinking purposes during floods has been addressed with halogen tablets, hand pumps, technological filters, bottle

water, airdropped chlorine tablets, tanker water. Those solutions changed the sources of water, the technologies to access it, the type of water, which is perceived as safe, exactly as development units and managements tools changed the concept of social work. As this problem is not the crux of this paper, I choose to refer to an example, which I discussed elsewhere, the ‘demonization’ of traditional dug wells for the sake of modern hand pumps, in situation in which hand pumps themselves are not safe in terms of water quality (Cortesi, 2009).

In my understanding, given the scenario, the generational change and its mediated impact on the knowledge transmission have increased the confusion. The change in the ecosystem happened relatively fast and recently, and people’s coping mechanisms to adjust to the situation have been disrupted by the establishment of the relief mindset. In fact, as the dependence on relief and external management is one of the reason for the slowing down of adaptation and coping mechanisms, the discourse portraying traditional knowledge as old and outdated triggers the devaluation and the inappropriateness of older generations’ authoritative authorship, and therefore the disinterest in the transmission of what is known and possible for the modern paradigm. Although old and traditional is not a value *per se*, the loss of resources, options, knowledge, flexibility are certainly dangerous (Appadurai, 2004).

HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY

After sketching the context of the document, I will try to show how from this context the movement took shape. Eklavya Prasad, a Bihari, a development practitioner, believer in community driven development, specialized on water management with experiences of rainwater harvesting in India and East Africa, came back to Bihar on a short assignment. His effort of understanding the peculiar situation of recurrent floods pushed him to spend long time in remote areas and probably to revive his attachment to his native place. At the end of his assignment he had established relationships of trust with a few organizations working at the grassroots, learning about their work and their struggle and discussing endlessly on what could ‘makes sense’ in the socio-environmental context of North Bihar, and particularly in the political context described in the previous chapter. This sharing built up a common understanding on the setting described before, the politics of floods, and the effect of different modalities of work on development processes in the field.

The organizations with whom Eklavya Prasad established those linkages were grassroots organizations working since decades in four districts of North Bihar, namely Khagaria, Saharsa, Supaul, Madhubani. During my years working with them myself, I observed a similarity of vision and approaches to social problems together with peculiar differences in terms of identities and value systems, which were reflected in complementing areas of expertise. Their collective history of social work includes a variety of issues as social mobilization, floods management, social awareness with regard to gender-related violence, agricultural practices, livelihood enhancement, community health, upliftment of backward castes, decentralized governance. I wish to provide the reader with a short description of each of them, which far from encompassing their identity, summarizes their distinctiveness. I believe this will explain not only their difficulties in coping with the political context described before, but also the identity of the social movement itself, which raised and is rooted in them.³³

Kosi Seva Sadan – KSS - has been set up through a struggle, and the conceptual roots are to be found in the *gandhian* and *bhoodan* Movement. Started being managed by a group of people in an horizontal way, it has kept its structure in the everyday decision taking mechanisms, where any member and worker, at any level, is proactively engaged in the organization functioning and has voice. Equity, not at all evident for an external outlooker, is continuously re-established by internal struggles, has been instrumental in the results of the organization in grooming future social leaders. SAMTA is a direct outcome of the social struggle that was spearheaded by Jay Prakash Narayan's 'total revolution' against the skewed power and economic manipulations popularized by the central government. The core principles of the organization define its identity as an activist and vocal organization, and its work is firmly rooted in its value system. As a consequence, Samta's stand and practices are not 'flexible to compromises', and are recognized in the area as not getting swayed by the modern social order of the development sector, as I have been told by a local senior government officer. Ghoghardiha Prakhand Swarajaya Vikas Sangh (GPSVS)'s identity as a transparent and accountable organization is mainly due to two main factors, the linkages with the *sarvodaya* and JP movement together with a strong and committed internal

³³ The descriptions of the NGOs which formed the social movement is a personal account, not based on their textual declarations but informed by my engagement with the movement. It is important to state that I am the only source and responsible for these interpretations, which may differ from the organizations' self representation.

leadership. GPSVS is a diplomatic player, which meets substantive work and a clear stand with a well-knit network at the grassroots, district, state and national level. As a consequence, the organization has become a source of inspiration for smaller organizations in the region, providing them with opportunities of growth through partnerships. Gramyasheel, initiated by a group of friends, inspired by communist and *gandhian*, progressive and egalitarian ideologies, has kept a distinctive identity of forward thinking organization, strengthened by risk taking ability and eagerness to internalize new systems and issues. For instance, the organization is practically and conceptually gender sensitive to an impressive extent. Moreover, during my work with them, I perceived a rigorous attitude of discipline and collective accountability that is extremely rare for local grassroots organizations.

When these four organizations decided to put efforts together, their expectations from the association were mixed and possibly uneven. From an external point of view, it seems obvious that they were brought together by reacting against the ‘typical development project’ they had to adjust to for decades, even more than from the problem of drinking water scarcity itself. They describe their experience with the typical features of development in terms of (i) isolation, (ii) lack of organizational learning, (iii) hierarchical decision taken by the funding agency, (iv) short project time frames, (v) window showcasing of successes, and (vi) deep failure to link the project with broader development objectives. My understanding is that there was a need for fundamental changes in the way projects were designed and implemented. However, the leaders of the organizations realized unevenly the potential of the entity they were trying to set up, and their motivations may have been diverse mixes of hope for a change and vision for the future. At the same time, the fact they worked together for initial 14 months without any financial resources or promises of funds is a strong measure of their commitment.

My understanding of the initial exuberance being about the alternative modality of work and process to foster, as opposed to the problem in itself, is not only perceived through the organizations’ leaders words, but is also supported by the initial scepticism in terms of what became the main issue, rainwater as a supplementary source of water. In fact, the problem which Eklavya Prasad was to evaluate and which constituted the centre of his deliberations with NGOs was the scarcity of water for drinking purposes in and after flood, and its impact

in terms of individual and collective well being³⁴. As a reaction, he brought into the discussion his experiences of rainwater harvesting from several areas of India, and of the horn of Africa, and tried contextualizing rainwater harvesting as a way to access safe drinking water during floods by highlighting the availability of rain in the region, but met with resistance from those organizations in terms of contextual acceptance of rainwater for drinking purposes.

The next part of my argument is that their urge for a change and their vision for the future have been influencing the shape of what came to be in two different ways. On one side, the structure of the unknown entity took the dual shape and the corresponding modalities of work of a campaign and a network. On the other side, the social movement adopted a core ideology with a specific content and conceptual understanding. However, my interpretation about the social movement in terms of its nature, its structure and content will be argued for in the next chapters of this work. I will here sketch the historical trajectory of the movement, as if I am following the movements of the potters who squeezed and shaped together the lump of clay they had in their hands.

Following the narrations I could revive, the formation of the new social movement and ideas happened in an incremental manner. The very process of searching a practical and all-inclusive modality of work to address what they conceive as a state of hopelessness through long and continuous deliberations brought in a sense of newness of approach. This dialogic attitude allowed enough space for trust, so that the organizations accompanied Eklavya Prasad to spend substantial time with the people living in the area with the intention of understanding their living conditions, their water drinking habits and 'knowledge', and their possibility of accepting rainwater for drinking. Therefore, despite some skepticism concerning the presence and intent of Eklavya Prasad, the new group of people wanted to examine the content and construct of the rainwater harvesting idea and to gauge the pulse regarding its approach, content and construct. It was decided therefore to foster the rainwater harvesting idea at the individual, organizational and community level, because a positive feedback could indicate a glimpse of acceptance, and would have helped to cross

³⁴ I do acknowledge a logical gap for readers who are more interested in the idea of rainwater harvesting as a solution for drinking water scarcity in flood affected area. However, the purpose here is not to elaborate about the problem of water scarcity itself, therefore the argument on how flood, or disastrous water abundance, translates into water scarcity will not be discussed in depth here. For what it matters, the argument is yet not simple, and its presumed simplicity informed the abuse of disaster management techniques highlighted in the previous chapter.

examine its effectiveness in terms of social and cultural feasibility as well as its potential to be adopted by the poorest sections of the society.

To understand the relevance of rainwater in rural Bihar, an attempt was made to locate its social and cultural connotation. The campaign members engaged themselves in a dialogue with different sections of the rural society across the four districts. Inputs from the older generation did project that rainwater was considered as a 'pure' resource, which was contrary to how it was perceived today. On the other side, many seasonal migrants, who had travelled to north-eastern states, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Mumbai, came out in support for rainwater as they had used it for drinking purpose, influenced by local or other migrants' habits. Interestingly, those migrants had not expressed earlier their experience of having consumed rainwater with the rest of the villagers, and few of them claimed of fearing isolation due to the radicalism of the idea. Conceptual support and local evidence from these groups bolstered the confidence of the campaign workers. As a result, they were able to put forth their views with lot more conviction.

In short, the new initiative did experience a mix of enthusiasm coupled with expectations of 'being provided' mainly at the village level. However, the very process of exploring options and continuously cross checking the feasibility of the past acquired knowledge somehow strongly indicated the modality of action the organization would take in the future. After several field observations and deliberations, rainwater harvesting was accepted as the core issue of the social movement. Rainwater harvesting was conceived as the 'entry point' to ensure: (i) raising interest around water and water related problems, both individually and collectively, (ii) fostering the idea of 'do it yourself', both individually and collectively, and dissociating the problem discussion and solution from relief initiatives.

Subsequently, the movement was named as Megh Pyne Abhiyan (MPA) – literally meaning clouds' water campaign. The biggest material concern of MPA then was to make rainwater harvesting technique localized in order to ensure its accessibility by everyone irrespective of caste, gender, class, economic possibilities, and social power. Before deciding on any particular technique, series of field testing were carried out in the four districts, and a few design models were shared with the people and with external rainwater harvesting practitioners. The end result was a simple technique involving resources like polythene sheet, bamboo, rope and water storage facility to harvest rains during floods. The design itself that allowed variation was chosen because it was similar to the structure of the temporary shelters

built during flood emergency, and therefore considered easily acceptable and significant during floods. This process was in fact a knowledge shaping moment, in which the partner organizations consolidated their understanding in terms of rainwater harvesting and its possible embodiments in specific techniques.

Initially, the organizations' volunteers, who became the members of the campaign, were unable to position the initiative as different from previous social initiatives. Hence, there were frequent diversion from the campaign mode to project mode, and to get them back to the campaign mode was indeed a challenging task. However, repeated stress helped the members in gaining clarity regarding the distinction. One of those moments was the failure of the 2005 monsoon. As a part of the strategy, the campaign had installed community rainwater harvesting systems for people to learn and creatively adopt the technique at the onset of monsoon. Shockingly, the failure of the monsoon was attributed to the installation of rainwater harvesting demonstrations. I was told that, in a few areas, the members of the campaign were forced to uninstall the structures. However, talking with some of the people who had dismissed the initiative at first, I got the feeling that the disappointment towards the lack of direct benefits was indeed 'as important as the one towards the rain which has not reached'.

At the same time, the campaign's members were gaining clarity regarding their role as campaign partners. Consequently members of the grassroots organizations were persistent in talking about rainwater harvesting, and were made to understand that the purpose of it was not simply the water that could be drunk, but the very idea of having people collecting and drinking water by themselves, discussing and taking resolutions about water, innovating ways of harvesting it, without particular instruments, and direction by external agents. During a spell of monsoon, rainwater was publicly harvested both by the majority of MPA's volunteers, and by other people of the area out of curiosity. People started responding positively towards rainwater as they started to believe it was helpful in overcoming difficulties of digestions due to high levels of iron in the groundwater. Next step, MPA members encouraged people to explore, innovate and improve techniques of rainwater harvesting. This lack of orthodoxy which MPA volunteer were asked to spread, although bringing in confusion in certain cases, benefited the campaign members in terms of understanding that the modality of their work was as important as its content.

MPA's concept of initiating and strengthening collective accountability and action through institutionalizing decentralized water management practices came into being with the help of *Arghyam*, a Bangalore based organization whose efforts are directed towards enhancing equity and access to water for all and emphasizing all round sustainability whether it is environmental, financial or social.

Arghyam's support allowed the campaign to intensify and expand its activity. In order to assess the impact of the campaign in the first year, a *Jal Samvad Yatra* – Water dialogue journey – was organized in all the four districts. The main intent behind this was to obtain and understand the incidence and the mechanism of water related problems at the local level. As per the fieldworkers, the yatra also helped in mobilizing people's support, mainly because the option of drinking rainwater as a collective idea without any conditions and compromises provided the necessary base inter linkages within communities. People's response and the perceived potential of rainwater harvesting increased the interest and the confidence of partners on the practice of decentralized water management, therefore a consensus was reached to increase the functional area of the campaign.

During its initial period MPA was active in four panchayats across four districts, with a handful of people. In Khagaria, MPA was active in Dhamma Khairi Khutaha with a population of approximately 14,000 people. Similarly in Supaul Bayriya panchayat was identified with a human population of 16,000. In Saharsa and Madhubani, MPA was concentrating in Mahishi (North) and West Lucknaur panchayats respectively, with a 10,000 and 6,000 human population. Later, additional 17 panchayats were identified to be included in the campaign on the basis of flood vulnerability, extent of perceptible water related problems, and experience of partner organizations of working in the area. Moreover, in the second phase, a West Champaran based organization - SAVERA was included in the campaign. In order to develop a comprehensive and common understanding of the entire MPA team regarding the campaign, regular orientation sessions were held at the organizational level by the local coordinators and the development practitioner respectively. During these interactions, the field workers shared their need for a structured orientation on water related issues. In response to their requirement, training program of different nature have started being organized regularly, starting with a *Jal Manthan Shivir*, held in March 2007 in Khagaria.

Apart from propagating temporary rainwater harvesting system, the social movement decided to include other activities of social mobilization around water in order to address crucial issues in the five campaign districts of Bihar. One, water quality assessment through testing namely physical, chemical, biological, and arsenic contamination, especially during and after floods; two, exploring simple water filters that could purify water from iron in a sustainable way, as they could be easily produced by people themselves, with very little money, natural material and no supervision; three, promoting dug-well revival to gain access to safe drinking water free from groundwater contamination, by stressing the value of the technology and its re-appropriation by the community and by facilitating the intergenerational transmission of knowledge; Four, propagating SRI as innovative methodology of rice cultivation in order to enable food sufficiency/security at individual household level. On the organizational side, from the second half of 2007, a lot of energy was spent to build capacities of partner organizations and field staff with regard to the issue of water management, social mobilization, and drinking water quality, socio-economic aspects of people's life, organizational culture and accountability.

The third stage of the campaign, which started on February 2009, has been designed with the aim of consolidating the gains of the previous phases in terms of community mobilization around the issue of concern. While rainwater harvesting and water management will remain central to the campaign, the overall goal of the third phase is to help people strengthening their resolve to autonomously and collectively address development issues. An area where the development processes are being manipulated and controlled by short term relief and rehabilitation measures, the social movement vision is to reiterate the relevance of local potential and to channelize it in establishing an alternative development model to the governance systems.

After an analytic description of the context and a narration of the naissance and the development of the social movement, a more interpretative outlook is necessary to explain which kind of social movement I am discussing about. The next part of this study will concentrate on understanding MPA on the basis of the main features that define a social movement, on its structural aspects and its conceptual components. The interpretative outlook will be also accompanied by a change into the author's voice, which will become more personal and subjective.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT

As mentioned in the first chapter, ‘social movement’ is a loose term used in a *very* loose sense by different sets of people. While some scholars use it interchangeably with ‘organization’ or ‘union’ (Shah, 1990), the term could also be used to differentiate formal organizations with an historical dimension, a trend or tendency. The term has also a strictly political connotation, as some political leaders and social reformers call their activities ‘movements’ to convey the idea that they are able to mobilize a consistent group of people.

As mentioned in the introduction, the literature provides with a broad definition that captures different aspects of the concept. I consider a social movement to be (i) an organized attempt, or ‘a deliberate collective endeavour’, (Shah, 1990:16-17) (ii) on the part of a group of people which share a common or compatible identity (Diani, 1992) (iii) which *raison d’être* is a reaction to a certain *status quo* and a commitment to bring about a partial or total change (Shah, 1990:16), (iv) based on a certain ideology and a certain discourse, (v) through collective mobilization, as a ‘network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations’, (Diani, 1992:13) which may be more or less structured, ranging from a loose, informal or partial level of organization to a highly institutionalized and bureaucratized movement.

After clarifying my own use of the concept, my goal goes beyond arguing that MPA is a social movement. I will instead elaborate on a few selected aspects of MPA *as* a social movement, in the light of the analytical framework provided by the social movement theory, with the goal of explaining which kind of social movement I believe MPA to be. Hence, I wish to examine MPA on the following aspects, selected on an heuristic basis: (i) which identity is shared by the actors that constitutes MPA; (ii) which is the discourse/ ideology that is fostered by the campaign and how it is culturally grounded; (iii) which is the degree of informality and the degree of structure/organization; (iv) which is the change the social movement is pushing for.

The group shares a common identity

A social movement is defined by Diani as a ‘network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations engaged in political or cultural conflict on the basis of a shared collective identity’ (1992:13). My understanding is that MPA

partners have a similar identity, provided that we consider identity as the result of a particular blend of experiences and commitment, similarly to what Carroll and Ratner (2001:614) comment:

‘When asked if members share common principles, ethics or values, (...) respondents (...) had no difficulty describing a common commitment to redistributive social justice claims involving universal entitlements to a good life. And when asked whether it is a shared identity or a commitment to similar ethical principles and values that fuels activism (...), our respondents tended to choose the latter, or to claim that the common experience of poverty (‘identity’) combines with a common world view’.

However, identification in terms of identity is a sensitive classification. Woods (2003) finds the social movement he was examining to be based on, and characterized by, a sense of rural identity, which he sees as a social representation, not based on socio economic structures but on symbols and signs and images. However, the critics of the category ‘rural’ recognize that the intra-rural differences can be enormous and the rural-urban similarities can be sharp (Hoggart, 1990). In this paper, I would not discuss the articulation, the contestation and the construction of the rural identity and ideology as in the scholar complexity of rural studies, but I would refrain from labeling identity with a precise connotation.

While keeping in mind that ideological differences and understanding can still be accommodated in a discursive identity, the common identity of MPA partners can be ascertained, in my point of view, in similar biographical experiences and value systems. As described previously in this work, MPA’s partners are part of the same socio political setting, matured personally and professionally in a context raged by floods and its politics, chose social work as a social and political mission, abode for the struggle of managing the few vocal organization in rural north Bihar during the ‘dark years’. Moreover, although from different ideological backgrounds as discussed at the beginning of this paper, they share a precise set of values in correspondence with their common profession and commitment. Those includes parameters of (i) quality of work, (ii) realism of serving at the grassroots, (iii) ability of managing workers at various level and grooming younger social workers, (iv) courage to stand by certain standards of coherence. From a negative point of view, (v) compromises in terms of projects both from the impact at the grassroots than from the relation with the founder, (vi) interest for money, considered as a risk factor and a test of efficiency, and interestingly enough not as an indicator of the capability to manage larger projects, are similarly parameters of evaluation.

However, in my view, a similar identity is not necessarily a collective one, nor it is necessary *for* a collective one. As an outsider, the welcome I myself received while joining was an implicit but sincere set of tests and obstacles. However, the everyday made concrete a shared commitment for a specific struggle, the practice of experiencing it together, and a collective understanding on our issues of concern. In fact, the formation of the group took several steps. One of the most important has been the action taken with regard to SAVERA's internal problems. In the second part of 2008, SAVERA, a small organization from West Champaran which joined MPA in 2007, faced some organizational internal problems, and some of its members asked for MPA's partners help, as they are senior respected personalities in the social sector. As part of the coordination team, I pushed for this to happen in the form of a round of meetings and commitments towards action. Being aware of the culturally prescribed behaviour given the situation, I was astonished by the amount of time and the intensity of the discussion the partners invested into the attempt of resolving the problem, much beyond what was planned. This series of meeting, that can be read both as a prolonged search for consensus about organizational culture and as a common sacrifice of time, money, personal and professional priorities, was crucial in the creation of a collective identity.

The group is engaged in a culturally grounded struggle with an ideology/discourse

MPA's discourse is built on some arguments with which the campaign engages at the level of research and in its vocal activism:

- (i) Water is a highly symbolic and social resource. Its collective management has been a social occasion and changes in the management can have an impact on the way in which people relate to each other for common problems and decisions.
- (ii) The individualization of water management through the promotion and the adoption of hand-pumps, together with the lack of responsibility attached to the technology³⁵, and the ignorance on its quality, needs to be countered.
- (iii) Equity and sustainability are parameters that need to be taken in account in water management intervention, both in form of norms and practices.
- (iv) Drinkable water is a scarce resource. However, as scarcity needs to be read as an economic and social category, similarly quality needs to be read and managed through habits, conceptions, access, concepts of storage, demand.
- (v) Water quality is an increasingly disregarded issue and is manipulated for economic and political interests³⁶.

³⁵ The claim refers to the fact that hand pumps do not require collective management as dug well do. Moreover, the possibility of dug well being instrumental in polluting water of arsenic, or in creating a channel for contamination, has not being excluded till date (Cortesi 2009).

In breaking up MPA's discourse, I came across components that I would define as ideological and others which seem to me knowledge-related. As I believe the two as conceptually overlapping, I cannot engage here with defining blurred boundaries. I would roughly distinguish the two by giving a political connotation to the concept of ideology as a set of ideas reflecting an aspiration or believing in a change.

MPA's main ideology consists in suggesting that it is possible to collectively and individually look for solutions, instead of relying on others' decisions, with a 'do it yourself' approach. In order to work consistently with its ideology, MPA does not propose a packet of prescribed solutions, but encourages innovation and adaptability of its ideas. On the other side, in MPA's discourse a set of knowledge is identifiable in terms of which water is drinkable. The construction of this knowledge passes through local people, therefore keeping the movement culturally grounded. Important aspects are 'traditional'³⁷ ways to store water safely (in earthen pot or other traditional storage facilities), to test its quality (specific leaves reacting with iron in water), to filter it (with sand through simple filters and through dug wells). MPA conjugates those knowledges with 'scientific ones', which are contextualized and simplified by the campaign through its field associates. It can be noted that, as MPA started from the need to take a stand in front of some discourses which felt as detrimental for the society, its own discourse is 'reactively normative' ('it should not be, you should not let this happen to you'). However, the confrontational culture that animates the campaign naissance has kept its originality in making the absence of a set of solutions as its own flag, and the 'do it yourself' and 'improve it yourself' culture have concretely taken away the normative aspect of the campaign's message.

The flexibility the campaign pushes for, and the local knowledge that is included in the campaign's ideas, also ensures 'frame alignment' which in the literature is considered to be fundamental to the mobilization of social movements. As put by della Porta e Diani, 'collective action (...) becomes possible at the point at which mobilizing messages are integrated with some cultural component from the population to which they are addressed' (1999:74). Moreover, MPA's discourse is culturally grounded by the very fact that the campaign is almost exclusively composed by local people with a strong local agenda,

³⁶ For example, the fact that hand pump water is generally contaminated is not recognized.

³⁷ For a discussion on the concept of tradition in water management and in MPA, see Cortesi 2009.

similarly to what noted by Snow (*et al.*, 2007) ‘The dual identification of both the leadership and the grassroots supporters with an over-arching ‘rural identity’ or agenda is a crucial element in achieving frame alignment’.

Furthermore, when I joined the campaign we agreed that similar identity/agenda is not enough to prevent ideological distance between the leadership and the grassroots to grow. In fact, my ‘critical mandate’, which I referred to in the beginning of this work, gave credit to the relevance of an outsider anthropological look in order to keep the campaign coherent to its purpose and to the people it is supposed to serve.

The movement is informal and structured at the same time

Following Diani’s (1992:13) definition of a new social movements as ‘a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflict on the basis of a shared collective identity’, Woods suggests a shift in the ‘tenor and architecture of rural politics (...) from rigid, hierarchical organizations to fluid and polycentric groupings; from electoral and policy interventions to direct action and mediations; from sectoral representation to integrative campaigning and coalition building; from economic bargaining to post-materialist and identity politics’ (Woods, 2008:129). In sketching the history of the campaign, I will here devote some attention to one of the characteristic widely considered by the literature, the structural form of the social movement, elaborating on the double organizational form (campaign and functional network) the initiative has been given and the reasons behind it. Reference is made here to the information I was told by the leaders of MPA, while my interpretations on the issue will be clarified in the next part of this paper.

To my repeated questions, I have been answered that the ‘campaign mode’ was considered mainly as (i) allowing its concept to be firmly rooted to the ground by grooming a committed cadre of workers and developing a strong rationale at the grassroots for undertaking such an initiative, as the concept of rainwater harvesting was new for the region. Moreover, (ii) the campaign approach was envisaged to cultivate and preserve the enthusiasm and the concreteness created amongst the members and the villagers that otherwise could easily get lost in the process and to (iii) help in creating individual and collective ownership which would later assist in facilitating the altering mindsets. Surely, (iv) the development practitioners of Bihar were conversant with the campaign format of social

intervention hence it was comfortable for them to relate to the approach and contribute towards developing it as a strategy. Furthermore, (v) the choice of a campaign helped in overcoming the partners' concerns about uneven allocation of benefits and small area's projects which create significant discrepancies between groups and villages and about short-time duration of funding and activities. A campaign modality was considered as ensuring advancement in time and space on the base of the potential and feasibility of the issue *per se*, given the fact that a campaign is not bounded by a project, therefore can have a life in itself and spread at its own pace.

While the campaign's organization is loose enough to preserve a hint of spontaneity, the strength of the bounding is ensured by its structure as a functional network, with related roles and procedures. However, the idea to set up a functional network was not considered with the purpose of attaching a formal organization to the campaign but with in order to (i) include only those members who agree to actively associate in translating the concept into practice, so that a collective potential is developed for a common good, (ii) strengthen ties among partners for developing an enduring interrelationship, with the intention of creating a strong internal support system, (iii) create an environment that facilitates each partner organization to contribute as per their own strength towards the growth of the alliance, (iv) develop a common body of knowledge, specialized skills and leadership as a common resource within the group based on each of the organization's interest and capacity.

Woods asserts that 'all social movements are by their nature decentred, multi-leadered, amorphous and often contradictory', and sees the uniting feature in the 'common identification of its diverse members (...) and thus the mobilization of their activities around a defense of their (identity)' (2003:323). MPA's functional organization has the aim to create cohesion in the movement on practical aspects, therefore preventing looseness to happen and contradiction to take place. However, disunity is a typically weak point of social movement that affects MPA as well, and its recognition conceptually strengthens MPA's identification with a social movement. Although MPA has the potential to build alliances as a network, donor agencies tend to prefer single and small organizations as partners, for reasons addressed above. Till date, the counter forces that stressed MPA's internal ties have yet not been strong enough to destroy the campaign.

The social movement, in virtue of its dual structural forms, can be defined as 'reticular, with multiple links between autonomous cells forming in indistinctly bounded network', as

opposed to ‘segmented movement, with numerous different groups or cells in continual rise and fall, and policephalous movement, having many leaders each commanding a limited following only’ (Gerlach, 1976 in Woods, 2003:317). The indistinctiveness is expressed in the form of the campaign, for example through no static membership, no central leadership, no united philosophy, dynamic and flexible ideology. The organization is structured by the network, for example in the form of systems of internal communication and coordination. My understanding is that, as social movement is a word that can be filled with many different meanings, MPA members implicitly preferred some specific organizational structures, which have a clear meaning and define the character of the agenda and action modalities in itself. However, they kept two organizational forms instead of one, as both the form of the campaign and the form of the network were representing the identity the movement was being shaped with.

The goal is change

Rao refers to the issues of social movements’ genesis, ideology, organization, leadership, structure, internal dynamics, and social consequences. In his view, ‘(...) a social movement is an organized attempt on the part of a section of society to bring about either partial or total change in society through collective mobilization based on an ideology’ (Rao, 1978:2). The change which is brought forward by MPA is complex to define, as it is both symbolic and material, both involving ‘beneficiaries’/inhabitant of the area/people as well as the organization.

MPA falls into what is defined as ‘new social movements’ in terms of being characterized by ‘greater attention to social than to economic transformation’ where ‘the motivation for (...) mobilization cannot be reduced simply to material gain, but may concern the achievement of symbolic goals or the defense of symbolic resources’. The organization does not deliver immediate/individual benefits, but works for a long term collective one, ‘despite the contention in some analyses of social movements that individuals will only participate in collective action when the benefits that accrue to them as individuals outweigh the costs, (...) ‘new’ social movements have emerged in which the individual material gain to the participant is not obvious—but where the costs of participation are balanced by the aim of achieving some greater good.’ (della Porta and Diani, 1999:12) Evidences are reflected in MPA’s challenges. Part of the initial refusal was certainly due to the fact that participation

did not promise benefits. This certainly explained the resistances of middle men or political leaders, who, used to reassert their power through manipulating outsider organizations, appropriate and redistribute immediate material gains.

The symbolic transformative power which the organization has been searching for, is from my point of view, accepted as long term and slow, and relies in making visible different ideas of development. Borrowing Bebbington's words, 'this aspect of the nature and work of social movements receives particular emphasis in post-structural readings which insist that culture – meanings, ideas, practices – is one of the most important terrains in which social movements operate, and which they seek to change.' In fact, 'social movements do not only (or even mainly) engage policy with counterproposals for particular policy domains (for instance on poverty or social protection) but rather they challenge the meanings of core ideas that underlie policy debates, challenge dominant notions about what counts as legitimate knowledge in the process of forming policy and argue that alternative actors and alternative sources of knowledge ought also have a seat in policy making processes' (2006:5).

As described before, MPA's overall goal is in terms of 'self-reliance': this is the reason for rainwater harvesting being the ideal entry point: it does not create any dependence, but points at water which is not to be paid for, in terms of money and power. Moreover, it has an additional benefit in the development of creative innovations, and, directly and indirectly, in development of confidence, 'we can do it'. However, the transformative power of the organization not only is not expected overnight, but is context based and recognizably tight with the other actors' action (Bebbington, 2006) more than bounded by a particular project.

These considerations lead to additional clarifications to be made. In this type of analysis, social movements are best understood as the vectors of particular discourses and forms of questioning the world, which is a clear political goal (Fisher, 1997). Political, far from being related or relatable with party politics or any attempts to power, means that their call for a change is the expression of views and perspectives, which are naturally favourable to some sectors of the society, and not favourable to others. Dismissing idealistic visions of civil society, everything is political, and social movements are surely not an exception: although not clubbing with political parties, (i) they are making political claims, (ii) they have a strategy and tactics which are inherently political, and (iii) there are targeting political goals, for example justice, equity, self-determination, self-reliance. Moreover, (iv) reaction to a *status quo* is political *per se*: a Gramscian understanding of civil society envisages it as an arena in

which hegemonic ideas concerning the organization of economic and social life are both established and contested (Mitlin *et al.*, 2007:1702).

Given that the change which is fostered is political, it can be recognized as difficult to be pinned down to numbers and figures. To my understanding, the movement, in retrospect, will be considered successful in case, and to the extent that it has been instrumental in changing ideas, assumptions and concepts of 'legitimate' knowledge, in an arena of interactions which sees multiple actors. Part of MPA's success will be also related to MPA itself, which is also a target of its own activity. MPA's success would be, in my view, in setting up a force that shows development and has strength to be an interlocutor in its particular part of the socio-political arena. This cannot be read as a mere issue of power. It means to become an institution, to challenge the NGO's donor-executor relationship, to provide professional expertise and coordination for the social movement, to bring flood affected people interests in the agenda of institutions, while resisting efficiently standardized or interests-based disaster-management approaches.

'Social movement' has been analyzed as a complex category, whose meaning has been clarified and outlined. This definition, used as a transparency, has been projected on MPA in order to enable a discussion of some of its features, namely its identity, its grounded discourse/ideology, its tension between informality and structure, its political goal of change. The interpretative outlook will now zoom in on the social movement structure, through a separate analysis of the network and of the campaign. Finally, the conceptual part of the social movement will be questioned and opened up.

STRUCTURE

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the social movement has developed a somewhat unique organizational structure that embodies its ideas, its struggle, and its sense of social work. Through a diverse coalition across ideological and geographic space, the movement took the shape of a network and of a campaign at the same time, as discussed in the previous pages. My goal here is to capture its dual structure and to understand how the form itself has been decisive in shaping the social movement, and how specifically MPA has crafted its fundamental features.

MPA AS A NETWORK

Describing a network³⁸ entails discussing linkages between nodes, position of the individuals relatively to the ties, and their relative power. Brass and Burkhardt described network ties as ‘stable patterns’ that ‘represent a constraint on behavior’ (1993:444 in Stevenson & Greenberg, 2008). This critical outlook explains power inequalities through the relative positions of the nodes, along lines of center/periphery. Centrally located actors are assumed to be enabled by their position to accomplish their purposes, while peripheral actors are instead restricted by their position to powerlessness. Hence, centrally located actors have more influence over events, have more access to information and resources, are likely to get involved in policy networks and public policies, and will be more successful in pursuing their agenda (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

MPA as a network is actually formed by the coordination team and by the four organizations. The coordination team was composed by Eklavya Prasad and by the State Coordinator, position that I covered for almost 18 months, till December 2008. Although the coordination team is not necessarily supposed to be composed by professionals, it is formed by personalities with their role and their stand, so that the individuals themselves are independent actors of the network. Each of the four organizations are represented by their respective program coordinator and then the movement is ramified through a development associate for each organization and two field associates (a man and a woman) for each of the 21 (now 22) *panchayats* in which MPA is active. While the program coordinator is generally the secretary of the organization, or a member of the organization independent enough to have autonomy over the budget and decision making power, the development associates (four in number, one for each organization) are the link between the core of the network and the fieldworkers (approximately 50), who are the direct implementers of the activities.

In terms of positions and linkages, I do believe a structural deterministic approach cannot be applied to understand the relative position of the partners in the network. Instead, interconnections, interrelations, and changes are characteristics of the dynamic structures of social movements, as it is the case for MPA. In the structure of the social movement under examination, there is a multiplicity of linkages among all workers in all positions. In fact, the

³⁸Acknowledging but not deriving from the social network theory (Granovetter, 1973 and 1983; Wasserman & Faust, 1994; Borgatti & Everett, 2000).

coordination group has been ensuring constant presence in the field and direct link with the field associates. Moreover, a number of activities have been undertaken to develop linkages between field associates themselves, between development associates as a group across organizations, and between field associates and other organizations. Recently, one field associate, at the very peripheral extreme of the network, has been positioned as program officer, a new role in the (central) coordination group with certain autonomy. This change testifies the flexibility of the network in terms of structural position and related authority, and breaks the concentric structure which is assumed by the dependence theory outlined above. Finally, more structural changes are in the pipeline, as the network is willing to include a new collective actor, an advisory group, in order to bring new personalities and capabilities in the decision making process.

Power is, in my understanding, too fluid to be frozen by a centre-periphery approach, where it would be theoretically configured through a bi-dimensional structure, as a standard web, where it would be declining from centre to periphery. Instead, I believe the partners' are well aware that this 'weak ties' (paraphrasing Granovetter, 1973 and 1983) can be made strong only by keeping them equal. This does not mean that there is no power component in the partners' interactions. However, in order to give a figurative expression of power compatible with the standard web image, I suggest to add it as a third dimension, for example width, independent from the horizontal positions of actors' relationship in the network, but still a relational characteristic linked with their interaction. In fact, in MPA, the positions of authority of the actors have been fluctuating depending on personal status and involvement, charisma, temporary associations between actors, social capital. Moreover, it is important not to assume the network as self standing in a vacuum. Instead, I would conceive it as a social entity, situated in several overlapping external milieus. Institutional and informal linkages, for example interactions with external agencies and other governmental and not-governmental organizations, may influence the power of the respective actors in general, and affect network relations. Generally speaking, I would state that the social movement has been able till now to keep external factors at a lower influence through promoting commitment and performance as the factors of internal recognition.

From the point of view of decision making procedures, the leadership of the network has been based on non-hierarchical and consensus based rules. Authority has been conceived collectively since the beginning, and any relevant decision has to be taken in coordination

with all the main actors, as to say the coordination team and the respective organization leaders. Meetings at different levels and different frequency are the space for vocalizing priorities and concerns, as well as the source of strategic and tactical decisions, which is the way to ensure that the movement operates as one. From my point of view, this procedure has been effective in preventing schism in an heterogeneous entity comprising of several natural leaders and charismatic personalities, and allowed several problems to be faced as a group. However, at certain crucial pit-stops, I felt that the lack of a clear organizational hierarchy and the relevance given to consensus have been extremely time and energy consuming. At the same time, I have been often reflecting over positive externalities (for example, a sense of collective responsibility, the lack of internal alliances and fronts) that were given by the process itself and acquired relevance *per se*.

Linkages between nodes are, and enable, fluxes of resources. I wish to argue against views of dependence, which usually discuss about the benefits that accrue to the centrally located, with the implicit assumption that networks can be used to multiply their individual power. However, a resource dependence approach often ignores the exchange theory insight that the less powerful can seek alternative sources of resources (Cook, 1977 in Stevenson & Greenberg, 2008). For what MPA is concerned, the dependence of the partners in terms of resources is mainly due to a common accountability and image. On one side, member organizations do benefit from the social capital extended by the network as a whole, for example opportunities arising from its image and social relations. On the other hand, they have limitations because principles of coherence and commitment may prevent them to accept other funding opportunities.

As stated before, it would be narrow-mindedness to overlook the context of interactions in which the social movement is inserted. A group of actors that has been having a say in terms of resources is the group of International NGOs that, regardless of the effect of their power in terms of the social movement and its impact in the area, tried to gain from its experience and image. Development associates have been offered five time their salaries in order to bring their expertise and social capital in other organizations. Given the economic discrepancies between the two groups of actors, local NGOs are evidently not able to compete with international salaries, and are therefore unable to build continuity and expertise from a cadre of workers otherwise paid honestly in comparison with local standards. Organizations themselves were asked to get involved individually in disaster

management activities, so that the acceptance and experience earned collectively by the movement could be exploited without involving in a peer to peer partnership with the collective entity. The network itself, which works on a very narrow budget, becomes a difficult choice of motivation and commitment.

Research has shown that pre-existing networks provide a social resource to be used in establishing coalitions (Stevenson & Greenberg, 2008). However, as I am trying to demonstrate here, it has been acknowledged by various sources (Mosse, 2005; Bebbington, 2005) that INGO are often moved by and respond to agendas different to local ones, and through their power are able to threaten local efforts of development. In fact, research has also shown the ‘vulnerability of young agencies with relatively inexperienced staff to donor agency agendas despite attempts to realize progressive development strategies strongly rooted in local communities’ (Jellinek, 2003 in Bebbington, 2005). While recognizing that MPA has survived numerous unbalancing acts by external agencies, I would make mine Dichter’s request: ‘One can hope that the INGOs will eventually gain courage to come to terms yet again with the issue of development itself (1997:138 in Bebbington, 2005). However, till date the network has been a way to keep partners committed and accountable, and they have refrained from being subjected to money games, even if the social movement has been surviving on very narrow lines, bending its potentials, and enduring in a very uncertain future.

In conclusion, from my experience with MPA I understood structural positions as only partially revealing, subjected both to external factors and to the agency of the network and of the actors themselves. My point here has been to recognize that while network ties are not positive or negative *per se*, positions are not sufficient in revealing actions and potential for action, and the structure is not necessarily an issue of positions, given the fact that position as a principle can be sidelined by other principles which are the root of the movement. In my view, analyzing issues of power, of decision making procedures and of resources, provides powerful insights into the functioning of MPA, as potentially of any other network.

MPA AS A CAMPAIGN

MPA has been conceived as a network formally, while practically, on the ground, is a campaign. As a campaign, MPA was envisaged to keep the approach, the vibrant enthusiasm, the concreteness, with people’s pace. The campaign was considered the way to keep on

referring back to grassroots: the partners realized it was easy for a social movement organization to roll down in the project modality, and let distance to happen between their priorities and the people they work for. My goal here is to set up a dialogue between theoretical consideration and practical instances about participation, and finally to engage the discussion with the sensitive issue of change.

Apart from keeping the organization grounded, the campaign modality was conceived also as a way to involve people. Self reliance was immediately envisaged as a difficult goal to pursue. Projects often involve people in water management through institutions which are often only formal, where participation generally ranges from little to passive. When I heard the concern being vocalized by the leaders of the social movement, I establish a parallelism with the conceptual anthropological understanding on local institutions and typical 'water users associations'. Among many other contributors, Cleaver questions the idea of the 'need for clear and explicitly enforced systems of sanctions, and for clear boundaries of a resource-using group' (2000:370), while Mosse (2006) explicitly asserts that coordination in itself does not depend upon organization, as in the villages he studied organizations were avoided for fear of high transaction costs and the risk of conflict. Moreover, he claimed, where organizations were present, they were signals of failure.

It is easy to match the anthropological literature with the number of committees and water management rules that have been created in the past years, generally empty, formal and disregarded, but occasionally powerful and politically instrumental criteria for goods redistributions. Consequently, MPA campaign tries to overcome both extremes. The water committees that have been created are forum of discussion, and focal points for the dissemination of the campaign. There is little space for political manipulation, as they receive (minimal) responsibilities as maintaining the temporary rainwater harvesting shelter. Local water groups are a way to involve people, exactly as *yatras*, festivals, collective meetings and individual visits, trainings, and other activities of social mobilization that constitute the spinal cord of the campaigning modality of work, which do not attempt to create ties on the basis of benefits.

However, in theory, participation cannot be assumed as ensured by the modality of work, as means cannot assume the achievement of the goal. Participation, as a means or as an end, needs to be questioned in terms of whose participation and which type of participation (Cook & Kothari, 2001). In Woods' words, 'the established rural groups are fundamentally

hierarchical in nature, with a professionalized leadership representing and delivering to a largely passive membership' (Woods 2003:313). As a response, the campaign aims to reach out not only general communities, but every single individual in the areas of work, and to design activities which cannot be exploited nor considered unreachable.

Shifting again to theory, but avoiding yet another synthesis of the debate on the buzzword of community, I just wish to mention how, in general terms, in the era of development, community based programs often reinforce existing economic differentiations, distributing the benefits of the program over unquestioned inequalities (Guggenheim, 2003), and through 'a new mode of governmentality – (...) communities- in which integrated approaches to rural policy are encouraged at the local scale, and rural citizens are required to participate politically through identification with rural communities' (Woods, 2003:312). I would say that it is very common that rural elites are encouraged to participate through rhetoric of rural communities. MPA, as a reaction, tries not to reproduce (or fuel the reproduction of) patronage by dispensing benefits through rural elites, not to suppose identities in order to identify constituencies. However, it is important to recognize the effort of the campaign to avoid bounding participation to local scale: whatever the theory, I came to conclude that the campaign is *per se* able to spread its voice regardless of boundaries and conscious efforts. In Bihar, I have been encountering pockets of people using rainwater in an area far from specifically covered districts, but for informal family ties.

A delicate issue that I need to tackle while examining the campaign is the position of the same with regards to change. While for some commentators, the rise of new rural social movements reflects (or even produce) a shift in the power structure of rural society, that is not necessarily vested anymore with elites, for others, movements – and particularly movement organizations – end up doing reasonably well in facilitating access to benefits, but they fail to influence policy design, and their impact is unlikely to be fundamental. In my view, regardless of positive or negative hopes related to social movements, it is important to see the context as a mutating set of conditions, in which an organization needs to take a stand. Moreover, my understanding of social movement work is that they constitute one of the dynamic elements in processes towards progressive change, interpreting tendencies present in the society in the measure in which they are grounded in the reality. Finally, it should be considered that in working towards radical changes the focus on the process, instead on the impact, is what it counts the most.

In conclusion, the network and the campaign are two sides of the same coin, envisaged to, and working for, parallel exigencies and aims. Crafted to structure the decision making procedures and to interact with external powers, the network establishes a common accountability and keep the balance of the coalition. Embodying MPA's commitment against 'projects' modality' and willingness to keep the movement grounded, the campaign mode, instead, reflects MPA's strategy of self-reliance and mirrors its awareness over the lack of boundaries in social work. Describing a social movement requires a fluid conception of power and a dynamic understanding of social relations, which situate the movement in the external space and highlight the impact of external powers and agendas. MPA's choices have been informed by other concepts which have not been discussed in the previous pages: their considerations in the next pages hope to make the social movement, and its analysis, more intelligible.

MPA AS A CONCEPT

‘That is, social movements are
the progenitors of change
in the form and culture of the state,
and this is their main contribution
to chronic poverty reduction.’
(Bebbington, 2006:3)

After analyzing the structure of MPA and highlighting some salient features of the movement in the light of its dual form of a network and a campaign, my aim here is to understand MPA's work in terms of its concept and practice. I will consider this aspect from three points of view, (i) from the politics of MPA's conceptual stand, and the related issues of knowledge and knowledge transmission; (ii) from the question on how change in terms of knowledge and therefore power is operationalized; (iii) from examining the social movement's involvement in terms of the conceptual elaboration of the movement itself.

First of all, MPA entered in the social space with the overall goal to influence, at least to some extent, the way in which people approach common concerns, through the idea of broaching certain issues regarding water for drinking purposes. The social constructionist branch of social movement theory theorized that all social problems are socially constructed rather than being objective phenomena (Stevenson & Greenberg, 2008). While I do appreciate the conceptual effort of understanding the social-psychological processes that

occur before people agree on what constitutes a problem and what action should be taken to solve it, I would borrow from Goffman (1974 in Snow *et al.*, 2006) the idea of ‘the framing’ of the situation (or ‘frame alignment’), namely the creation of shared meaning among actors, has to take place in order for individuals to take collective action’ (Snow *et al.*, 2006). The framing of MPA surely involves the way in which water is conceptualized, which is not as a resource to be appropriated, nor as a need to be satisfied, and surely not as a right to be fulfilled by somebody else, but as an element of the natural and social context, everybody’s resource, everybody’s need, everybody’s right, individually and collectively. However, my question here is the following: Is the concept of water, in the way in which the campaign has conceptualized it, a political one?

My answer is affirmative. The way in which water has been considered by the social movement aims at challenging given structure of power/ institutions. In fact, the concept of collective management together with the individual possibility of accessing clean water, filtering, and storing it does shake at least three power practices. First, the dominant meaning of water as a benefit distributed by political leader to firm up their constituency; second, the ability of the powerful to socially exclude certain groups from the management of the resource; third, the capability of local centers of power (mainly politicians, ‘middle men’, caste based politics, certain initiatives of development) to instrumentalize activities and events for their own benefit. However, the campaign does not have direct impact on the assets which poor people control, or on the strength and the attitude to confront directly issue like unfair access to, and distribution of, the resource or its sources. In MPA’s conceptual stand and consequent practice of work, the potential lies in the processes of cultural politics surrounding collective management of common resources and common concerns. Therefore, MPA aims at initiating practices that undermine the way in which power relations affects water management. While water is a symbolic and a common property resource, need and right, and for these reasons is an excellent repository of power, rainwater gives an access to water that is power-free, in the sense that its material ‘right to use’ cannot be limited by an exercise of power.

Moreover, the overall scope of MPA can be defined as a political one, as it lies conceptually on governance, and on a social-psychological phenomenon that I would call ‘resourcefulness’. Only the secondary, or most specific, objectives regard enhancing knowledge on people’s health, environmental sensitivity, and government and development

policies. Through a counter-hegemonic approach and language, Carroll & Ratner's division of three analytically distinct tasks of social movements is helpful in understanding MPA's goals : (1) 'community building, in the sense of elaborating collective identities and ethical-political frameworks that are oppositional to dominant conceptions; (2) meeting needs of constituents in ways that empower them and prefigure alternative ways of life; and (3) mobilising and engaging in collective action to press for tangible changes in cultural discourses and social relations' (Carroll Ratner, 2001:605)

In principle, I do not necessarily espouse the distinction between 'affirmative' (reformist) or 'transformative' (radical) strategies of social change as definition of the horizons of a political project (Carroll & Ratner, 2001). Informed by MPA's case, I do think that it is possible to choose a political horizon in the form of an oppositional culture, even without the confrontation of a radical project. Interestingly, the path chosen by MPA has been to involve more than a 'collectively rational choice to mobilise resources and act on interests that are transparent to a subordinate group' (Inglesbee, 1994 in Carroll-Ratner, 2001), as the social movement does not have an outwardly oppositional character and looks for a win-win approach to conflicts. For what 'framing' is concerned, MPA, from my point of view, has chosen to involve people in collective practice that, involving new issues at a collective as well as at the individual level, cut across sectional interests and identities, and therefore avoid constructing discursive identities. However, the daunting challenge lies in maintaining, extending and elaborating the oppositional culture in efficient (and patient) ways.

There is another aspect of power that I am concerned of and I would like to examine with regards to the social movement, as to say power exercised through knowledge, or the conceptualization of knowledge in program design and implementation. As a consequence of the previous argument, my question shifts towards more specific ways in which water related knowledge is conceptualized and its effects on power. This concerns are reflected in the literature by several approaches, that look at a movement from its cultural content, norms, cultural understanding, instead of material interests and economic distribution, previously under the focus thanks to the Marxist social theory. An example of this attempt is provided by Scott (1990 in Snow *et al.*, 2006) who interprets the Greens as a moral crusade.

In fact, MPA intervention is not framed in terms of challenging policies and government intervention, but in terms of challenging knowledge and users. This movement gives legitimacy to a different knowledge approach to water, through which it aims at diffusing an

alternative developmental process, at changing relationship of management and cooperation regarding water, at giving a different meaning to self-reliance. The movement recognizes that inequities of communities often find their way through real or supposed traditional ways to manage natural resources and therefore do not foster unquestioned ideological traditional knowledge. MPA does not have any interest in sterile critiques of progress and modernization. Instead, it tries to look at contextual practices that, respecting history and symbols, can be contemporary significant and sustainable in providing clean water to individuals and in fostering people's equitable collectivity (Cortesi, 2009). The movement pushes for the new in the light of the context, not as progress *per se*, and recalls tradition and local knowledge in relation with the objectives of the campaign, not as tradition *per se*. For example, rainwater harvesting is an innovation in the area, scientific water testing is 'modernity and progress', while dug-wells, considered to be kept clean and under certain socio-political circumstances, are the epitome of the traditional. In order to do so, the movement relies on existing knowledge, but elaborates from progressive interpretations that enhance its equalitarian characteristics, for example, ensuring the absence of constraining ownership of dug well before is accomplished carefully before intervening for its revival.

However, how this effort towards bringing change in terms of knowledge, and therefore in terms of power, is operationalized in practice? While examining those aspects of water management initiatives, I will focus on the process, in line with a conceptual position outlined in the previous pages. The immediate aspect of the operationalizing tactics of MPA's strategy is flexibility in terms of water management. As asserted before, the campaign does not offer a set of standardized solutions, but ideas of practices which are cheap and simple, and, above all, changeable. Not only the technique are presented as offering space for innovation, but the campaign associates innovate and invite people to modify them instead of applying them as set and preconfigured. Ideas have been thrown back and forward, and substantial amounts of innovations have been registered in all the districts, in different activities, from rainwater harvesting to rainwater storage. However, while there are no rules to obey, there are guidelines, for example procedures to prevent water from stagnating and clean water to be stored in dirty containers.

The second aspect of the social movement's goal is pursued through the idea of 'constant dialogue', which hinder paternalism and prescriptive solutions. 'The persistence of broadly paternalist power structures directed deference and authority to larger farmers and business

owners as both employers and land owners, as well as to symbolic community leader such as clergy, doctors and teachers' (Woods, 2003:310). Thirdly, as already mentioned above, blueprint collective water management interventions generally try to ensure sustainability and equity by creating rules and institutional arrangements. Within the aim of promoting self-governance, MPA has considered detrimental to force rules and institutional arrangements upon groups or individuals, and dialogue and principle of equity and sustainability are preferred.

The following step of my analysis would be to understand whether the conceptual framework of the movement has determined the involvement of different categories of stakeholders. Participation, even if regarded in the process, is not only an issue of means, and cannot be considered as originating only from the structure of the movement, as mentioned before. Forsyth mentions how 'unlike 'old' social movements, which were based on industrial class divisions and their material interests, environmentalism and other 'new' social movements have claimed to transcend old class divisions, even if activists themselves tended to be middle class or highly educated'. However, Forsyth continues, authors have suggested that social movements may not be so socially inclusive, questioning that different social classes can participate equally in social movements. 'In other words, environmentalism may sometimes be portrayed as an 'environmentalism of the poor,' but it is not always clear if the poor have defined what it means to be environmental'. (Forsyth, 2007: 2127).

There are a few considerations that are significant to be made on MPA in this regard. First, MPA's efforts are towards addressing the concerns of a general disadvantaged population, with sensitivity for further discriminations. Fieldworkers visit each hamlet, household after household. In fact rainwater harvesting itself is the possibility to which everybody can rely upon for accessing safe water during the worst emergency. Lack of drinking water and vulnerability to floods are incrementally proportionate with poverty, but thankfully rainwater does not fall on richer settlements more the poorer, contrary to many types of airdropped packages and group-based benefits. Second, NO resources are distributed by the campaign, in order to prevent appropriation on the basis of power. Third, mobilization is not 'consensus mobilization' (Giugni *et al.*, 1999) over a certain set of agreed problems and solution. As expressed before, MPA tries to provoke structural and cultural changes by influencing people's attitudes and behaviours, and does so by stimulating dialogue over certain issues. At the roots of this, the idea that the social movement aims at the formation

of more encompassing and inclusive visions that might ‘unite oppositional groups within a counter-hegemonic unity-in-diversity’, instead of expanding ‘sectarian interests (that) may confer temporary legitimation on new collective identities, or new claims to material resources for targeted groups, but (..) are subject to ‘backlash’ (so that) the reactionary interventions of counter-movements, as long as structural bases for inequities, remain intact’ (Carroll & Ratner, 2001:606).

However, in my opinion, MPA could still work on a different development of this very idea, which I would word as such: it is relevant to be aware of the fact that the social base of a movement may have a range of concerns all of which the movement cannot address, and some of which its leadership and intellectuals may not even perceive. On this, MPA, like many other social movement, needs to be particularly attentive in the future. In addition, keeping in mind that, in development, problems and concerns do not only reflect, directly or indirectly, the agenda of particular socio-economic classes, but also external agents’ ones, the social movement should take the risk of becoming a center of capacities, a structure of common accountability, a force to reckon with, that not only addresses the power relations on the ground, but is also able to pin the agenda of external agents down to the ground.

The social movement has therefore a role in terms of change, not only in power relations, as it has been specified in the previous chapters, but also from a conceptual point of view, (i) promoting an oppositional culture of water, oppositional both in terms of power and knowledge, in terms of content but mostly in terms of process; (ii) operationalizing its tactics in terms of knowledge and related power, (iii) evaluating its impact of conceptual stand in terms of participation, and of participation on its conceptual stands.

CONCLUSION

Drinking water in a water scarcity context is a challenge, particularly when water scarcity is due to the water abundance of floods. Floods happens in, and because, a specific socio-environmental and political landscape, as in North Bihar. MPA, the social movement this paper focuses on, is not just about water in flood affected areas. It is about re-orienting people towards themselves, working on their resourcefulness and self –reliance. The goal is to make visible another type of development, acknowledging and working on the power and knowledge through which drinking water is accessed, understood, distributed, and

experienced. This subtle and ideologically diffuse motivation dilutes the typical idea of measurable political changes, and shifts light on the process of the intervention itself.

In its development, this paper has been discussing about MPA, addressed as a social movement, and examined as follows: (i) its context, mainly from the socio-political point of view of development interventions, in which the social movement has been raising; (ii) its consequent historical trajectory, originating against specific considerations; (iii) its nature, in terms of shared identity, fostered ideology and grounding, degree of structural organization and motivation behind it, change desiderata; (iv) its dual structure, both as a network (with nodes, linkages, structural positions, power, decisions making mechanism, resources, context) and as a campaign (people involvement, institution, participation, community, change); (v) the conceptual features of the social movements, in terms of the political conceptualization of problems, overall goal, strategy, objectives, knowledge-based challenges, operationalizations of tactics.

However, normative plans for action, de-constructivist approaches, and impact evaluations have been sidelined in this paper, as they would have been unjustified by the authorship and hazardous in terms of the outlook deployed. In fact, any of those three approaches should pass from an understanding of the effects of the particular modality of the intervention. Social movement is an empty box, which has been filled by MPA's ethnographic case. Its ideology and political objectives are consciously recognized, together with the conceptual stands embodied in goals, strategies, tactics, structures, procedures. Conceptual features have been considered as interdependent and mutually constituting, and have been looked at from different points of view. This paper is an insight gained through a long term involvement and an anthropological outlook, and is inspired by reasoned faith on the necessity of the social sciences' involvement in social development.

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Chapter 6

Social Movement against Industrial Water Pollution: A Study Of “Bhavani River Protection Joint Council”, Tamil Nadu

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Introduction

In the mid-1980s, opposition emerged in the Bhavani basin to perceived industrial pollution caused by South India Viscose. From this emerged, a larger movement under the banner of the Bhavani River Protection Council aimed at preventing industrial pollution of the Bhavani River. What set this movement apart from many other social movements around water was that it focused primarily on water quality issues as opposed to on issues of decentralization and water distribution (see other case studies).

This chapter examines the emergence of this social movement, the establishment of the Bhavani River Protection Council, the ultimate shutting down of South India Viscose and subsequent developments with regard to the wider movement around water quality in the river basin. In particular, it narrates how deteriorating water quality in the basin resulted in a number of concerned citizens responding under the aegis of the Bhavani River Protection Council, the main actors involved, the strategies adopted by the Council to raise awareness and challenge environmentally-unfriendly industrialization and the wider impacts of the movement on water policy in the region. In the process of doing so, it also tried to engage with a number of questions that are central to the social movement literature: (1) the role of the social movement organization vis-à-vis the social movement, (2) the philosophical underpinnings of the movement. (3) the particular strategies the movement employed and (3) the impact of the movement.

The chapter is divided into four main parts. In Section 2, a brief profile of the Bhavani river is given highlighting the multiple and sometimes competing demands for water. Section 3

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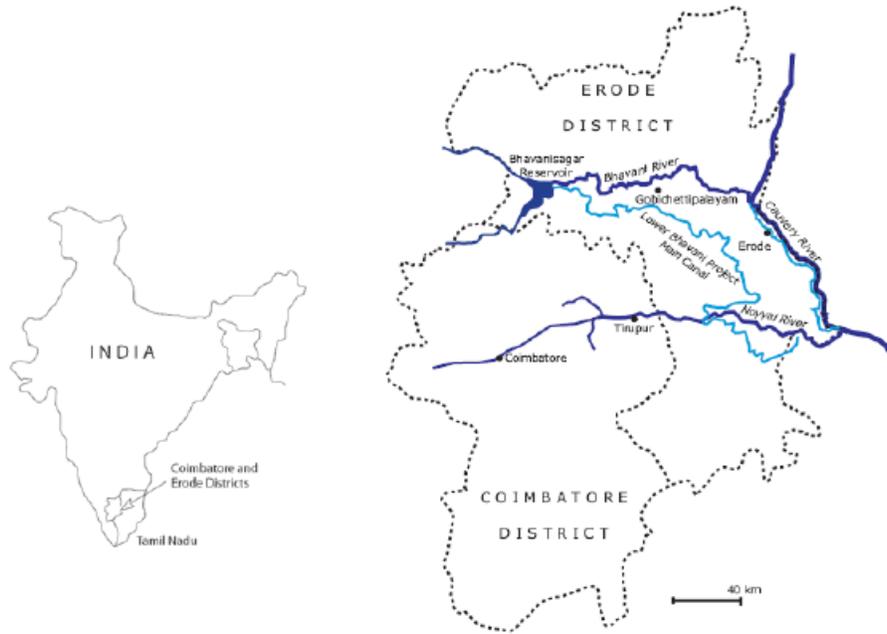
looks at the issue of industrial growth and pollution, how SIV contributed significantly to this and the emergence of the Bhavani River Protection Council. Section 4 examines the organizational character of the Council and the strategies adopted by it while Section 5 examines the broad-ranging impact the movement has had in terms of policy.

Bhavani River Basin: Competing Water Needs and Conflicts

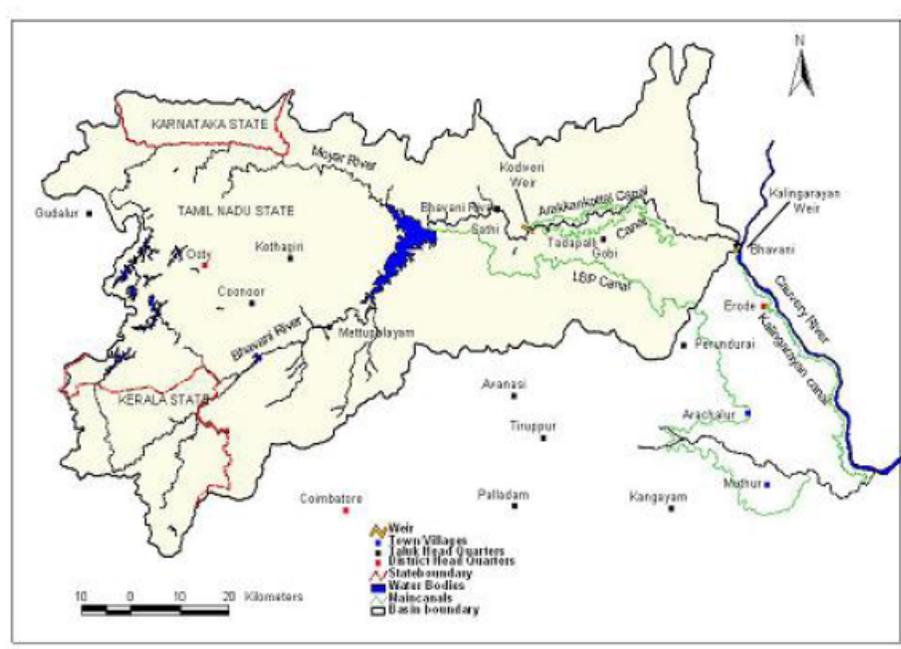
The Bhavani River, the major tributary of the Cauvery River, which originates from the Western Ghats in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu and flows through Coimbatore and Erode districts before joining the Cauvery (see Map 1)⁴², has been a major source of water for hundreds of years. In the pre-British period, local kings constructed two *anaicuts* or water diversion systems. The first one was constructed just above the confluence of the Bhavani with the Cauvery in 1253 A.D. and was completed in 1263 A.D. It commanded an area of about 7,300 ha and was 90 km long and primarily aimed at feeding the Kalingarayan canal. The second one was the Kodiveri *anaicut*, constructed during the regime of Hindu Kings of Mysore in the 17th century. It diverted water of the river along two canals – the Arakankottai (54.4 km.) and the Thadapalli (144 km.) irrigating about 9,900 ha. (Department of Water & Environmental Studies et.al, 2006).

⁴² The Bhavani Basin is 6,154 sq kms.

Map – 1: Location Map



The Bhavani River Basin, Tamilnadu



Bhavani water for agriculture (i.e irrigation) continued to be the major focus of state policy after independence. While there were pockets of intensive cropping and plantation in the upper catchment of the Bhavani, the major focus of irrigation development took place in the Lower Bhavani.⁴³ During the post-independence period (1948-56) a large stone masonry and earthen dam was constructed at the confluence of Bhavani and Moyyar rivers to extend irrigation in the basin. It was known as the Lower Bhavani Project (LBP) and also as the 'new system'. While the LBP was originally meant to provide about 870 mcm of water a year to 81,000 ha for growing relatively less water intensive crops like cotton, groundnut and millet, farmers gradually shifted to wet crops like paddy (Appasamy, 2004). The Lower Bhavani River Basin now includes the areas irrigated by the Lower Bhavani Project (LBP) Canal and three other canals of the old system viz., Thadapalli, Arakankottai and Kalingarayan canals.

Apart from the above mentioned irrigation projects, a huge quantity of water is pumped by farmers from the river and/or shallow wells, (particularly in the upstream part of Bhavanisagar) and the canals for irrigation. Historically, wells in the basin were widely used for irrigation purposes. During the last 50 years the number of wells increased substantially and at present there are some 51,266 wells in the basin, irrigating a net area of 45,554 ha (MIDS, 1998). In brief, along with surface water groundwater extraction in the basin is substantial.

The Bhavani River has also been the source of water for a number of other purposes. Hydropower development in the basin started during British times in the Upper Bhavani with the construction of Katteri Diversion Weir (1930), Glenmorgan (1930), Pykara (1935) and Mukuruthy (1938) reservoirs. However, the major construction period of hydropower dams was the post-independence period, particularly during the 1960s. Today the total power generation in the basin is estimated to be more than 640 MW (Department of Water & Environmental Studies et.al, 2006), 35 per cent of total installed hydropower generation in Tamil Nadu.

⁴³ For the convenient the Bhavani river basin is broadly divided in to two parts: the Lower Bhavani and Upper Bhavani. Lower Bhavani is the area comes under Bhavani sager reservoir in the plains which consists entire Mettupalayam and part of Avanashi and Palladam Taluks in Coimbatore district; and Sathyamangalam, Gobichettipalayam Taluks and part of Perundurai and Bhavani Taluks in Erode districts. The Upper Bhavani is the catchments of the Bhavani river at Nilgiri district.

Domestic water supply needs also exist both from within the basin and outside. Total drinking water extractions are 166 Mm³ per year (455 mld), with 132 Mm³/y in the Upper Bhavani and 34 Mm³/y in the Lower Bhavani. Much of this is a result of increased demand from urban areas in the Noyyal Basin. The inter-basin transfers from the Upper Bhavani to Coimbatore (second biggest city in Tamil Nadu with more than 1 million inhabitants) and Tiruppur (a major textile industrial centre in Southern India with more than 500,000 inhabitants) cities is about 110 Mm³ per year (300 mld). There are two major drinking water reservoirs in the Upper Bhavani. The first is the Siruvani Reservoir (initiated in 1940 and remodeled in 1984) where 37.5 Mm³ / year water is diverted to Coimbatore. The second one is the Pillur Dam which has a total storage of 44.4 Mm³ and a combined use for power generation. This dam was constructed in 1967 and is supplying 47.9 Mm³/year water to Coimbatore. Coimbatore city receives 84 Mm³/y water from Siruvani and Pillur reservoirs and Tiruppur city gets 19.2 Mm³/y from just upstream of Mettupalayam (Department of Water & Environmental Studies et.al, 2006).⁴⁴

Fisheries also play a key role in this area. The Tamil Nadu Fisheries Development Corporation has had fishing control rights in the Bhavani Sagar Reservoir since the dam construction. Both capture and cultural fisheries are being done in the reservoir. Fishing is also taking place in the minor reservoirs, river and canals. Kodiveri, Gunderipallam, Varathupallam, Odathurai and Perupallam reservoirs are the major fishing spots besides for the Bhavanisagar (MIDS, 1998). Fishing also takes place along the Bhavani river and LBP and Kodiveri canal systems.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Apart from the above discussed major water supply schemes to Noyyal basin, there are number of smaller water supply schemes are designed by TWAD Board and maintained by local bodies. There are 14 such schemes include the water supply schemes for Ooty, Coonnur and Mettupalayam municipalities at Upper Bhavani. 9 water schemes are in between Pillur and Bhavanisagar reservoir maintained by local bodies, supplying 39.18 mld water. There are 24 water supply schemes in between Bhavani Sager Reservoir and Bhavani town, (include the water supply for Bhavanisager, Sathyamangalam, Gobichettipalayam and Bhavani municipalities), which supply 63.34 mld of water. Out of the 24 schemes, 18 (40.04 mld) are maintained by TWAD Board and 6 (23.20 mld) by local bodies (MSE, 2006). Existing water supply schemes for municipalities were set up during the 1960s, for town Panchayats 1966-1987 and for village Panchayats during the 1990s.

⁴⁵ Bhavani Sager is the second largest reservoir in Tamil Nadu with a water-spread area of 7720 ha. (30.41 sq.miles). It is observed that the quantity of catch for the un-stocked / natural fish variety has declined substantially in recent period. The annual average catch was 153 tonnes during the period of 1993-94 to 1995-96. But it has declined to 48 tonnes during the period of 1996-97 to 2001-02. The resent data

Finally, Bhavani water has been important for industries both in the Upper and Lower Bhavani. In the upstream part of the basin in the Nilgiris around 10 industrial units are currently extracting around 15 mld of water from the river (Sundaresan, 1993). In the Lower Bhavani region industrial water extraction was at one point as high as 86.4 mld, (Nelliyat, 2002). In the Metupalayam area 10 units are consuming 10.2 mld of water. Moreover, downstream of the dam two large sugar mills and a number of medium and small units are located that extract water either from the river or from the aquifer.⁴⁶

These competing needs have resulted in conflicts both across sectors and within sectors. According to Appasamy (2004), since the water users in the Bhavani are very high there are substantial conflicts among the users. In the agricultural sector alone conflicts emerged between basin farmers and delta farmers, farmers in the old system and farmers in the LBP system, farmers in the different segment of the LBP system, and farmers in the command areas of the system and those who pump water from the river and the canals. The emergence of competing demand for water by different sectors, particularly industry and the domestic sectors in the Coimbatore and Tiruppur region, has been caused by the diversion of water from the Bhavani basin to the Noyyal basin. Besides the domestic and industrial demand in the Bhavani basin has also increased substantially. The diversion of water to meet the demands of domestic use and industrial needs has created consequential damage to the ecology and environment. (Saravanan and Appasamy, 1999; Saravanan 2007; Blomqvist 1996). The diversion of water for domestic and industrial purposes has also adversely affected the water availability to agriculture in the basin. On many occasions farmers objected to industrial water extraction and power generation in the upstream. The fishermen in the basin have also raised grievances against pollution in the river and reservoirs since it has adversely affected their fishing activities.

This paper focuses on the conflict that has emerged as a result of industrialization and more specifically on the movement that has emerged against industrial pollution. It is important to point out that the problem of industrial pollution besets only the Lower Bhavani. Although

(particularly the period after the complete closure of SIV) showed an increase in catch with an annual average of 61 tonnes.

⁴⁶ It should also be noted that the Bhavani Basin also serves other ecological functions. Since Bhavani is a perennial river it disserved rich biodiversity. The forest ecosystems in the upper catchments of the river are fames for many flora and fauna (Sundaresan, 1993, MIDS, 1998). The aquatic biodiversity of the river and the reservoir was appreciable but under the threat of pollution due to anthropogenic reasons (Sundaresan, 1993, MIDS, 1998 and Natarajan, 1998),

there are 10 major industries in the upper catchment with a daily consumption of 15 million litres⁴⁷, the evidence suggests that industry has not affected the water quality of the river. The Central Water Commission's (CWC) observation (monitoring station) at Nellithurai, upstream catchment, is that there are no serious water quality problems. The same is true of their evidence from Thengumarahada on the Moyar river. The only apparent problem is the relatively high levels of nitrate and chloride at Thengumarahada as compared to at Nellithurai station. The nitrate level could be due to the fertilisers used in the tea plantations. Based on existing evidence, the situation was different in the Lower Bhavani Basin. Nelliya (2002) estimated the pollution load discharged by the industries (including SIV) in Bhavani river basin based on 1996-97 data. The study showed that the nine industries in Mettupalayam area including SIV discharged 994 kg/day of TSS, 64550 kg/day of TDS, 4463 kg/day of chloride, 85kg/day of oil and grease (85 kg/day), 172 kg/day of BOD and 2152 kg/day of COD.

In this pollution load SIVs contribution was more than 90 per cent. This not only suggests that pollution loads were high but that perceived problems of industrial pollution were real. A number of studies also highlighted that the Bhavani is already 'closing' and 'stressed' (Palanisamy, 2003; Rajagopal et.al, 2005; Department of Water & Environmental Studies et.al, 2006). This suggests *post facto* why a movement against industrial pollution might have emerged. The next section focuses specifically on the pollution caused by SIV.

⁴⁷ In Bhavani river basin water intensive industrial units has been emerged early 1950s. The study done by Sundhresan (1993) indicated that at Nilgris districts 9 industrial units include: Hindustan Photo films Manufacturing co. (film), Hindustan Photo films Manufacturing co. (X – ray film), Rallies India limited Chemicals, Nestle India Limited - Tea, Cordite factory (Ammunition), Pomds India limited (Perfumes), Needle Industries, The Nilgries Dt. Co-op. Milk Products, and Manjushree Plantation Limited (coffee) discharge 15.38 mld of waste water in to the river.

Industrialization, SIV and Pollution Issues in the Lower Bhavani River Basin:

Growth of water consuming industries in the Lower Bhavani River Basin started with the establishment of United Bleachers in 1953. Subsequently Indio-Swiss Synthetic Gem Manufacturing Co Limited (1957), and South India Viscose (SIV) (1960) were also established. All these industries were located in Mettupalayam Taluk, the upper part of the Lower Bhavani Basin. Details of industrial growth in the Lower Bhavani River Basin (taluk wise) are given in Table 1. As can be seen only three major industries were established during the 1950s and two in the 1960s. The bulk of industries were established thereafter, the maximum (16) in the 1990s mostly in Mettupalayam Taluk.

Table 1
Growth of Major Water Intensive Industrial Units in Bhavani River Basin

S. No	Taluk	Decade					Total
		1951-60	1961-70	1971-80	1981-90	1991-00	
1	Mettupalayam	3	-	1	-	8	12
2	Sathyamangalam	-	1	1	3	4	9
3	Gobichettipalayam	-	-	-	1	3	4
4	Avenashi	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	Palladam	-	-	-	2	1	3
6	Perundurai	-	-	2	1	-	
7	Bhavani	-	1	2	1	-	3
	Total	3	2	6	8	16	4
	Cumulative	3	5	11	19	35	35

Source: MIDS 1998, Nelliya 2002.

The total water consumption by the 35 large industries was estimated at 85 mld and the effluent they discharged into the river at 64.6 mld – 76 per cent of the total water consumption - (MIDS 1998, Nelliya 2002). Based on TNPCB data, the daily discharged load was as follows: 5286 kg of TSS, 103276 kg. Of TDS, 18914 kg. of Cl, 175.5 kg. of Oil and Grease, 10229 kg. of BOD and 88232 kg. of COD (MIDS 1998).

Apart from the major water consuming industries 222 small units (majority of them are small textile bleaching/dyeing units, tanneries or chemical units) are located in the different parts of the basin. A majority of these units were established during the 1980s and 1990s. These units together consume 1.64 mld of water, both surface and groundwater. Near the confluence of the Bhavani with the Cauvery (near the town of Bhavani) and along the Kalingarayan channel, there are 66 small bleaching and dyeing units and 62 tanneries. They draw water from the river/canal and discharge their effluents back either directly or indirectly into drains and gutters (Appasamy, 2004).

Besides for industries, urban residents pollute water sources in the form of domestic sewage and farmers in the form of agricultural waste. Five municipalities and a number of town and village panchayats draw water for domestic uses from the river, and discharge an equivalent amount of untreated wastewater (sewage) into the basin.⁴⁸ In the irrigated areas of the basin, farmers use substantial quantities of agro-chemicals (fertilizers and pesticides). The excess quantity leaches into the groundwater.⁴⁹

SIV Industry: Production and Pollution

SIV Industries was established in 1962 in Sirumugai village upstream of the Bhavanisagar reservoir around 50 kms away from Coimbatore. SIV Industries was a multi-project private sector undertaking. It manufactured a variety of products like rayon grade wood pulp, viscose staple fibre (VSF) and rayon filament yarn along with important auxiliaries like sulphuric acid and carbon-di-sulphide.

⁴⁸ Mettupalayam, Bhavani Sager, Sathyamangalam, Gobichettipalayam, and Bhavani are the 5 Municipalities located in Bhavani River Basin. All these Municipalities are extracting their water requirement (19.9 mld) from the Bhavani river. The total quantity of sewage generated by these Municipalities is 16.3 mld. None of these municipalities have any sewage treatment facilities. Since all these municipalities are located at the bank of Bhavani most of the sewage drains into the river. Hence the possibilities of contaminating the river water are high. The annual pollution load generated by all the 5 Municipalities together would come to 9,745 tonnes of TDS, 8546 tonnes of TSS, 1843 tonnes of BOD, 3140 tonnes of COD, 3223 tonnes of chloride, 124 tonnes of sulphate and 478 tonnes of total nitrate. Besides the municipalities a large number of Town Panchayats and Village Panchayats also generate sewage in the Bhavani river basin and might contribute to non-point source pollution.

⁴⁹ An earlier micro level study of 30 farmers in three villages in the Bhavani basin show that farmers apply high nitrogenous fertilisers over and above the recommended level, the fertiliser use efficiency is quite low (30 per cent for Paddy), resulting in substantial loss of fertilisers (other agricultural chemicals like pesticides) in the environment, which either ends up in groundwater through leaching or in the atmosphere through volatilization. In the Bhavani River Basin about 80 per cent of rice and groundnut growing farms use excessive high nitrogenous fertilizers (MSE, 2005).

A reserve forest is located at a distance of about 3 Km to the NW of the factory site. The river Bhavani flows at a distance of about 750 m to the west of the site. Eucalyptus wood was the principal raw material for the manufacture of the rayon grade wood pulp. A major portion of the wood required was obtained from forests located in the Nilgiris, Annamalai and Kodai hills and also imported. Wood pulp, carbon-di-sulphide acid were the raw materials for the production of VSF and rayon (Centre for Water Resources, 1998).

The mill had an installed capacity to produce 60,000 metric tones (MT) of pulp, 7500 MT of rayon and 39,000 MT of viscose staple fibres (VSF). It was permitted to withdraw 59 m³/day of water from the Bhavani River and discharge 41m³/day in the form of treated effluent (Department of Water and Environmental Studies et al., 2006). Over the years a number of joint ventures led to an increase in pulp production from 42000 tonnes to 50000 tonnes and a daily increase from the VSF plant from 30 tonnes to 50 tonnes. Furthermore the production capacity of filament yarn also increased in 1991 and the pulp plant was modernized in 1992. In 1995, further modernization took place and finally an oxygen activated sludge plant was installed with technical support from Lind Germany.

Table 2: Basic Raw materials Used by the SIV

S.No	Raw Materials	Principle use in the production	Quantity (T / Day)
1	Wood	Produce wood pulp	430
2	Sulphur	Produce sulphuric acid, carbon di sulphide and calcium bi sulphite	80
3	Caustic Soda	Produce viscose and in pulp bleaching	44
4	Limestone	Produce calcium bi-sulphite	26
5	Charcolal	Produce carbon di sulphate	5
6	Alum	Treat effluent water	15
7	Limesludge	Treat effluent	45
8	Chlorine	Bleaching agent	5
9	Zinc	Produce rayon yarn and staple fibre	0.42
10	Sulphuric Acid	Produce rayon yarn and staple fibre	58
11	Carbondisulphide	Produce viscise	6
12	Hydrochloric acid	Bleaching	0.33
13	Sodium Carbonate	Bleaching	0.56

Source: Department of Environmental Science, -----.

The problem of pollution became an issue in the early 1980s. In 1982, following objections by ecologists and environmental protection agencies, the management of SIV installed a Rs.

3 crore lagoon biological treatment plant to meet the norms prescribed by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board so as to bring down the BOD and COD level. But the effluent continued to contain chemical contaminants which were far higher than the permissible limit; hence serious damage occurred to different water user sectors. During 1995 the company decided to expand the treatment plants in proportion to the company expansion. The same year the company modernized the effluent treatment plant located close to the Bhavani river. It was claimed that this investment would result in reducing utilization of water for effluent treatment (Business Line, 1994). The company authority expressed that the ETP had the latest technical know-how and would soon solve the effluent problem (Express News Services). In early 1996 SIV installed/modified the effluent treatment plants (cost of 50 crore) in collaboration with the cost of operating the new ETP would be Rs. 4 lakhs per day (Hindu, 1996).

The effluents from the three plants were combined and the total effluent was treated to remove the pollutants present in the effluent, primarily acidity, suspended solids, BOD, COD and zinc (Centre for Water Resources, 1998). The treatment process comprised primary treatment with physical and chemical methods and secondary treatment with biological methods. However, despite upgradation of technology the technology used by the mill was obsolete and was not able to meet the effluent standards of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB). The effluent from the pulp plant was coloured since it contained lignin, and hence was easily observable by the public.

The Environment Impact Assessment Committee of the Union Ministry of Environment reported high BOD at Bhavani River at Sirumugai due to discharge of chemicals / effluents by the factory and reported that this effluent was harmful to fish and other aquatic organisms (Indian Express, 1995a). According to the Centre for Water Resources' (1998) study (water sample analysis from 1992 to 1997), the river water quality in terms of electrical conductivity (EC) was within acceptable limits upstream of the SIV factory, but below the factory there was a sudden increase in the EC of the river. The impacts of the effluents were noticeable up to a distance of 20 km downstream. Some effluents such as the tannin and lignin, which imparts color, were detectable even at Kodiveri anicut. Below the Bhavani Sagar dam, the quality of water was okay due probably to dilution.

Bhavani River Protection Joint Council: As a Social Movement

In the early 1990s, water pollution in its multiple forms became an issue and a major public concern. Leading NGOs in Tamil Nadu, like the Tamil Nadu Green Movement and INTACH, took up the issue and started to associate with various regional NGOs and other stakeholders in the Bhavani Basin. Many meetings were conducted under the auspices of the Tamil Nadu Green Movement and INTACH. Ironically, during this period SIV also expanded its activities resulting in further concern of the public.

As a result, the Bhavani River Protection Joint Council (BRPJC) was formed on the 24th February, 1995. This registered NGO consisted of a 21 member governing body including 7 executive members and 14 other members. The 7 executive members included a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Asst. Secretary, Treasurer and 2 Co-ordinators. The council office functioned at the residence of the President. Most of the council members were well-known personalities of the region and well-qualified too.

The BRPJC designed 15 fundamental objectives or aims (Appendix 1) with the prime purpose of protecting the river from pollution and maintain its multi-functionality (services) for preserving the livelihood of the people, particularly the poor farmers in the basin. The council has conducted 52 formal meetings (meetings with minutes) and designed its various plans of action according to its periodical priorities. The brief summary of the meeting is in Appendix 2. The council at the very beginning made it clear that it would remain aloof from party politics

The initial focus of the BRPJC was SIV as it was deemed the major polluter. Many strategies were employed to oppose SIV including:

- Awareness programmes among the stakeholders about the severity of SIV pollution.
- Mobilization of the public and agitation against industrial pollution.
- Pressurizing the government, particularly the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, to strengthen enforcement.
- Legal action at the High Court and Supreme Court.
- Mass coverage in the press about pollution
- Wider joint action with other NGOs.
- Urging expert committees to look into the issue of pollution in the Bhavani.

Awareness programme among the stakeholders on the severity of SIV pollution

The Bhavani River Protection Joint Council organized many awareness campaigns/programmes in various part of the basin to disseminate information about SIV's pollution of the basin and the need to protect the basin. Awareness programmes of the council were targeted at various groups of society: school and college students, urban residents and farmers. After the formation of the council, a weeklong environmental awareness programme was arranged each year on World Environment Day which included several activities such as essay competitions, quiz programmes, drawing competitions, etc.), mainly aimed at students. Moreover, many programmes were targeted at schools teachers as well. In villages awareness programmes were conducted through camps, processions and meetings. The council distributed notices with a message aimed at highlighting the urgency of protecting the Bhavani.

Some of the major events organized were: (a) An awareness rally at Gopichettyalayam on 5th August 1993 where 6000 people participated, (b) An awareness camp, exhibition and environmental quiz for school children on the 7th August 1993 in which 600 children participated, (c) An awareness camp at Satyamangalam where different group of children participated, (d) An awareness meeting with various other local organizations at Satyamangalam on 10th April 1994, (e) A public meeting at Erode to create awareness against pollution on 21st July, 1994, (f) An awareness camp at Saundapur village on the bank of the Bhavani on October, 1994.

In fact all the above programs were organized before the formation or registration of Bhavani River Protection Joint Council (BRPJC) as an NGO on 24th February, 1995. According to a pioneer member of the BRPJC “even before the registration of the council many people, who later became members of the council, actively participated against the SIV pollution issues under the leadership of the present president of the council”.

Mobilization and agitation

The Bhavani River Protection Joint Council organized many agitations with public support against SIV industrial pollution at various stages of its continual fight against SIV. The first major agitation organized by the council was a one-day fasting strike in front of SIV on 7th May 1995. Around 5000 people, including women and children, from different parts of the basin participated. This symbolic hunger strike had an immediate impact at policy level.

The TNPCB asked SIV to close the pulp unit until they could manage the pollution. The TNPCB also gave instructions to the Electricity Board and PWD to disconnect electricity and water supply respectively. In response to the TNPCB's action the company was closed for one day and subsequently approached the Madras High Court and obtained a stay order. In February 1996, a mass petition drive was organized aimed at getting the Supreme Court to act. Around 10,000 individual petitions were submitted through post cards which requested the Court to take immediate action against pollution. The petitioners included school students and the public at large from the Bhavani basin. Subsequently the council collected another 1 lakh signatures and submitted it to the government aimed at getting the government to take immediate action to address the pollution problem in the Bhavani.

The council conducted many processions and rallies against SIV pollution in the basin. In all these programmes, apart from the mass public one (including students, women and children) a number of NGOs and farmers association representatives (including the Kalingarayan Agriculture Association, Kodiveri Farmers Association, Erode Environmental Association, LBP Farmers Association, etc) were also actively involved. During March 1996 a major '*Kalnada Jatha*' was conducted from Kuduthurai (where Bhavani joins the Cauvery) to Sirumugai (SIV location). In all the villages, where the '*Jatha*' passed through, public meetings were organized. The *Jatha* terminated with a big public meeting at Sirumugai

From the 7th to 9th April, 1996 the Council conducted a van procession from Sangamam to Sargar to Sirumugai with the collaboration of Tamil Nadu Green Movement, Lower Bhavani Farmers Association and Kelingarayan Canal Association. The van procession had night halts at Kallipatti, Salliyur, Sirumugai where major public meetings were organized.

Another major agitation that the council initiated against SIV was on October 1999, when the industry proposed to irrigate Chettipalayam and Irrumbarai villages with effluent from its plant. The council mobilized all the villages and initiated a big agitation against the project. The mobilization resulted in the civil work for the effluent project being stopped..

Pressure on the Government and TNPCB

The council acted as a pressure group against SIV and the pollution it caused in order to urge the government to take action. Since the TNPCB is the nodal agency responsible for enforcing pollution control norms, the council put pressure on it at the regional and state level. In May 1995, the council demanded a joint monitoring system on pollution issues through a monitoring committee comprising TNPCB, CPCB and BRPJC.

In SIV's case the Board took reasonably appropriate, effective and impartial action (which normally does not happen when industries call pollution and violate effluent discharge standards), primarily due to the constant pressure exerted on it by BRPJC. Pressure was put on TNPCB through a petition submitted to the District Collector, Chief Minister, Environment Minister, Public Works Department, elected representatives of parliament and the assembly – all of which had an impact politically. The Petition Committee of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly headed by an MLA visited SIV and evaluated the situation (Indian Express, 1995a).

Legal Strategy

The Bhavani River Protection Joint Council, as mentioned above, originally sent representations to the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, the District Collector and other Government agencies. These representations exerted pressure on the TNPCB, resulting in the passing of the order dated 9.5.1995 for closure of the pulp plant of SIV and stoppage of water supply and electricity. Against the said order dated 9.5.1995, SIV filed W.P No. 7142/1995 in the High Court of Madras seeking the quashing of the order. SIV obtained an interim stay on the above mentioned order.

As a result, the Bhavani River Protection Joint Council filed an application, W.M.P. No 12226/1995, praying to implead W.P. No.7142/1995, and to highlight the gravity of the pollution to the courts. SIV vehemently opposed the said impleeding application and tried to prevent the federation to implead it. The SIV National Workers Union affiliated to INTUC also filed W.M.P.No. 11843/1995 challenging the write filed by the Council.

The concerned judge through his order dated 28.9.1995 pertaining to W.P.No7142/1995 allowed SIV's petition challenging the move by TNPCB. The TNPCB order was quashed on the ground that the petitioner industry had taken 'sufficient and bonafide steps to reduce the

pollution and that the TNPCB failed to consider the explanation and the proposals submitted by SIV⁷.

Media Coverage

The council made sure that its activities were covered by the media. All their activities appeared in national dailies like The Hindu and the Indian Express and state vernacular papers such as Dinamani and Dinathandi. The major programmes of the council were also covered by the leading news channels in the state. The council made special video recordings of their major events (hunger strikes in front of SIV, van procession, water quality variation in the river and the impact on agriculture, fish mortality in the reservoir and river etc.) and showed them in the form of documentaries at public meetings.

Moreover, council members participated in many environmental conferences or seminars at regional/national/international level where they discussed pollution issues related to the Bhavani. One example of the Council's high profile is the invitation one of its members got to present a paper at a conference in the U.S. on environmental movement in rural areas. In other words, the council obtained a high profile status.

Coalitions with other NGOs

One of the major objectives of the council was to assist, support and work in collaboration with the other organizations having a similar ideology. In various occasions the Bhavani River Protection Joint Council sought support from parallel NGOs who were working on water pollution issues. From the Bhavani river basin itself the council obtained constant support from the Kaligarayan Agriculture Association, the Kodivari Farmers Association, the Erode Environmental Association and the LBP Farmers Association. All these organizations were actively involved in various programmes of the council, particularly against SIV. Besides the BRPJC had a good relationship with various leading environmental NGOs in the state, particularly the Tamil Nadu Green Movement, INTACH, C. P. Ramaswamy Environmental Research Foundation and EXNORA. The council also extended its full support to the formation of many regional NGOs (Committee for the Protection of Bhavani River Water and Ground water, Tamil Nadu Agriculture Groundwater and Environmental Protection Welfare Association, Dhodapalayam Peoples

Movement, Valliangadu Environmental Society etc.) in the basin and were actively involved in their activities. All these NGOs were also fighting against industrial pollution in the basin.

Involved or participated in various committee and demonstration of the ideas

Finally, the Bhavani River Protection Joint Council president and members served in different environmental committees and organizations through which the council extended its scope. During 2001, the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board formed a District Environmental Committee headed by the District Collector. The key members of the committee included various government department heads, NGO representatives, environmental activists and academic scholars. The Bhavani River Protection Joint Council president also served in the committee. The president of the council was also part of the Rotary Club and District Education Trust

Assessment of Bhavani River Protection Joint Council in the Context of Social Movements in the Water sector

It is very clear from the above discussion that the Bhavani River Protection Joint Council primarily targeted the issue of water pollution. According to Business Line, “Bhavani River Protection Joint Council is an umbrella organization for different environmental groups in the Coimbatore and Periyar districts which is spearheading the movement against water pollution” (Business Line, 1995).

The role of the Council was no doubt central to the ‘success’ in terms of closing down SIV. To what extent, therefore, can it be called a movement and what role did others play? As we have illustrated, the Council was the equivalent of a social movement organization in the sense that it spearheaded the campaign. But without a wider public involvement, the work of the Council would not have been as significant as it was. In that sense, a genuine movement did arise around the pollution of the Bhavani. People from different strata of the society - school and college students, farmers, women, middle and upper class communities, academic and research personals, government officials, and key social activists in the country, etc. directly participated in the programme organized by the council. Moreover, many peoples and organizations extended their support to the council at various occasions.

Generally the council conducted the formal meetings and took the key decisions including the plan of action against SIV pollution issues. These decisions were then supported by the wider public. In that sense, the council did not follow a democratic vision. Based on the discussions with various council representatives we observed that the key council members (who are primarily upper class highly educated persons) always took the major decisions without proper consultation with other members or representatives. But the council succeeded to a great extent in mobilizing farmers and other stakeholders (who experienced the problems of SIV pollution).

Despite its stand to not align itself with political parties, the movement was not divorced from politics. Different political parties extended their support to the council and the council also approached elected political representatives as a means to raise issues at the assembly and parliament level. It also influenced electoral politics significantly. On many occasions political parties requested the president of the council to stand as a candidate and participate in election campaigns. Although the president or other members never did participate in elections, the Council certainly influenced other political parties to raise the Bhavani issue.

If we independently evaluate the council's objectives, activities and the final outcomes with respect to SIV pollution a couple of issues emerge. The first issue is whether the council achieved its objective (protect the river from pollution) in a socially acceptable manner? At the immediate level, SIV was closed. At another level, there is much greater awareness about water pollution in the region and water quality has seemingly improved.

On the other hand, there is the issue of industrial closure. After the closure of SIV the Bhavani River Protection Joint Council president stated that "I did not want industry to close! However, she did add that the river needs to be protected as it is the lifeline of people and farmers (Business Line, 1995). Whether or not SIV closed because of the protest is also not absolutely clear. The environmental management history of SIV reveals that at various occasions the industry incurred huge expenditure for pollution abatement. Nonetheless, the frequent closures due to public action and court orders no doubt had a major impact.

The closure of SIV nonetheless did result in concerns especially about the future of industrial development in the region. Political party unions warned of the 4,000 workers who would be entrenched (Hindu 1995a). Small-scale industry representatives bemoaned the end of small-scale industry in the Coimbatore area. According to SSI officials at the time, the action will seriously affect the ancillary sector constituting of 500 small-scale units employing

about 25000 workers. About 3 crore people would be indirectly affected beside huge loss of revenue to the government and non-availability of viscose (a close substitute of cotton yarn) (Hindu, 1995b).

The trickle-down effect of SIV on SSI sector imposed the units to take some action and accordingly more than 200 small scale industries in and around Coimbatore formed a SIV campaign and appealed to both Tamil Nadu and Central Governments and Tamil Nadu Pollution Board not to initiate any step that would lead to the closure of the industries. According to them SIV is the only a south based company manufacturing staple fibres and its closure will effect more than 200 textile units. Nearly 500 small scale industry in and around Coimbatore are supplying ancillary parts to the SIV and they will be severely affected if the SIV industries will be closed down. SIV producing about 1 lakh kg. of staple fibre per year. The closure will effect nearly 3 crore people indirectly besides rendering about 5000 jobless.

Court: The High court ordered an interim stay on the operation of the Pollution Control Board's notice. According to the Court the company employs more than 2500 people and has a turn over of Rs. 400 crore.

Trade Unions: The trade unions had been pleading with the government to intervene immediately to resolve the crises. The union members were worried about the public resentment due to increase in pollution and labour unrest consequence of closure of industries (Business Line 1997a). The representatives of various trade unions including INTUC, JDLF, AIDUC, ADMK, MLF, CITU, PF, NLO, and BMS unanimously pointed out that though 2500 factory workers are employing their monthly wages, over 5000 *kuli* workers who are depended on the running of the factory are on the threat of starvation.

Excise Revenue Department: According to the Excise Department officials the closure of SIV industries (due to the closure of pulp and rayon units in Sirumugi) in the wake of its legal battle on environmental problems has had an impact on the coffers of the central excise department. The regional office of the Customs and Central excise Commissioner, Coimbatore may miss its exercise collection target of Rs. 939 crore set for 19 96-97 largely due to the sharp fall in the excise revenue from SIV this year (1997) against the expected revenue of around Rs.60 crore. The revenue collected from the company by ways of revenue of excise duty was only 28 crore. The Department was deprived of revenue to the extent of Rs. 36 crores this year (1997) due to the problems faced by the SIV. This has been

the single largest factor to upset the excise department calculation on revenue mop up. The excise duty collection from SIV last year had been in the 45 to 50 crore range (Business Line, 1997b).

While on one hand, the closure of SIV have become inevitable due to the mounting pressure from the farmers and the environmental activists, it has also created the problem of industrial unrest, as employees of this factories numbering a few thousands are faced with a grim prospects of losing their employment. SIV was one of the 100 most profitable companies in the country. But the shut down problems faced by SIV due to the environmental related crises results in substantial reduction in the project outlay of the company. Hence the financial restructuring plan was inevitable for the company those times. Sales was down from Rs. 421.34 crore achieved during 1995-96 to Rs. 297.80 crore mainly due to the suspension of production during substantial part of the first quarter of 1997 on account of environmental issues. The estimated loss due to the closure would be Rs. 1.2 crore per day apart from the revenue and loss to the state exchequer (Business Line, 1997c). SIV had a work force of around 5000 persons meets a annual wage caused around Rs. 35 crore. In the initial days of stagnation, even if all the plants remaining closed, the company paid full salary for their employees. Subsequently, SIV was not in a position to provide salaries to workers at the days of closure. The workers of SIV demanded an assurance that they would be paid their salary in full even if the factory was closed. Workers blocked the road and it finally end up in police lathi-charge.

According to the company sources, due to the pollution problem the company run up a loss of Rs. 31 crore 1996. Besides, the loss in first half of 1997 would be around Rs. 50 crore (Business Line, 1997d). The financial losses (SIV Industries reported a cash loss of Rs. 10.23 crore for the year 1996-97) compelled the industries to dispose of two of its Estate (with a total area of 170.89 acres) at Kodaikanal These estates have eucalyptus and also have coffee and fruit plantation covering 71.66 acres.

The closure of SIV really made serious impacts on the entire textile sectors particularly the silk industry. It also leads to the unemployment of large number of workers in allied industries including handlooms, transport, and trade as a chain reaction. The closure of SIV industries had affected millions of weavers and textile industry in Tamil Nadu. The viscose filament yarn and viscose staple fibre yarn were largely consumed by the weavers both handlooms and powerlooms in a number of districts including Salem, Rajaji, Periyar,

Coimbatore, Madurai, Dindigul, Tirunelveli and Ramanahapuram for manufacturing various types of sarees and clothes and were sold throughout India. Besides, hundreds of twisting and reeling factories consume hundreds of tones of art silk yarn. The closure of SIV industries, which produced the best quality viscose filament yarn and staple fibre, made many merchants jobless. They say that the SIV Industries supplied 60 per cent of the total requirement of Tamil nadu consumers regularly and the prices of these yarns had gone up steeply as the Tamil Nadu merchants had to purchase from the North India.

At least 3 lakhs workers engaged in silk industry in the district of Salem are among the worst hit due to the closure of SIV. Another 7 lakhs workers in other part of the state involved in the Art silk industry have also been hit. Tamil nadu required 2000 tonnes of art silk. Out of it 60 per cent is supplied by SIV. The hosiery industry in Tiruppur were also using viscose filament yarn. State Government loss several crores of rupees by ways of sales tax. Hence the Silk Merchants Association urged the Chief Minister personally to intervene and help SIV. They pointed out that the 36 year old factory had already put up an ETP at the cost of 65 crore. Hence the treated water did not affect crops including sugarcane and turmeric (Hindu, 1997a and Hindu, 1997b).

Another serious concern is that the council looks like an anti-industrial organization, since its full emphasis is on industrial pollution issues in the basin. It is very clear in polluting the Bhavani River the domestic and agriculture sectors also play a significant role. Five municipalities and number of town and village panchayats are directly discharging their untreated effluents to the river. Besides the return flow from agriculture land may contains huge quantities of residual fertilizer and chemical pesticides. Unfortunately, these non-point sources of pollution issues were not a serious concern to the Bhavani River Protection Join Council.

Even if the Bhavani River Protection Join Council faced some constraints like: no regular funding source, lack of democratic decision making or hierarchy in the process of decision making by the key members of the council, etc. the council has some remarkable achievements:

Creation of awareness among the public regarding the water pollution impacts and the need for protecting the river

One of the major objectives of the Bhavani River Protection Join Council is to generate awareness among the public regarding the importance of environment particularly the river

and its ecological and socio-economic functions. At various occasions the council organized programmes (awareness camps, campaigns in villages and urban areas, training and workshops for school and college students etc.) where they disseminate the importance of river in human life and their livelihood earnings to the community. The discussions carried out with stakeholders in the basin revealed that the council's programmes really helped them in enriching their knowledge on the significance of natural resources like river and the need for protecting them from various threats like industrial pollution. Now the people in the basin are very seriously observing the pollution issues and reacting in time. Now a day's number of regional Environmental NGOs emerged in different locations in the basin, which played a significant role in reducing the pollution problem in the Bhavani river basin compared to the neighbouring rivers basins, like Noyyal and Amaravathi.

Establish better relationships with parallel NGOs and work together for achieve the common objectives

The Bhavani River Protection Join Council succeeded in establishing good relations with the NGOs in the region particularly who are working in the environmental side. The council obtained frequent supports from the NGOs like Tamil Nadu Green Movement, INTAC etc. at its various stages of their agitation against SIV industries. Besides the council members extend their active participation with different regional NGOs who are working against industrial pollution and water resources degradation. The council's involvement with the NGOs at Upper Bhavani, Kalingarayan canal command and Noyyal river basin where industrial pollution impacts were sever. It shows the councils interest in collaborating with parallel NGOs who are active in involving in the industrial pollution issues.

Provide inspiration in the emergence of many NGOs in the basin who are fighting against industrial pollution

The Bhavani River Protection Join Council provides inspiration in the emergence of many small / regional (NGO) movements in the Bhavani basin. Now these NGOs are fighting against industrial pollution and water resources management, which are not very common in other part of the state. The prominent NGOs include:

- Committee for the Protection of Bhavani River Water and Ground water (based in Mettupalayam): Primarily working against the industrialization at Mettupalayam Taluk, the upstream part of the Bhavani Sager reservoir).

- Tamil Nadu Agriculture groundwater and Environmental Protection Welfare Association (based in Sathyamangalam): This organization actively opposed the SIVs effluent irrigation project at Sitapalauam and Irrumbarai village.
- Dhodapalayam Peoples Movement (based in Dhodapalayam): Dhoddapalayam is a town panchayat after the Bhavani Sager reservoir, where the large number of people are intensively depending the river for domestic water supply and irrigation.
- Valliangadu Environmental Society (based in Valliangadu): Valliangadu is a village where a perfume industry effluent and other wastes contaminate the ground water. This organization primarily works against this industries pollution issues.

Some of the members of the Bhavani River Protection Join Council who actively participated in the SIV pollution issues are also the members in these associations.

Restricted the further water intensive industrial growth and industrial pollution issues in the basin to a great extend

The Bhavani River Protection Join Council and the other parallel NGOs who got inspiration and support from Bhavani River Protection Join Council successive in restricting the further industrial development in the Bhavani River basin. Bhavani is a perennial river where water intensive industries really targeted to locate, particularly in the catchments area where industries can extract the water throughout the year. The council members obtained the lessons from the neighbouring basins (Noyyal and Amaravathi) where industries severely polluted the fresh water sources. Along with the SIV agitation the council and other parallel NGOs decided to restrict the industrial development in the region.

The council is also in the firm view that no industry should be allowed within 5 kms, of the bank of the river for avoiding the extraction of water and discharge of effluents. The council suggested that the industries located within 5 kms radius of the Bhavani which use river water and discharges effluents into the rivers be listed and inspected for pollution aspects of river Bhavani by Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board. Such an inspection should be placed before a committee of officials and non-officials, scientists and farmers (Indian Express, 1995b).

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Appendix 1

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BHAVANI RIVER PROTECTION JOINT COUNCIL

1. To protect, restore and maintain the wholesomeness of the fresh waters of Bhavani river.
2. To maintain the strong agriculture basis of the Bhavani river basin.
3. To take all necessary action for clearing the pollution by Industries and other such sources by mobilizing people, appealing and representing to the government and other agencies and also to take legal action, if needed.
4. To prevent deforestation of catchment areas of Bhavani river and its tributaries.
5. To take up massive afforestation programme at Nilgiris in collaboration with the Nilgiri Environmental Society, Tribal welfare organizations of Nilgiris and other organizations sharing the same motive.
6. To augment the flow to Bhavani river and press for the implementation of the pending Pandiaru Punnampuzha scheme.
7. To regularize the sharing of the waters for drinking, agriculture and industries or other purposes.
8. To take up massive tree plantation in the Bhavani river basin.
9. To conduct meetings, camps, seminars, Video/Audio shows, street plays, cycle rallies, public demonstrations or any other legitimate methods to create awareness among the public in general and students in particular.
10. To preserve the Shola forests, flora and fauna all along the course of the Bhavani river and prevent destructive activities.
11. To assist the formation of similar organizations and assist other similar organizations in their programmes.
12. To assist, support and work in collaboration with other organizations having the same ideology at National and International levels.
13. To take up research work on the pollution of the environment and safe drinking water sources.
14. To press for representation of this organization in pollution control boards and other bodies for the same purpose.
15. To seek counseling and advice from experts in this area.

Appendix 2

BHAVANI RIVER PROTECTION JOINT COUNCIL: SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES OF VARIOUS MEETINGS

Key factor behind the formation of Bhavani River Protection Joint Council:-

In early 1995 SIV decided to expand the plant with an additional investment of Rs. 650 crore (with European collaboration). There was a general feeling among the public that this attempt would increase the pollution problem and environmental impacts in the Bhavani River basin.

1st Meeting (24 – 02 – 1995)

- The first formal meeting BRPJC
- Discussed the procedures in selecting president and members.
- All the members are from Bhavani watershed / Bhavani river basin. They are very much associated with the river for their survival / existence.
- Billow and Aims were prepared.
- Made the background for registration as an NGO.
- Decided the office in Dr. Sathyasunderi's residence
- Decided to appoint Dr. Sathyssunderi, as president till the election
- Governing Body consists of 7 executive members and 14 other members. (Executive members consist of President, Vice-president, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, and two coordinators).

2nd Meeting (20 – 03 – 1995)

- Elected President ((Dr. Sathyssunderi)
- Registered as an NGO (7+14 = 21 members)
- Billow approved
- Decided BRPJC would free from politics (no chance for politician to become a member)
- Members should not mention any political party's name
- Appointed a member to look over the legal part (to obtain the legal opinion at appropriated occasions)
- Fixed one day fasting struggle in front of SIV (09 – 05 – 1995)
- Discussed various strategies to mobilize the people from different part of the basin (how to bring people, mode of agitation etc.)

3rd Meeting (02 – 05 – 1995)

- Discussed the developments on the proposed fasting strike (9-5-95)

4th Meeting (16– 05 – 1995)

- Discussed about the fasting strike and its success.
Around 5000 people from the different part of the basin participated.
All of them assembled in front of SIV
After the strike TNPCB ask SIV to close pulp unit.
Electricity and water supply (to SIV) stopped.
One-day company closed (against PCB action)
SIV went to the court and obtain stay order.
Implete d PCB
Nalani Chidambaram accept to argue in the court

5th Meeting (22– 05 – 1995)

- Extend thanks to all the people who participate / support in the strike
- Extend thanks to PCB's actions against SIV.
- Decided to request / demand the SIV to treat effluent properly before discharge.
- Requested PCB that not gives permission to any industry along the bank of Bhavani.
- Demanded a joint monitoring system on the pollution issues through form a monitoring committee (TNPCB, CPCB and BRPJC).
- Discusses the comprehensive approach on the pollution issues (It is an inter district issue, since the SIV in Coimbatore district and the Bhavani Sagar dam in Erode district).
- Since SIV closed for 3 months BRPJC asked industry to compensate the workers and arrange alternative job opportunities.

6th Meeting (10– 07 – 1995)

- Discussed and Prepared necessary documents for file the court case.
- Consult a civil advocate (**Mr. Mobarac**)
- Decided to generate awareness programme (related to Bhavani river pollution and its impacts) among the students in Erode district.
- One group in the council given the responsibility of mobilizes finance (through donations).
- Decided to conduct Public Meetings at all the villages, which located along the bank of Bhavani river.
- Decided to take necessary steps to start an electric cemetery in Bhavani Municipality to avoid the pollution at Kuduthurai (related to burial).

- Opposed the CPCB to provide NOC to SIV.

7th Meeting (28- 10 – 1995)

- Decided to transfer Nalani Chedambaram (Advocate), and case transferred to **Mr. Gandhi**.
- Identified Nalani Chidambram is not able to successfully handle the case.
- Decided to stop the collaboration with EXNORA (whenever required obtain their help)

8th Meeting (05- 01 – 1996)

- Thodapalayam village want to file a case separately, since it is highly affected by the pollution. (BRPJC given the permission).
- Decided to consider other industries (which located in Bhavani River Basin) pollution issues also.
- Decided to participate in the hunger strike at Ooty (against the plantation of *Eucalyptus* trees).

9th Meeting (14- 02 – 1996)

- Decided to submit a public petition to Supreme Court judge.
- Decided to send requests (against pollution) to Supreme Court judge (by school students and public through post cards. (More than 10,000 petitions submitted).
- Discussed the fish mortality in the river and crop failure / damages at various part of the basin.
- Decided to put more pressure on the government to take immediate action against all the polluting industries in the basin.

10th Meeting (15- 03 – 1996)

- Since (that period) the flow in the river reduced, Council demanded to the enforcement agencies to take strict action against waste discharge in to the river.
- For making more awareness among the public, decided to conduct more rallies including *kalnada jathas and vehicle jathas*
- Decided to disseminate the programme in wider audience including the NGOs and Farmers Associations.

(Many *jathas* conducted: People including women, students and children participated. Besides Kalingarayan Agriculture Association, Kodiveri Farmers Association, Erode Environmental Association, LBP farmers Association etc. actively involved in the programme)

- A major *Kalnada Jatha* was conducted from Kuduthurai to Sirumugai. Many NGOs participated in the jatha. The public support and involvement was great. In

all the villages, where the Jatha passes – through, public meetings also organized. It was a great success.

11th Meeting (30– 03 – 1996)

- Decided to organize a Van Procession from Sangamam to Sagar to Sirumugai from 7/4/96 to 9/6/96.
- Also decided to obtain the support / collaboration of other organizations like: Tamil Nadu Green Movement, Lower Bhavani Farmers Association, Kalingarayan Canal Association, etc.
- Decided the night hols of procession at, Kallipatti, Salliyur, Sirumugai (with a big public meeting in front of SIV).

The programme was a great success. During the meeting people blocked the gate of SIV. Lot of police came since it may lead to law and order problem. (Doesn't take permission from the police department. Around 15 – 20 minute blocked the vehicles also).

12th Meeting (05– 07 – 1996)

- Decided to submit a memorandum to Chief Minister.
- Prepared the memorandum.
- Made a plan to plantation of trees along to the Gobi - Sathi road (with the help of school children and NSS volunteers).

13th Meeting (20– 08 – 1996)

- Decided to conduct a weeklong environmental awareness programme.
- On 26/8/96 a meeting arranged at GKP Thirumana Mandapam, Gobi. (Around 3000 school students from GOBI participated). The hall and the food sponsored by the Kalyana mandapam proprietor).
Organized speech for students, quiz programs, exhibitions and drama.
- Discussed the issue with NKK Pariyasamy (Minister of Environment, Government of Tamil Nadu).
- More pressure from various political parties arises (they want the BRPJC president become the candidate in the Bobi constituency).
- But the council strongly opposed.
- Subsequently, N K K Pariyasamy showed his interest in the council's activities.
- 27/11/96 – High court judgment.
- This time N. C. Mehtha has appointed in dealing the Environmental Issues at Supreme Court.
- SIV obtain stay order from Supreme Court.

14th Meeting (10– 12 – 1996)

- Discussed the court judgment: Respond the key issues.
- Decided to do good consultation with Government Department, Academic Institutions, and legal experts etc. before take further steps.
- Contact Dr. Duraisamy, Prof B. B. Sunderesan, Many TNAU scientists, etc.

15th Meeting (9– 12 – 1996)

- Thanked the High Court Order.
- Thanked all the people who worked and rendered help.
- Decided to extend environmental education, pollution impacts and its consequences in Village Panchayats and Town Panchayats members and officials.
- Proposed Bhavani River also to be included in the lists of National River Protection Council's list.
- Decided to submit a petition to ministers, collectors, MLAs and MPs regarding the seriousness of pollution impacts before the end of January.
- Decided to involve all stakeholders in the movement and show its strengths (in a highly democratic way)
- Decided to obtain maximum expert opinion from the possible sources.

16th Meeting (21– 02 – 1997)

- Appeal the PWD to clean the Bhavani Sagar Dam (through silt removal) for increasing the storage capacity of the dam.
(This time SIV did some thing in effluent treatment and start to function)
- Approach all local bodies and ask them also to support against pollution.
- Make awareness to TNFDC regarding the poisons in reservoir water.
- Object the road across Moyar river at Thangumarangad (it affect the forest ecosystem – flora and fauna)
- Decide to establish link with National Alliance of People Movement (Mehtha Padker)
- Tried to obtain involvement from many NGOs and organizations.
- Decided to consider all sort of pollution (sewage, solid wastes etc.) apart from the industrial pollution.
- Discussed the Orthapalayam pollution issues (Noyyal basin) and decided to extend the councils support.
- Conduct a meeting at Orthapalayam (decided to consider the learning from the Noyyal)
- Took a decision that the council never allows the effluent to reach in the river.
- Increased the member's strength through incorporating four more people.
- Expressed thanks for the donation provided by the organizations like Sathi Environmental Association, Kongu Youth Association, and Consumer Council. (They together donated Rs. 10,000 to the Council).

17th Meeting (02-06-1997)

- Decided to celebrate Environmental Day. (Send letters to all educational institutions in Gobi educational district).
- Decided to organize an environmental trip in Gobi.
- Decided to take part in the function / struggle against the “Entrol Strlight” at Koodankulam organized by the Tamil Nadu Green Movement.
- Decided to involve any sort of investigation (for example – water quality analysis etc.) whenever required, especially for the court.
- To insist all industries (particularly SIV) to recycle / reuse the waste water.

18th Meeting (22-08-1997)

- Decided to inform all the local bodies in the Bhavani River Basin to not mix the sewage in the river.
- Inform SIV; even the trail run effluent should not mix in the river.
- Decided the BRPJC do the water quality analysis and give the certificate to Supreme Court.
- Since the expenditure for the day-to-day function of the council increasing, the possibilities towards mobilizing the fund discussed.
- Decided to obtain advise from B B Sunderasan, (Rtd. V. C. of University of Madras and who did extensive research on the environmental issues in Bhavani) towards the further steps taken by the Council.

19th Meeting (07-11-1997)

- N. C. Mehtha Attended the Meeting.
- Discussed the strategies - How to follow in the Supreme Court.
- Decided to follow through a socially acceptable manner (collective action) including government – not privately.
- Requested to consider, Bhavani in National River Protection Council.
- Arranged many meetings for Mehtha: Gobichettipalayam, Bhavani Sager, Coimbatore, Sathyamangalam.
- Decided to consult many experts: Dr. B. B. Sunderasan, Dr. M. Ramasamy, TNPCB.

20th Meeting (11-02-1998)

- Discussed the pollution issues of Bhavani Textile (located near to Kodiveri Check dam)
- Took some action along with TNPCB.

21st Meeting (16-04-1998)

- Discussed the Fish Mortality at Bhavani Sager Reservoir and the river.
- Took the issues with the attention of Government, local bodies who extract water for drinking purpose, media and press etc.

- Invite press people and make visits to the spot.
- Decided to conduct public meetings at different places in the basin and explain the reason attributes for the fish mortality.
- SIV made some attempts to solve the fight doing by BRPJC through the Environment Minister (Pongalore Palanisamy), TNPCB officials (for compromisation).

22nd Meeting (16- 04 – 1998)

- Expressed thanks for the donation (Rs. 20000) provided by Vellore Trust
- Take necessary steps against the effluent discharge into the river.
- Raw water allocation (drinking should be the first priority then agriculture then only industry)
- Since river flow is reducing considerably in the summer period, industrial extraction needs to be stopped. Industry can close for maintenance during this period.
- Request fisheries department for providing information /explanations on fish mortality (previously they explain some viral-disease was the cause for fish mortality).
- Discussed the colour water (effluent) irrigation plan of SIV and its possible pollution impacts at Chetipalayam and Irribalay villages .
- Approach TNPCB and request to take immediate action against the effluent irrigation plant.
- This time SIV opened the pulp plant.
- Don't compromise agriculture in Bhavani river Basin for the sake of Industrial development. If so big agitation should be organized.
- Express the disagreement of the US policy on terminated seeds to spread in India.
- Bhavani Textile pollution issues discussed and designed the strategies for taken up the issue further.

23rd Meeting (12- 10 – 1998)

- Pulp unit restarted (strongly opposed against the effluent discharge into the river, and put more pressure on PCB)
- Participated the meeting at Erode Town against the textile pollution in the district (made some attempt in a collaborative manner)
- Decided to put pressure on local body to estimate the area of temple forest in the district.

24th Meeting (26- 11 – 1998)

- SIV pulp unit decided to enhance
- Generate awareness among the public about the pulp units effluents (14/12/98)
- Give a warning against the pulp unit effluent discharge in to the river
- Organize a protest against pollution issues with an aim to awake the public.
- Meet Erode Collector and discuss the issue.

25th Meeting (21-- 07 – 1999)

- Discussed the invitation from Auburn University, Alabama USA for the international conference on Environmental movements in Rural Areas.
- SIV discharged effluent in to the river. Further fish mortality (11/7/99)
- Decided to make more collaboration with NGO's who are working in environmental issues.

26th Meeting (16-- 10 – 1999)

- Make or strengthen awareness among all the villagers in the Basin
- Decided to support the farmers at Chetipalayam or Irriburay villages, where 250 people arrested (including ladies and put in the kalyana mandapam).
- Decided Dr. Satyasundari to visit personally to the villages and get their feed back and provide the appropriate guidelines. (In the villages people laid before the JCP) The council suggested some non-violent type methods of agitation.
- Decided to make some more attempt to mobilize the people
- Discussed the budget and identified options to mobilize money.
- Decide to appoint a new office bearer (primarily for focus on press and video news)

27th Meeting (23-- 05 – 2000)

- Industry should not extract water at scarcity period (strict government instruction to be given and implemented)
- Remove sediments from the reservoir, and increase its storage.
- SIV gave Rs. 15 Lakhs as compensation for fish mortality. The Council recommended using that money for cleaning purpose.
- When flow reduced don't discharge any wastewater to the river
- Rain water harvest in all the area in the basin.

28th Meeting (31-- 10 – 2000)

- Tree plantation in Gopi areas
- Don't use plastic bags
- Awareness among the public on the environment issues
- Decided to send representative to Allahabad, for participating in a National Seminar.

29th Meeting (31-- 2 – 2000)

- Met PCB chairman on 25/11/2000 and discussed the SIV's illegal discharge of effluents. Also submitted a memorandum to take immediate action against this.
- Also discussed other key members of the TNPCB.

30th Meeting (29-- 2 – 2002)

- More flow should retain in the river (In this regard the Central Government decision should be implemented in the Tamil Nadu river.
- Domestic supply should not disturb in village panchayat and town panchayat
- Make more awareness against the spread of water borne diseases
- Argued for forming a Corporation (River Board) form saving the river.
- Panchayat members, local body officials different stake holders, NGO's and elected representative should be the member in the Board.
- Decided to generate more awareness on the importance of water and the need to maintain its quality and genuine use among the local people. Also the importance of maintaining the river and keep it in clean.
- Irrigation water management and problems of effluent irrigation
- Need for introducing organic manure instead of chemical fertilizers.
- Need for crop rotation for improving the efficiency in agriculture.

31st Meeting (20- 5 - 2002)

- Decided to start a web site (www: bhavaniriver.org)
- Mobilization of fund (monthly contribution from the members), membership fees and donation from various sources including farmers / associations
- Decided to participate in the water procession at Erode

32nd Meeting (7- 9 - 2002)

- Decided to conduct environment awareness programme among the students (essay writing, and other competition etc.)
- One Student (S. Gurumurthy) from Gobi participated in 'All India Students Meeting'

33rd Meeting (28- 11 - 2002)

- Decided to take action against the sand mining at the Bhavani river bank
- Decided to take action against Mukkali water diversion
- 18/2/2001 SIV closed. (No effluent discharged. River is relatively clean, all improvement)
- Decided to act against Tiruppur Area Development Project (water diversion scheme from Cauvert to Tiruppur).

34th Meeting (25- 12 - 2002)

- Decided to collaborate other NGO's and fight against Tiruppur Area Development Project
- Decided to participate in the Erode meeting (against effluent irrigation)

35th Meeting (15- 2 - 2003)

- Decided to clean all surface water bodies in Bhavani river basin (tanks, streams, etc.

- Decided to participate river linking project meeting at Chennai.

36th Meeting (24- 4 – 2003)

- Demand to restrict sand mining in the river
- Arrange awareness programmes among the people for the need of protecting water bodies.

37th Meeting (1- 6 – 2003)

- Made public awareness among the people regarding the problems of deforestation among the people.
- Decided to plant more trees in the water shed areas in the basin
- Decided to argue in equity in water distribution 1
- Argue the need for a proper land use policy

38th Meeting (7- 9 – 2003)

- Proposed to divert Pandiyar and Ponnampuzha towards Bhavani Sagar Reservoir (for increasing the storage).
- Decided to collaborate other NGO's working in water and environment areas.

39th Meeting (16- 11 – 2003)

- Decided to participate in the CPR centers's (Chennai) Environmental Programmes

40th Meeting (3- 1 – 2004)

- Decided to disseminate Bhavani River Protection Joint Council's attempts to public through electronic media.

41st Meeting (19- 3 – 2004)

- Generate awareness among the people on the impact of air and noise pollution
- Industry should recycle the water
- Industry also emphasize on water conservation devises.

42nd Meeting (5- 5 – 2004)

- Increase the ground water storage through rain water harvesting
- Decided to start some practical attempt of rainwater harvesting through students.

43rd Meeting (2- 6 – 2004)

- Decided to celebrate environmental week
- Many competition programmes and cultural programme for the students and the public

44th Meeting (2- 10 – 2004)

- Decided to participate in the Gopi Arts and Science college, National Seminar on Environmental issues (9/10/2004)

45th Meeting (15- 1 – 2005)

- Decided to participate in the Water Technology Center's meeting at Tamil Nadu Agriculture University.

46th Meeting (10- 3 – 2005)

- Decided to participate a public meeting at Erode (sharing water between Kerala and Tamil Nadu organized by Indian River Network)

47th Meeting (7- 5 – 2005)

- Decided to take part actively in the Noyyal pollution issues.
- Decided to participate in a meeting at Ooty.

48th Meeting (16- 7 – 2005)

- Discussed the possibilities of sharing water between Kerala and Tamil Nadu
- Organize Environmental awareness champagne.
- Decided to organize a cycle rally for students on 25/10/2005

49th Meeting (5- 12 – 2005)

- Decided to conduct meeting at schools on the importance of tree plantations

50th Meeting (3- 1 – 2006)

- Decided to participate in the Environmental protection conference at Vellalur College for women

51st Meeting (10- 3 – 2006)

- Discussed the need for silt removal from the irrigation canals
- Initiatives should come from Agriculture University and the Government.

52nd Meeting (14- 5 – 2006)

- Discussed Narmada Dam issue and expressed support to Mehtha Patkar
- Need for recycled paper use

Chapter 7

Pani Sangharsh Chalwal:⁵⁰ A case study from South Maharashtra

Kaustubh Devale⁵¹ and Suhas Paranjape⁵²

Acknowledgements: Kaustubh Devale spent a good part of the time over four months in the area to update our current knowledge of the movement. Suhas Paranjape has been involved with the PSC as a supporter and sympathizer from its beginning. The little written information that we have about the movement comprises a few articles (see bibliography) and a set of newspaper cuttings. However, they are the tip of the iceberg and they tell very little of the story. We have supplemented it with extensive interviews with leaders, activists and supporters. In the course of this work Kaustubh had long, frank and intense discussions with Dr. Bharat Patankar. We are grateful to Dr. Bharat Patankar and to the Patankar family especially Indutai, Jayant, Sandhya and James for bearing with the impositions we placed on them and which they cheerfully bore. Besides we have had fairly detailed discussions on the issues with a whole range of activists and supporters/sympathizers which included Dr. Anant Phadke, Ashok Jadhav, Avinash Kadam, Bhiku Deore (dada), Dhanaji Gurav, Dilip Patil, Ganpat Anna Ghagare, Humayan Mursal, Jayant Uthale, K. J. Joy, More sir, Sampat Desai, Sanjay Tardekar, Santosh, Seema Kulkarni and Vitthal Dangre and many others. We are grateful to all of them for welcoming us and giving their time unstintingly and for the open and frank manner in which they approached the issues. This was especially important for us since the movement is itself going through a challenging and trying time. Needless to say, we are solely responsible for the inaccuracies and shortcomings that may have remained. We would also like to thank SOPPECOM for supporting this study and for bearing with the many delays in drafting that would have tried the patience of almost anyone.

Background and History

Pani Sangharsh Chalwal (PSC) is a movement active on water rights in South Maharashtra.. It is active primarily in the districts of Sangli, Satara, Solapur, and Kolhapur. In the last three decades this movement has spread both physically as well as in terms of content and ideas.

The history of the PSC may be divided into two broad phases. In the first formative phase it was known mainly as the *Mukti Sangharsh Chalwal*⁵³ (MSC) and was on the whole confined to the one taluka of Khanapur in Sangli district. This formative phase is important because many of the formative influences in this period helped it acquire its main characteristics. In its second phase, the two SMOs the *Shetmajoor Kashtakari Shetkari Sanghatana*⁵⁴ (SKSS) and the *Maharashtra Rajya Dharanrast va Prakaalgrast Parishad*⁵⁵ (the Parishad) became much more important and the movement spread practically to the whole of the Krishna basin. In what

⁵⁰ Literally The Movement for a Struggle around Water

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⁵³ Literally The Movement for a Liberation Struggle

⁵⁴ Literally the Agricultural Labourers' and Toiling Farmers' Organisation.

⁵⁵ Literally, the Maharashtra State Conference of the Dam and Project Affected

follows we describe briefly the two phases and some of the important struggles that shaped the movement.

The formative phase: the *Mukti Sangharsh Chalwal*

The occasion for the formation of the MSC was a confluence of a number of factors in the early 1980s. The backdrop was the Mumbai textile strike of 1982-83 that was led by Dr. Datta Samant. The strike was long drawn and unsuccessful and is a definite landmark in the labour history of Mumbai. It marked the decline of the prominence that textile mills and textile mill workers had in shaping the identity of Mumbai as an industrial centre. Most textile mill workers had originally migrated in search of permanent employment to Bombay due to lack of consistent income because of rain-fed agriculture and dependency upon single crop in their native villages of Konkan and drought-prone regions of western-Maharashtra. The striking unions asked the workers to go back to their villages to garner support, and as the strike dragged on and showed no signs of settlement, more and more workers decided to return to their villages. It was to turn out to be a historic demobilisation of the textile workers of Mumbai.

The strike years were also followed by a drought and the government had to provide work under the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS), especially in the drought prone areas like Khanapur taluka. A very large number of farmers and agricultural labourers, except for the very large farmers had to seek support from the EGS. Among them were also the textile workers who had returned to their villages. With their union experience they soon began to see the need to organise EGS workers who had very few facilities. Corruption and delays in payment were rampant. Many of these workers were in touch with the Shramik Mukti Dal (SMD). SMD was formed in 1980 as a political organisation with a revolutionary agenda that aimed at removing all kinds of oppression – class, caste as well as gender oppression. SMD activists, especially Dr. Bharat Patankar, who also hails from Sangli district, had also participated in leading and helping the 1982-83 Bombay textile mill workers' strike. Soon SMD activists began to provide active leadership to this struggle.

With SMD leadership, the struggle soon spilled over to larger issues. The return of the migrant workers in 1982-83 had triggered discussions regarding avenues of employment. Though the EGS was in place with an assurance of the state government to provide for employment to those who seek it and providing commensurate remuneration according to

work done, what *kind* of work was to be provided was not specified. The SMD picked up this point and made it an important issue.

SMD activists, along with other left parties had been part of the work of the Drought Eradication Committee which functioned in Maharashtra for many years after the great drought of 1972. In 1983, in Khanapur taluka, they demanded that instead of providing ad hoc work like breaking stones and constructing roads, work that contributed nothing towards drought eradication, work under EGS should be aimed at drought eradication. So along with organising EGS workers for their union demands, they also began mobilising for drought eradication.

Being one of the most drought prone talukas in Maharashtra, the idea of making drought eradication the central plank of their activity caught the imagination of people in Khanapur taluka. The movement that began to gain strength was formally established in October 1983 at its *Sthapana Parishad*⁵⁶ and called itself the *Mukti Sangharsh Chalwal* (MSC) because it had as its larger aim the elimination of all oppression and saw their activity as framed by this aim. While mobilising and organising people around this demand of drought eradication in the villages of Khanapur taluka MSC got to know about quite a few plans developed in the British times for local water harvesting/storage structures, which had not yet been constructed. While the left parties did not officially join forces with the MSC, they did not actively oppose it either, and it received the backing of activists from local left parties within Khanapur taluka.

The Baliraja memorial dam

The struggle over the so called Baliraja memorial dam was one of the important formative influences for the movement. Yerala river, one of the major tributaries of the Krishna river, originates in Khatav taluka in Satara district in Maharashtra and flows southwards into Khanapur and Tasgaon talukas in Sangli district for about 120 km before it meets the Krishna. This once perennial river had gradually turned into a seasonal one by the 1970's due to number of possible contributing factors: construction of small and medium water storage structures upstream; increased irrigation by farmers cultivating sugarcane along the banks and rampant sand excavation along and in the river bed. This gradually affected the surface

⁵⁶ Literally, Establishment Conference

as well as sub-surface water flows resulting in lack of ground water availability round the year for peasants without access to direct lift irrigation.

Sampatrao Pawar from Balawadi village on the Yerala banks in Khanapur taluka and a leader of the Peasants and Workers Party (PWP) who participated in and helped establish the MSC at its *Sthapana Parishad*, played an important role in the movement. MSC activists used *padayatras* (foot marches) with the help of local farmers along the river and other streams to explore possibilities of water harvesting and storage. One major cause for drying up of the river that was identified was the rampant sand excavations from the river bed. Balawadi and Tandulwadi twin villages situated on the opposite banks of Yerala river emerged as leading centres for discussions and debates about the issue and probable solutions. The movement was able to succeed in the PIL against sand excavation. Discussions between the MSM and farmers led to a suggestion to construct a small dam between Balawadi and Tandulwadi villages to ensure a permanent source of protective irrigation for these two villages. The movement developed a twin strategy around sand excavation. They demanded a long term ban, but also demanded a change in the way sand excavation was carried out. In those days it was auctioned to private parties by the government. They insisted that the village communities be given permits to sell limited amount of sand (within the Minor Mineral Extraction Rules) the sand with a royalty being paid to the government, which was the earlier practise. The movement opposed auctioning of sand. In fact, it was their intention to collect money through sand excavation for a dam at Balawadi-Tandulwadi and stop all sand excavation after the dam was built.

K.R. Datye, a renowned engineer from Bombay, worked pro bono to develop a two-phase plan for this tiny dam. After completion it would irrigate almost 380 ha of land of 400 families from the two villages. The dam was named the Baliraja dam after the legendary farmer-king Baliraja and has become widely known as the symbol of what the MSC aimed at achieving. The first phase comprised a smaller dam that would serve to support a later falling gate structure erected on top of it. The movement has been able to complete the first phase and provide water to about 100 plus families, but has not been able to complete the second phase. It collected funds for the first phase partly through income gained from sand excavation and partly from urban sympathisers as loan. This loan was collected through a wide campaign in the cities in Maharashtra and elsewhere and a large part of the loan was

returned when revenue was generated for the village committee through sale of limited amount of sand..

The sand excavation has been stopped. However, since the second phase of the dam has not been completed till today, the storage is small and only around 100 families from Tandulwadi and some dalit families from Balawadi villages respectively are using the water from this dam for more than a decade now. In accordance with the set of priorities discussed at the beginning of the movement, the water from the dam is not used for irrigating sugarcane and from about February till the onset of the monsoon, the water is utilised only for domestic purposes and not for irrigation. Issues related to the funds needed for the second phase, the desilting of the first phase and involving the government department in taking over and managing the full system seem to have taken a back seat as the attention has shifted to other and larger issues. The larger goal of an equitable access based system for all households in Balavadi Tandulwadi⁵⁷ with an alternative crop pattern remains to be realised.

Equitable water access and minimum water assurances

It is during this formative period that MSC took over the concept of equitable water distribution first enunciated and implemented by the late Vilasrao Salunke in drought prone Purandar Taluka of Pune district, developed it further with an additional emphasis on including landless agricultural families in the equitable water distribution. This was to become a central idea in the social and economic restructuring that the PSC envisages. The idea was that everyone should have an equal right to the water required for earning livelihood. This immediately involved the issue of how much water was required to provide livelihood for a typical family.

Simultaneously, therefore, experiments were initiated to assess the quantum of water requirement to sustain one family. The Centre for Applied Systems Analysis in Development (CASAD) and MSC took up this study in two villages, Balavadi and Benapur, during 1986 to 1991 as part Wasteland Integration Research Project supported by the Society for Promoting Wasteland Development (SPWD), Delhi. As a result of this experimentation and later interacting with experts, PSC now has developed a thumb rule that about 18 T of bio-mass

⁵⁷ Equitable water distribution amongst all households of both the villages, irrespective of the size of landholding (including the landless), biomass-based land use and cropping pattern and sustainable agronomical practices were the main features of the initial design of the project)

are required for sustainable livelihood for a family and optimally utilised, requires about 6,000 m³ of water use. Further, again as a thumb rule they assess that given the concrete conditions in this area, including an annual 80% dependable rainfall is only 300 to 400 mm. about 2,000 m³ of this water use would have to come from exogenous sources, requiring say an allocation of about 3,000 m³ from dam storages in the area. The new strategy of drought eradication and sustainable agro-industrial development was premised on availability of reliable source of exogenous water of 3000 cubic metres to every family, to be under local control of the people and adoption of a mixed crop pattern consisting of certain proportion between grains, vegetables, fruits, fodder, biomass for fuel and agro-industrial use.⁵⁸ The PSC has developed a full scale argument for restructuring irrigation in the Krishna Valley along these lines. (Patankar 1997)

Restructuring the Takari Lift Irrigation Scheme

By end of the 1980s, the MSC was convinced of the practical viability of the equitable water distribution. The people from Balawadi and Tandulwadi had agreed to the broad principles of equitable access and had also developed a three acre model of land use with one acre of assured irrigation from the Baliraja dam. However, this would not take place until both phases of the dam were completed. Meanwhile there was another opportunity to develop this idea further.

MSC worked out and demanded a restructuring of the Takari Lift Irrigation Scheme in Khanapur taluka with equitable water distribution as its principle. This struggle was launched in the summer of 1989 with a conference which led to a memorandum signed by 1,520 peasants that was sent to the Chief Minister. The original plan of this scheme was to lift 4.6 TMC water up to 116 m by using 31 MW of power to supply it to 30 villages (8 would be fully and 22 partially covered) thus irrigating around 13,000 hectares at a cost of INR 2,800 million. MSC, with the help of concerned experts in CASAD, put forth an alternative plan for allocating 3,000 m³ to each family in 60 villages to cover 60,000 hectares of land. Given the command area approach of the government, there were bound to be a number of problems. The first one was the basis of the Water User Associations

⁵⁸ This norm of exogenous water of 3000 cubic metres to every family was substantially less than the norm suggested by the widely respected expert committee, appointed by the government of Maharashtra in 1978. It was popularly known as Dandekar-Deuskar-Deshmukh committee (The "Three D" committee) and had argued for a total of 750 mm of irrigation per acre. This is equivalent to 9000 cubic meter of water for 3 acres.

(WUAs) that were supposed to manage irrigation at the lowest rung. The government treated only those who owned land in the area they had designated as the command areas as eligible to receive water and be a member of the WUAs. The alternative principle summed up the village allocation and treated it as an allocation to which every farmer in the village, including those outside the government designated area as eligible to receive water and to become member of the WUA. This itself was a contested area. After long drawn out negotiations, the MSC presented its alternative plan during a broad based meeting in the Shivaji University in Kolhapur, which was then accepted by the Chief Engineer who allow such WUAs to be formed on a pilot basis. Negotiations were also on about additional water to be given to the societies and for villages not covered.

However, things did not move very smoothly with Takari. The proposed restructuring was premised on a systematic completion of the present and the proposed restructured canal distribution system. Only the main canal network has been fully completed; the distributaries and minors are practically non-existent. Due to pressure from below, water is now being released into these main canals and some of the villages are getting water, and some, for example, Hanumantvadiye, are trying to use the water they receive as equitable as possible, but on the whole, this has been happening without adequate distribution support.

Distinctive forms of struggle

What marked out the MSC were also the distinctive forms of struggle that it developed. If we take the example of Takari alone, there were a number of forms which were used. They included:

- Signature campaigns wherein thousands of signatures were collected.
- Poster exhibitions to create awareness.
- Resolutions of 12 Gram Panchayats from amongst the 30 potentially benefiting villages.
- Conferences with participation of toilers and peasants from the area along with state-level leaders of the toiling class.
- Padayatra along the canal where land was going to be submerged.
- Simultaneous Rasta Roko (road blockade) at 12 places wherein men, women and children participated with their cattle and carts thus blocking important road network of the taluka.
- Chavani Andolan (literally: camp agitation) where people marched into the taluka office and occupied it along with their cattle.
- Holding of People's Courts during the *Chavani Andolan* at the taluka centre.

All the campaigns that the MSC ran may be seen to be marked by a plethora of similar forms of struggle.⁵⁹ These forms were innovative, drew in a large number of people from different sections, ranged from different kinds of action and media. In addition, there was the practice of negotiations being carried out not by individual leaders, by an activist team drawn from the gathered assembly which immediately after the negotiations reported to the larger assembly and obtained ratification from it.

These were characteristics the SMD brought to it and it is also reflected in the active and widespread support that the movement received from urban centres wherever SMD activists were working. The mobilisation of support and the required funds for the Baliraja dam was a protracted process that displayed all these characteristics. This made for transparency and created a different kind of trust and confidence about the leadership and people came to identify with the movement in a manner that was closer than mere 'support' and tended to become an identity that was capable of cutting across party lines. In fact, the MSC found support from many local activists belonging to various parties, except the BJP and the Shivsena, and many of them joined the MSC in this period.

In the later part, the Takari struggle has taken a different path. Of the 60 villages involved, the new village level Water User Associations that were proposed have been set up in 11 villages (and three have been registered). However, at present only the main canal has been completed for the most part and the rest of the distribution system has not been built and this has given a different twist to the issue. An agitation for releasing water even though the full network has not been built has been successful and water is now released into the main canal, some of this is diverted by farmers with their own effort and since the canal is unlined a lot of it percolates and appears as groundwater recharge in the influence zone of the canal. Those who are near the canal and those who have well and are in a position to invest in pumps and the wells have been able to benefit. The major issues are now the release of water, whether or not water charges should be paid. Though the movement still attempts to raise the issue of the overall restructuring of the Takari scheme it is mainly the immediate issues around which the struggles are taking place.

⁵⁹ Information on these forms for the different campaigns may be found in many of the reports mentioned in the bibliography.

Phase two: the PSC becomes a basin-wide phenomenon

By the early nineties, in its formative phase as the MSC, the movement had spread to almost the entire taluka of Khanapur. It had acquired a distinctive take on equitable and sustainable water use and had a broad plan of restructuring the irrigation system within the Krishna basin. It had also attracted attention from a number of people in the region also on count of the trustworthiness, honesty and innovative forms of struggle that it carried out. During the early 1990s, the movement spread out in two directions and acquired its innovative characteristic in which it joined together the struggle of the drought affected and the dam affected into a common basin wide struggle. They can both be respectively seen to be centred on two SMOs: The Shetmajoor Kashtakari Shetkari Sanghatana (SKSS) and the Maharashtra Rajya Dharangrasta va Prakalpagrasta Parishad (the Parishad).

The *Shetmajoor Kashtakari Shetkari Sanghatana* and the struggle of the drought affected

The new phase also entailed a rapid expansion of the scope and reach of their work. They also received support from many more quarters around the ideas developed by the MSC, especially in relation to drought proofing and equitable water access. However, an additional focus that equitable access received in the course of this expansion was the issue of equitable access to the Krishna waters between the areas on the immediate banks of the river and the farther placed upland areas of the Krishna basin. Almost all of the irrigation development up to the 1990s had been concentrated on and around the Krishna banks. The idea of equitable access now became a powerful argument for restructuring existing and developing new systems to convey water to the heretofore neglected upland drought prone areas within the Krishna basin. A broad front and sympathetic support cutting across party lines but firmly centre and left in orientation began to form around these ideas.

Nagnath Anna Naikawdi, legendary revolutionary of the freedom struggle and veteran of several struggles on behalf of toilers was an important supporter and later a leader of this movement for equitable distribution of water. He provided the leadership to the Hutatma Kisan Ahir Co-operative Sugar Factory⁶⁰ in Walve taluka of Sangli district which was not one of the common run of the mill sugar cooperatives. It is one of the best run factories (it has always had one of the highest recovery rates of sugar in the state), it had a policy of

⁶⁰ Literally, hutatma is martyr and the factory was named after Kisan Ahir, a colleague of Nagnath Anna and a martyr of the freedom struggle during the 1940s.

supporting working class struggles and regularly kept aside a fund for such support, especially for the struggles of the unorganised. He lent active support, not only politically, but by often providing food and board for the activists and also providing them with vehicles when moving about for campaigns and for movement related work. Comrade Nana Shetye of the Lal Nishan Party (Leninist)⁶¹ and other left-wing leaders also rallied behind these ideas. The result was the formation of the Shetmajoor Kashtakari Shetkari Sanghtana (hereinafter: SKSS)⁶² meaning agriculture labourers and toiling peasants' organisation. The SKSS was formed at the Kini Parishad (conference held at Kini village) on 26th May 1993. The immediate context of Kini Parishad and the formation of SKSS was the demolition of the Babri Masjid a year earlier. After the demolition of Babri Masjid there was widespread mobilisation and this culminated in the Kini Parishad. The conference was attended by more than 25,000 people including prominent leftist leaders like comrade Govindrao Pansare, Dr. Baba Adhav and socially empathetic film celebrity Nilu Phule. SKSS was the not only a movement of toiling peasants and labourers but also a joint front committed to eradicate drought and press for the issue of equitable access to water from South Maharashtra.

The formation of the SKSS was followed by a series of actions in the 13 drought-prone talukas of the Krishna basin spread over Satara, Sangli, Solapur and Kolhapur districts. The SKSS became particularly popular and active in the drought-prone Aatpadi taluka of Sangli district. A rally of more than 25,000 persons on 11th July 1993 demanded equitable access to the water from the Dhom and Ujani dams for all the households, including the landless. This was followed by more than 66,000 signatures (almost all the adults from Aatpadi taluka) on a memorandum demanding a rightful share from the dams in the basin. Fifty six Gram Panchayats, many co-operative societies, workers' unions, ex-armymen's associations, many teachers and students passed unanimous resolutions in support of the memorandum. Even the Panchayat Samiti, the taluka level self-government body, passed a resolution in support. State government announced in 1994 that water would be provided to Aatpadi taluka from the proposed Urmodi dam. People from all the 80 villages of the taluka refused to pay land revenue until the demand for equitable share in the Krishna river water was met.

The movement for equitable distribution of the dammed water spread to 13 Talukas in the low rain fall zone of Sangli, Satara and Solapur districts comprising the Krishna basin

⁶¹ The Red Flag Party (Leninist)

⁶² Literally, Organisation of Agricultural Labourers and Toiling Peasants.

in Maharashtra and big rallies of tens of thousands of people demonstrated the strength of the movement. In view of this, some individuals from the left parties and also from the Congress party supported this demand. The Nationalist Congress Party included this demand in its election-manifesto for the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly elections in September 1999. After coming into power as, first dithered about fulfilling its election-promise. After repeated mass mobilizations by the PSC on the issue, the new Democratic Front government that came to power accepted the principle of 'equitable distribution of dammed water', in case of new dams. After assuming office in 2000, the Democratic Front drew up a 51-point common minimum programme, Equitable water distribution on per capita basis was included as the first point by the N. D. Patil Committee set up for that purpose.

Restructuring of Tembu Lift Irrigation Scheme

The Tembu Lift Irrigation Scheme (hereinafter Tembu scheme) that was launched in 1995 was at least partially a response to the pressures to provide the drought prone upland areas of the Krishna basin with a share of the Krishna Waters. The scheme, named after Tembu village located in Karad taluka of Satara district on the Krishna River bank from where the ambitious lift irrigation scheme proposes to lift 22 TMC of water from the Krishna basin, carry it in five successive stages through 317 m to the highest point, irrigating 79,000 hectares of land in 173 villages situated in six low-rainfall talukas from Satara, Sangli and Solapur districts.

Atpadi taluka, a stronghold of the PSC was to receive 4.4 TMC of water irrigating 16,000 hectares of land in 63 villages out of 84 villages in the taluka. SKSS launched a struggle in Aatpadi taluka to press for restructuring of this scheme based on the principle of equitable distribution of water so that it would supply about 5000 m³ of water to all the households, including the landless, in the 84 villages in the taluka. They also demonstrated that this was possible within the present 4.4 TMC that was being allocated to the taluka in the present plan.

In 1999 SKSS re-intensified its struggle for this demand, and its later application to the another areas of the scheme by launching a simultaneous 3-day dharna (protest) in the 13 drought-prone talukas of the 3 districts. More than 100,000 people, the dam affected and drought affected throughout the basin, participated in these protests. Finally, in September

2001, the government agreed in principle to reworking of the scheme on a pilot basis in Aatpadi taluka based on the principle of equitable distribution of water for all. The alternative draft proposal was submitted by SKSS in 2002 making a prima facie case that all the 22,000 households in Aatpadi taluka receive 5,000 cum of water per family. A joint proposal was to be worked out in detail by the irrigation department and the SKSS on how to operationalise the equitable distribution proposal and what its costs would be. For the first time that a government department has agreed to prepared an alternative detailed plan submitted by a people's movement.⁶³ In August 2002, the Chief Minister issued instructions for giving administrative sanction to this plan within 3 months, though the bureaucracy was slow to act on it. What is important is that it illustrates the potential for significant transformation that the demand for equitable water distribution in drought-prone areas can create.

By mid-2003, it became evident that the Tembu scheme was far from being completed and there was very little progress on working out the alternative restructuring of the scheme in Atpadi taluka. The SKSS called for a total bandh (closure) in Aatpadi taluka on 15th September 2003. At the same people from neighbouring Tasgaon taluka (drought-prone) organised huge rallies demanding a share of the Krishna river waters from the Tembu and Takari schemes. These rallies culminated in an indefinite sit-in of thousands of farmers in front of the Sangli District Collector's office on 1st December 2003. The concerned minister then agreed to extend the Tembu scheme to all the villages in the Atpadi and reorganise it based on the principle of equitable water distribution amongst and within villages. It was also agreed to work out a similar alternative for Tasgaon taluka. At present, water user associations are being formed in the villages of the two talukas, details of the alternative scheme are in the process of being worked out, additional budget allocations are being sought for the revised proposal and the work on the necessary structures and main canals is nearing completion. The movement is concentrating on ensuring that funds are allocated for construction of the Tembu lift as per the restructured plan and work commences in the full.

Another issue related to the Tembu scheme is the issue of energy. The energy consumption in lifting water by as much as 300 plus metres has come under criticism and the movement is engaged in including an answer to the co-management of energy and water.

⁶³ Joy (2002) examines the issue of financial and energy viability of the alternative scheme.

There is also the issue of whether the farmers will have to bear the full burden of the electricity cost which would make irrigated agriculture prohibitive. In an alternative plan worked out with experts, the movement has proposed setting aside a certain proportion of the water to be utilised for producing biomass that would be used exclusively in regenerating energy use through use of biomass for energy saving biomass technologies as well as biomass derived energy generation. Levelised basin costs as basis for water charges and dedicated energy saving biomass production and use are the two strategies that the movement has proposed to keep the energy and economic cost of water affordable for these drought prone regions. However, the main thrust of the present activity is oriented towards detailing the alternative distribution system and its costs.

The Dharangrast Parishad: the struggle of the dam affected

Large dams were once called the temples of modern India and exemplified the attitude to development during the hey-days of post-independence socialist influenced thinking in the government. Maharashtra, and particularly South Maharashtra probably has the largest concentration of large and medium dams in the country. In the hurry to construct dams on time and with as large a catchments technically possible, the government looked at the dam affected one more obstacles to be removed to facilitate speedy construction work. The dam affected, that is, those who lost their agricultural land or were displaced from the village where they were living were typically unorganised and unaware of the means and methods to oppose the state. Thousands of families have been uprooted from their ancestral lands and dumped into unfamiliar regions where the conditions are completely different.

Efforts to organise the dam and project affected began in the sixties and by the early 70s they were brought together under the umbrella of Maharashtra Rajya Dharan Grasta Va Prkalpa Grasta Shetakari Parishad⁶⁴ (hereinafter: Parishad) led by Dr. Baba Adhav and Comrade Datta Deshmukh. The emergence of organised opposition by the Parishad had a role to play in the state government enacting the Maharashtra Rehabilitation of the Project Affected Act in 1986. This act, at present is one of the most progressive in India, provides, amongst other things for a minimum of 2 acres of agricultural land in the command area to be provided to every dam affected family and specifies 18 civic amenities ranging from

⁶⁴ Maharashtra State Dam and Project Affected Farmers' Organisation

houses and schools to piped water supply and drainage to be provided for the new settlements of the dam affected people.

Struggles against MKVDC

The Bachawat Award (hereinafter: Award), the award of the tribunal set up to resolve the interstate dispute over Krishna waters between the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh of 1975 had specified the allocations for the respective states and had also ruled that whatever share of the three states is not utilised by the respective states by 31st May 2000 would then form a common pool, and would be eligible for reallocation in the next round of negotiations between the three states. By the mid 1990's the government realised that though a large number of projects had been planned, the actual impounding of water within Maharashtra in the Krishna basin was far below the quota allocated to Maharashtra state. This led to a spurt in the construction of as many dams as possible in order to impound additional water. The Maharashtra Krishna Valley Development Corporation (MKVDC) that had been formed in the 1990s was given the responsibility to ensure dam construction and the full utilisation of the allocated quota within that time. Dam constructions were being pushed through without proper rehabilitation of the dam-affected villages.

The Parishad decided to oppose this fast-track, pushed through, development and thus initiated a flurry of struggles against the government and MKVDC in particular. The MSC leadership that had merged into SKSS after the 1993 Kini Parishad was already involved in some of the struggles of the dam affected, especially those of the Koyna dam affected, one of the oldest dams which still has a number of rehabilitation issues outstanding. In face of the MKVDC attempt at stepping up dam construction activity, they decided to take this on through the medium of the Parishad. They became active within the Parishad and challenged the government on the issue of proper rehabilitation of the dam affected. They also found in it an opportunity to join the two struggles by arguing that proper and speedy rehabilitation meant proper and speedy completion of dams and thus was in the interests of the drought affected. They took up the issues of the dam affected in South Maharashtra in all 13 talukas of Sangli, Satara, Solapur and Kolhapur districts falling within the Krishna basin and affected by the Bachawat Award. In a series of struggles starting from 1995-96 the Parishad took up

the struggles of the dam affected persons in Uchangi, Chitri, Urmodi, Warana, Wangmarathwadi, Uttarmand and a number of other dams in these districts.

The resultant movement is characterised by its innovative demands and organizational strategies that have laid a foundation for the expansion of the water rights for the dam affected. The Parishad has been able to see that the existing provisions are fairly and faithfully implemented but more importantly, it has been able to set important precedents, both in terms of demands raised and accepted as well as in the form of struggles. For example, they have demanded that rehabilitation be completed *before* any water is stored in the dam ('rehabilitation before storage') and have been able to speed up rehabilitation and see that this is largely adhered to in the later struggles. Interestingly, by tying the storage issue to rehabilitation, they have been able to draw the drought affected beneficiaries of the project into the struggle by arguing for complete rehabilitation as a measure to early storage and access to water.

The Parishad has been able to argue for a *pani bhatta*, or water allowance to be paid to those farmers who have been rehabilitated but not given land with irrigation. The water allowance is then meant to compensate the dam affected for the delay in providing water they should have rightfully got and at least partially make up for the difference in productivity between irrigated and non-irrigated agriculture.. They were successful in getting the government to agree in principle for the *pani bhatta* in May 2000 (Rs. 600 per family per month) and were able to implement it for some of the projects and more importantly, set a precedent that can be exploited later. Similarly, they have taken advantage of the fact that the government orders mandate exploration of no or minimum rehabilitation alternatives to the dams or projects before sanctioning land acquisition. The struggles around every dam have their own unique story to tell, but for lack of space, one such struggle, the one around the Uchangi dam that combines many of these features is taken up below for a little more detailed description.

Uchangi struggle

In 1985, the Maharashtra government proposed a dam near Uchangi village on the Tarohol stream in the Ajara taluka of Kolhapur district. This proposed dam was to submerge roughly 222 hectares of land thus submerging six villages completely or partially. Chaphawade and Jeur were the most affected. The dam and its catchment fall in a high rainfall zone (with up

to 4000 mm of average annual rainfall) and is not drought-prone. The local farmers traditionally create small temporary bunds and feed canals to irrigate their agriculture lands so many farmers felt that the dam was not adding greatly to irrigation capacity. One of the reasons cited later in 1997-98 by the MKVDC, when Parishad took on the cause of Uchangi dam-affected populace, was that it was necessary to utilise Maharashtra's share of impounding water under the Bachawat Award.

In 1996, affected villagers of Chaphawade, Jeur and Chitale began protesting against the government when they came to know of the proposed Uchangi dam. They also proposed alternatives which they published in the local newspaper. They sought the assistance of the Parishad in 1997 and intensified their opposition. Given the evident popular opposition to the construction of the dam, the government began talks with the dam-affected villagers in November 1997. The villagers suggested scrapping of the present dam and exploration of other alternatives.

Here the movement was making a new kind of point, following the precedent set by the *Narmada Bachao Andolan* earlier, that the dam affected had not only the right to struggle for good and proper rehabilitation, but also to propose alternatives that would minimise submergence and the burden of the dam affected. The government agreed to consider the alternatives to the proposed Uchangi dam if the movement would put them forward. This agreement bolstered the confidence of the agitators and paved the way for development of a scientific alternative to government's plans. Parishad requested the assistance of engineer K. R. Datye (who had assisted the SKSS during Baliraja memorial dam struggle) and his colleagues from SOPPECOM and the *Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti* (BGVS)⁶⁵ to evolve an alternative. Accordingly, a Participative Resource Mapping (PRM) was carried out for the two villages. The alternative was based on information from the PRM, the toposheets and secondary information about the area through discussion with people. The Irrigation Department did not provide more detailed data of topographical survey that would have been required to for a more detailed alternative.

However, even while the alternative was being worked out, the MKVDC unilaterally decided to begin dam construction in monsoon of 1998. In pouring rain, thousands of villagers gathered at the dam site to oppose the construction and staged a sit in. A large police force

⁶⁵ Literally, India Science Knowledge Association.

was present, but sensing the mood of the people and their determination, the government suspended dam construction.

So after, the suggested alternative was put before the government. It comprised of the following elements:

- a) Reducing the Uchangi dam height by 5 ms to reduce the submergence area,, instead of having one large reservoir at Uchangi.
- b) Constructing three supplementary storage dams at Dhamanshet, Khetoba and Cherlakatta which would more than offset the reduction in storage at Uchangi
- c) Watershed treatment for the area, along with about eleven checkdams on the streams between Khetoba and Chaphawade.

The total impounded water in the alternative would be 624 mcft, each family in the region would receive 3,000 cum of dam water, and additional water from local watershed development would supplement this at a local level. Irrigated area would almost double, there would be no displacement of habitats and would greatly reduce the amount of good quality land that would be submerged.

The government did not accept the alternative. However, it did see merit in the Khetoba dam and also agreed to reduce the height of the Uchangi dam by 2 metres in December 1999. It also agreed that farmers who lost good quality land along the stream-banks because of submergence would be provided with lift irrigation for other parcels of land. These modifications meant that none of the houses in the village settlements would be submerged and those who lost good land would get some consideration. However, MKVDC has, through a Government Resolution (GR) of April 2004, decided to go ahead with the building of the dam according to the original design and height.

Lately, the Uchangi story has seen a number of twists and turns and has had an important role to play in the split that the movement has suffered and it is discussed separately as part of the discussion about the split.

Common mobilisations and struggles of the dam and drought affected

We have described in the foregone different struggles of the drought and the dam affected led by a common leadership. Even more important perhaps are larger mobilisations and struggles in which the two sections have participated in a common struggle with a common charter of demands. This section describes some of those struggles.

The Thiyya Andolan (Indefinite sit-in) that was launched on 19th January 2004 in front of the office of MKVDC at Pune was one of the important examples. Around 7,000 drought and dam affected persons participated. This agitation was launched in response to a series of accumulated grievances of the drought affected as well as the dam affected and brought them together on a common agenda and charter of demands. Nagnath Anna Naikawadi, Ganpatrao Deshmukh, Dr. Bharat Patankar and Dr. Baba Adhav were in the forefront of the Andolan. The background to this was the failure of the government to keep to the promises it had made in the earlier period. The Tembu and Takari Schemes were incomplete and the movement was demanding their speedy completion and restructuring. The movement also felt that the government was using the drought of 2003 and the EGS works that it had undertaken as an excuse to reduce funds and delay the construction of many dams which the movement saw as the only true solution to drought proofing. Many of the assurances given to the dam affected in respect of proper screening of alternatives, of the pani bhatta, of no storage before completion of rehabilitation were not being implemented. The Andolan declared that all the 7000 participants would stage an indefinite sit-in at the MKVDC office until their demands were considered.

In view of the unprecedented action and the forthcoming elections due that year, the protestors received a quick response and negotiations were carried out immediately. On the second day of the agitation, Home Minister and the Irrigation Minister agreed to some of the the demands and also agreed to continue discussions of the other demands. Some of the important measures that the government agreed to included the following. .

1. Rs. 1,500 crores would be made available and spent on dams and water systems before March 2004. Rs. 1,150 crores of these would be utilised within the Krishna river basin in accordance with earlier assurances.
2. Rs. 230 crores would be made available and similarly utilised for the rehabilitation of the dam-affected.
3. Equitable water distribution according to population rather than land was accepted in principle.
4. Re-examination of the new water policy that accorded greater priority to industry over agriculture in water allocation.

This was the biggest sit-in that the movement had organised, and possibly the largest indefinite sit-in on the drought issue by any organisation so far. Larger mobilisations have

certainly taken place but did not have the nature of either a sit in or did not declare an indefinite sit-in. equally important was the way the Andolan was organised. The actual Andolan was preceded by a preparatory period in which every village and local organisation came together and thought who it had to send to participate and then had to mobilise the bulk of the funds. The SMOs did not provide funds except for its main activists. This process itself created and confirmed a lot of the bonding that happened within the movement. In Pune itself, local organisations, including working class as well as students and activists' groups organised food packets for the participants and also collected financial contributions from urban sympathisers. All these things contributed to making the event a nodal point in the formation of the PSC and its identity.

As a follow up of the assurances given in 2004, another Thiyya Andolan was launched on 14th February 2005 at the Azad Maidan w(a large ground in Mumbai, close to the State Assembly and historically the place where protests and demonstrations have taken place) with the participation of about 1000 protesters from six districts of south Maharashtra and Konkan. The Andolan demanded action on part of the government to implement the principle of equitable distribution of water and asked for a better rehabilitation policy along with increase in fund allocation for the proper rehabilitation of the dam-oustees. The Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Water Resources (Krishna Basin) and the Minister of Co-operation and Rehabilitation negotiated with the delegation. It was agreed that if people in an area form WUAs that may not conform to command areas and decide to redistribute water amongst themselves equitably, the government would recognise such WUAs and accept their plans, provided all the beneficiaries under the existing plan would also be part of the equitable water distribution. It was at this meeting that the ministers agreed that, as pilot schemes, the irrigation department would actively cooperate in three talukas -- Kadegaon, Tasgaon and Aatpadi -- by providing technical assistance to restructure the current canal schemes in accordance to the principle of equitable water distribution. However, the issue of the additional funds necessary which would be required for the implementation of restructured schemes based on the principle of equitable water distribution was not resolved. The 'Urmodi pattern', wherein rehabilitation of the dam-oustees had to be completed as per the Rehabilitation Act before actual commencement of the dam construction work, was agreed to in principle by the government. The government also agreed to modify in the Rehabilitation Act after considering the note provided by SMD, which included the monthly

pani bhatta as a mandatory provision. The ministers also agreed to explore the option of creating a special sub-head for rehabilitation funds and de-linking them from the funds meant for backlog completion. Another follow up *Thiyya Andolan* was launched on 26th November 2008 by the dam-affected populace from Satara district in front of the Satara District Collector office. In response to this on 17th December 2008 during the Winter Assembly session of the Maharashtra State Legislature the government promised to meet the demands of the dam-affected and also promised prompt action on its earlier assurances.

The present situation in the movement

Currently, the movement is at a cross road. It seems poised to expand beyond the confines of South Maharashtra and at the same time it has suffered a major vertical split towards the end of 2009. These are indeed challenging times for the movement.

Poised for expansion

Over the last decade, and especially in the last five years, the movement has spread to areas outside its normal preserve of the 13 drought prone talukas of the Krishna basin in Maharashtra. One of the issues that has resulted in its spread is the issue of windmills and the issue of land acquisition and displacement caused by windmills and wind farms. The movement has come up with innovative demands for the compensation of those whose land is acquired for the windmills. The movement has opposed the practice of assessing worth of land and consequently the level of compensation on the basis of current use of land. The lands acquired are often wasteland and the government and the windmill operators have generally argued that they are worth very little and have assessed it accordingly.

The movement however has tended to give a series of arguments that move the focus to alternative use. For example in some cases it is argued that the land be valued not on the basis of what it presently yields, but on the basis of what its value is for the appropriator. Secondly, it is argued that providing land is tantamount to partnership and that landowners should be granted shares or percentage of profits. The important thing here is the change in discourse that the movement is bringing about: shifting the focus from present state and use to potential benefit to the appropriator. This is an important change and will give a much better bargain for the displaced. This has carried the movement eastwards into Solapur district and westward into Konkan.

The other major initiative that it is leading is in North Konkan, though the issue has the potential to cover all of Konkan. The issue is a complicated mosaic, but the movement seems to be utilising the synergies caused by the many factors. On the one hand we have the process of land acquisition, specifically for two mega thermal projects as well as for an SEZ. There is also the issue of water being provided to the thermal plants by diverting it from a major project that was supposed to irrigate a large tract of land including the very land that is now being acquired for the thermal projects! The authorities say they have diverted this water because it is not being utilised while the people maintain that they are not being provided water and hence it is not being utilised. And lastly there is the clause in the above-mentioned GR related to land acquisition for projects that enjoins the rehabilitation authority to first consider the minimum displacement alternatives before proceeding towards actual acquisition. The movement has put up a multilayered argument that may be summarised as follows.⁶⁶ Firstly, it analyses the power situation in Maharashtra and argues that the many plants being planned in Konkan are not required and that the power requirements can be fulfilled by alternative means. Secondly, it argues that the water from the project which was originally planned to be given to farmers in the area is lying unutilised because of project management and not because of the farmers, It presents an alternative plan and crop pattern that shows that the proper provision of water would be able to provide biomass with an energy replacement value that is similar to the energy being generated. Thirdly, it argues that there is sufficient fallow land lying mainly with the government in the same area or its vicinity which can be utilised for the thermal plants. And fourthly, it invokes the GR clause and asks the government to accept one of the above three alternatives as the minimum displacement (what can be more minimum than zero displacement?) alternative. This is a powerful set of arguments that cannot easily be brushed aside, especially when it is backed by a mass movement and mass mobilisation.

The discourse and the manner of building an alternative that has arisen in both these cases has an importance of changing the discourse around project and displacements, and has immediate and long term potential of extending the movement to very large areas. Moreover, it does not require the water-centred explicit alliance the drought and project affected that characterises the PSC but also constrains it in its spread (see below). It is now straightforward matter of building alternatives and alternative forms of discourse and

⁶⁶ For more a detailed discussion, see Joy K. J., Suhas Paranjape and Anant Phadke 2009

struggle of the project affected. Given the current trend of the government acting on behalf of projects (whether they are large government irrigation or multipurpose water resource projects, or private mining, industrial estates, SEZs, roads, infrastructure, power and the like for private parties) to acquire land on their behalf claiming public purpose – what some have called accumulation by dispossession – the potential for extension of these ideas is much larger. If it takes up these issues in earnest the movement will grow and spread but also change significantly and move away from its focus on water per se that now characterises it, in a sense move away from being the distinctive PSC movement it is today..

A vertical split

Just at the moment that it is poised for a major expansion, the movement has recently suffered a major vertical split. As said earlier, the PSC leadership has essentially been provided by the SMD, because while other currents or individual leaders may be handling one or the other flanks of the movement, it is the SMD leaders and activists together who have provided the leadership that cuts across all its flanks. In the past too there have been differences and splits. There have been instances when individual leaders have differed and have moved away or split from the movement: For example, the break with the dynamic leader Sampatrao Pawar of Balavadi and with Raosaheb Shinde of Benapur. There have also been more serious schisms too; an example is that of increasing distance between Nagnathanna Naikawadi who was one of the movement's staunchest supporters, in action as well as in resource provision. However, in all these instances the group of SMD activists and leaders who comprised the PSC leadership were united and it was isolated individuals who left or parted ways. The more serious aspect of the 2009 split is that it is a vertical split that has cut vertically through the SMD, especially the group that is active in the PSC area. In the aftermath of the split, the portion that continues to use the original identity is best described as led by Dr. Patankar, while the other calls itself now the SMD (Democratic) (SMD-D henceforward)

A number of reasons have been cited for the split, more so by the SMD-D who have felt aggrieved by the events leading up to the split. There seems to be the following set of issues over which divergent views have arisen. Firstly, and this seems to loom fairly large, is the issue of Dr. Patankar's leadership and style of functioning. The SMD-D argues that during last few years it has become very individualistic and devoid of democratic decision making.

More seriously, the SMD-D considered the attitude and role of the now-SMD led by Dr. Patankar in the further course of the Uchanggi dam struggle as unacceptable. It needs to be discussed in a little more detail.

The first issue was the attitude towards the government's decision to revoke the reduction in height that it had earlier announced. SMD-D felt that not enough attention was given to the people's opposition to this decision and willingness to fight on this issue and that the restoration of dam height was too easily accepted. This acceptance implies that an additional 85 acres would be submerged, most of it good agricultural land, without any addition to their rehabilitation package to compensate for it.

The second issue was the ceiling to be applied in the command area of the project. It is customary to apply a ceiling in the command area of a project. Land above the ceiling is acquired by the government and is consolidated into a land pool that is utilised for the rehabilitation of the project affected. The amount of irrigated land in the project command that can become available for the rehabilitation of the project affected therefore depends crucially on the size of the ceiling. The smaller the ceiling the larger the land pool. The movement had been demanding a ceiling of 4 acres to be applied to the Uchanggi dam as that is the ceiling for other dams in the area while the government was offering 8 acres. SMD-D feels that Dr. Patankar went back on the original demand of 4 acres and too easily accepted the ceiling of 8 instead of 4 acres - and that it was no accident that Babasaheb Kupekar of the NCP was the leader of the farmers from the Uchanggi command area. The villagers want rehabilitation within the command area of the dam, but if the 8-acre ceiling is accepted, some of them will have to accept rehabilitation somewhere else. The SMD-D thus finds the role of Dr. Patankar in the Uchanggi struggle unacceptable and it has played a large part in finally precipitating the split. The Uchanggi issue is not yet settled and villagers are still engaged in a struggle regarding the height of the dam and the ceiling.

There is also the issue of political alliances. So far, the PSC, and the SMD, had refrained from closely allying with any one party and that in many ways was its strength. It had come closest to something of the kind when it gave a call to oppose the policies of the BJP-Shiv Sena government. (and in fact during the BJP-Shiv Sena regime, many leaders and cadre of both the Congress and NCP joined the mass actions of the PSC).. However, the call here was couched in terms of an anti-fascist and anti-Hindutva call and did not specifically ally with any one party. In 2009 however, after the split SMD unambiguously allied itself with

the NCP during the Lok Sabha and Vidhansabha elections. After the split, this association of SMD and the NCP has become much more evident and by all appearances has grown stronger. For example, SMD actively campaigned for Babasaheb Kupekar of the NCP during the Assembly elections, when all these years, he has been the main political rival of SMD in that area.

Pani Sangharsh Chalwal: A Case Analysis

Framing of issues and core promise

Formally, the SKSS and the Parishad are the organisations that carry out the activities of the PSC. However, so far as the South Maharashtra region is concerned, the unifying ideology, beliefs and leadership between the activities of the SKSS and the MRDPP is provided by the SMD, and more specifically by the South Maharashtra members of the SMD.

Issue Framing

The first phase of the PSC, the Mukti Sangharsh Movement (MSM) was mainly confined to the Khanapur Taluka of Sangli district. However, much of the main framing of the issues took place in this phase. This initial issue framing took place in a dual interaction, between the basic tenets of the SMD and an intensive study of the area and through discussions with local people, sympathetic local political leaders from various political parties and trade unions, urban intellectuals and pro-people scientists.

SMD's belief in the confluence of class, caste and patriarchal oppression meant that equity issues were clearly central to their concerns. But very quickly, drought was identified as one of the most important issues. The initial issue then was framed in terms of the lack of permanent measures to eradicate recurring drought by the political hegemony of the society. This linked up without the issue of lack of control over and rights for sustainable utilisation of locally available natural resources by the local populace. Since water was one of the fundamental means of production in agriculture, equitable water distribution then became an instrumental to sustain basic livelihood for all and eradicate drought. In the long run, it became part of the fight against exploitative caste, class and patriarchal exploitation and for a comprehensive and radical overhaul of social relations of production in order to ensure the right to local populace to not only determine, govern and manage the sustainable use of locally available natural resources but also reap equitable benefits from the same. In the later

transition to the second phase of the PSC, the issue of drought eradication became also an issue of parity and equitable access to Krishna waters for the thirteen drought prone talukas of the Krishna basin and justice for the project affected people who would be the ones who would sacrificing their lands for this purpose.

What is important here in the framing is the confluence of drought eradication and equitable access to the Krishna waters with the broader long term aim of overthrowing caste, class and patriarchal oppression. There are many groups working with the long term objectives that the SMD had. However, it is the articulation of those broader goals with the issues of drought eradication and equitable access to Krishna watershed and the skill with which this was done that has made the PSC what it is. It allowed the PSC to represent itself as the bearer of the general interest of the region even while it championed the cause of those suffering from class, caste and patriarchal oppression. If we accept that at least one aspect of the exercise of hegemony by any social group is the ability to represent its own interests as general and universal interests, it may be said that the PSC succeeded in counter posing a hegemonic viewpoint of the oppressed in South Maharashtra.

Moreover, this interface also provided the PSC with the creative challenge that has fed its growth. The articulation of this interface is a constant effort as newer and newer issues have emerged, newer and newer areas have been added and more and more local issues with local specificities have also been included. As a result what we see now is an elaborate alternative that ranges from macro level policy issues – that themselves range from globalisation, participative irrigation management and water policy – to micro level issues of proposing alternatives to existing projects or proposing new projects.

Core promise

The core promise of the PSC can also be seen to be at two levels. For the more politicised participants of the PSC, especially the SMD leadership, it is this elaborate alternative itself. While the mass propaganda so far has focussed on equitable distribution of water, the very demand for inclusion of landless labourers and deserted women in this equitable distribution organically touches the gender and caste dimension of the issue. This is because dalits constitute the majority of the landless labourers and all deserted women are landless. It is the promise of the abolition of exploitative hegemony of upper castes and classes and patriarchy through the change in methods of production leading to a decentralised agro-industrial

society making use of local as well exogenously supplied natural resources in the transformed means, methods relations and forces of production. In other words, a revolution that not just seizes control of the means of production as developed by the capitalist forces but rather radically restructures them into a decentralised renewal based means of productions in a stateless and exploitation less society.

This however is likely to be an insider view of the leadership. It is suggested that the larger unifying core promise of the PSC is constituted in simpler terms. It is simply the promise of drought eradication through access to additional water and the vision of a more equitable and just society. In these two planks one can see two different elements being brought together. On the one hand are water issues, moreover, water issues related to livelihoods, economic concerns if they may be so called, and also issues of a more just and equitable society. However, is not just a general vision of a just and equitable society, it is very much a vision that is based on a certain identity, a regional identity that the PSC leadership has been careful to inculcate. It is an active appropriation and interlinking of traditions that the PSC holds important – the legacy of the Satyashodhak movement, Jotiba Phule, Shahu Maharaj (the progressive ruler of Kolhapur, the traditions of the great king Shivaji,) the legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar and, inserted within this framework, the legacy of Karl Marx. In fact, Dr. Patankar, who is one of the active symbols of the PSC, begins almost all his speeches with a steady invocation of all these legacies.

It is thus not just a movement for equitable water rights, it is a confluence of the summative identities of the traditions/legacies just named. It is this that makes for the bonds within the PSC, not just the common demand for water but these shared legacies. It is perhaps also important that South Maharashtra is a region in which it is possible for the legacies to come together, not without problems, but nevertheless come together. In other areas, they may not combine as easily. For example, landlessness is relatively smaller in South Maharashtra. However, in Marathwada region of Maharashtra, where landlessness is high, landlordism is stronger, and the conflict between the rural landed upper castes and the landless and marginal dalits is sharper, it will be more difficult to combine the legacies of the Satyashodhak Samaj and Babasaheb Ambedkar because their main followers are likely to be engaged in a sharper struggle. Even in south Maharashtra, inclusion of landless agricultural labourers and of deserted women is not the central plank of the movement. The central plank is equitable water distribution in general and hence the anti-casteist, anti-patriarchal

posturing is not the central ideological or programmatic driving force of the movement, even if the leadership has been emphasising anti-casteist, anti-patriarchal legacy. There are very few women activists/leaders in this movement and none of women's issues have been taken up by this movement.

In Vidarbha, which falls in an assured rainfall zone largely, other factors rather than water may be more important for livelihood assurance and the demand for access to water may not have the sufficient urgency to bring together different sections into a common movement. In all probability, therefore, the confluence of the demand for equitable access to water, drought eradication and the combination of the various legacies sustaining the vision of a just society may be a unique phenomenon that gives the PSC its identity, and also perhaps defines its constraints.

Major impacts

Mainstreaming the concept of equitable access

The most important impact of the movement is the change in discourse that the PSC has been able to bring about about water use. It has brought the issue of equitable access to water into the mainstream and has forced all political currents to respond to it and to take some stand on it. The particular concept of equitable access was pioneered by Vilasrao Salunkhe of the Pani Panchayat in the early 70s. The PSC has taken it over, refined, it and built a reasoning around it and made it the basis of an alternative path of development for the Krishna basin. It has now become a concept that is widely accepted term, though it is understood quite differently by different political currents. There are many distinctive aspects of the way that the issue of equitable access to water has been introduced by the PSC into the mainstream discourse.

The most important change in the concept of equitable access is the one pioneered by Vilasrao in the Pani Panchayat where every household got water enough to irrigate half an acre per family member irrespective of the total land it might own. Access to water was here delinked from land ownership and land rights. Implicit in this is a concept of need. Need is here assessed as the amount of irrigated land that would be required to provide livelihood and sustenance to every member of the household and this was taken to be roughly half an acre. The PSC has taken this further by emphasising the inclusion of landless labourers. This has the potential of becoming a redistribution of productive assets in the villages; Secondly

PSC has worked out a quantum of water amounting to about 3000 m³ of water per household and uses this amount as a thumb rule in its assessments.

The significance of this change is not clear unless it is contrasted with the dominant approach of the irrigation establishment. It basically thinks in terms of contiguous command areas and providing water to the land in the command areas and equity within the command is to assure equal water delivery to all the land in the command. Here access to water becomes mediated by ownership of land in the command. The PSC concept would start with the people and their requirements and the command would then be derived from it. This is essentially a difference between a land centred and people centred approach to water and irrigation.

Right to water as part of the right to livelihood

Water is also seen here as a means of livelihood and equitable access to water is seen as part of a right to livelihood, and hence it is extended to all, even the landless. Here the landless labourers are seen essentially as landless farmers or peasants and are therefore counted as part of all farmers. It is argued that giving them the right to water will enable them to acquire land for farming and farm it profitably. Similarly, water is also seen here as an independent means of production and the PSC has also argued that equitable access to water, de-linked from land rights is akin to land reforms in that it is a redistribution of the means of production, since if we look at land and water together as forming a productive unit, equitable access brings about a radical redistribution of this productive capacity that can supplement land reform without necessarily countering it.

Since every farmer is entitled to water in proportion to the number of persons the right to equitable access to water stands as an independent right de-linked from land rights and landholding. This provides expanded access to poorer farmers which is an important input in their primary source of livelihood which is agriculture. Moreover, since exploitative hierarchies based on class, caste and gender exercise their power in rural areas through control of land, delinking access of water from land also has an implicit challenge to the hegemony exercised by these hierarchies. What is remarkable is that it has found its way into the manifesto of the ruling coalition which included allocation of water according to population as an important clause in its manifesto.

Inclusion of dam affected and their access to water

As importantly perhaps the change in discourse also involved a change by including the oustees who `sacrificed' their land for the greater good and therefore stood in need of recognition and compensation for making equitable water access possible. This is a theme that runs through many of the speeches given from the PSC platforms, by small and big leaders alike and by those who are insiders as well as outsiders who are called upon to share the dais and express their views. And that itself indicates the power of the pressure for inclusion of the dam affected that the PSC has created. It is because of this inclusion that the forces of the dam and the drought affected have been able to combine instead of being pitched against each other.

The movement has strongly argued for water rights for the dam affected. Though the idea that the oustees should receive irrigated land has been there in the movement right from the beginning, the new stress on their right to water, up to and including the pani bhatta in the interim period is a much sharper focus on the rights component. Equitable access therefore does not just mean water for the command areas as it used to mean when the focus was on the irrigable gravity command rather than the individual farmers who were served, but it now means equitable access for the combined community of the dam affected and the potential beneficiaries.

Facilitation of rehabilitation, dam construction and water access

Hand in hand with the change in discourse, the movement has also had an important impact on the water resources in the area. Through its agitations, it has helped in the rehabilitation of the oustees, facilitated dam construction by demanding and getting greater fund allocations for the dam projects as well as for rehabilitation. It has also kept up the pressure for greater fund allocation to the major lift schemes in the area like the Tembu and Takari schemes.

However, it may perhaps be said that the movement has been much more successful in expanding water access than in distributing it equitably, especially within the village/command. It is noteworthy that the acceptance of proportionality to population is implicitly mainly aimed at regional distribution and allocation. It is not very clear whether it applies to the micro level and intra-regional water access. Use of the word population implies aggregate and bulk allocations rather than individual allocations, though there is still

sufficient ambiguity to allow the movement to interpret it in its own way. So far at least, its major achievements in terms of equitable access have been in changing the discourse and in getting it accepted in principle by the government. In this respect the imprecision of the term is an important component that allows different participants to identify with it and participate in the movement without major clash of interest.

Methods

Strategies employed by PSC

Joint action by drought and dam affected was of course the core strategy that has been the innovative element, the USP of the movement. But as it went along it also evolved innovative political and mobilisational strategies that were important in its growth and spread.

Relations with other political forces

The leadership of the movement which rested with the SMD attempted a way of operation of the day to day organisation of activity which has often been upheld as a non-sectarian approach within the left but has been rarely practised. The insistence was on the programme and the founding strategy rather than on party affiliation and activists from the other left parties, especially the local activists, were invited and even encouraged to work for the movement without severing their party ties. This created a broad left political space and the movement has had the support and participation of many left activists and leaders over the years.

As far as the larger polity was concerned, the movement drew a clear cut line between the Hindutva parties on the right and the others, and similarly welcomed any of the leaders from the non-Hindutva parties who wished to participate in the rallies and protests. However, the same sort of caveat generally operated that in one way or the other they had to show their agreement to the basic concept of equitable water distribution and their opposition to the Hindutva forces.

It also helped that the PSC operated in areas that formed the political base of some of the important ministers of the government. It became impractical for these ministers and their parties to ignore / avoid the demands of PSC, which was winning such wide support for its ideas. Moreover, the espousal of the cause of the dam-affected and drought-affected by

some of these ministers when earlier when their parties were not part of the ruling government had an important role in helping them come to power. This made it politically difficult for them to ignore their demands once they came to power.

However, there also seems to have been a downside to this and with some regularity, leaders have been dissociating as much as associating with the movement. Early leaders like Sampatrao Pawar and Raosaheb Shinde are no longer part of the movement. Similarly, Nagnath Anna Naikawadi a great supporter and prominent leader is also not associated with the movement. In sum, the growth of the movement cannot be seen as a linear process of increasing accretion; in fact, it is possible that the number of active leaders and activists of the movement has remained the same or even been reduced and there has been a process of turn over within the movement.

More serious are the differences in strategy that are reflected in the recent vertical split. The movement has always operated as a pressure group with respect to the ruling parties and their constituencies. The difference now is related to the degree of association with the ruling parties. The portion of the SMD leadership led by Dr. Bharat Patankar chose to go with the ruling Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) in the Assembly elections concluded last year in 2009. The plea was similar to the principle that was applied for participation of leaders in PSC rallies, that they proclaim in some way their acceptance and support of the PSC principles. The other group that now goes as SMD(D) believes that this is going too far, and while it is permissible to have such participation in individual rallies, mere proclamation of allegiance to a viewpoint is not enough for such a close political collaboration. This shows up the limitations of maintaining the type of broad political alliance mentioned above without getting embroiled in party politics. SMD (D) argues that the unequivocal support to the NCP is a departure from the earlier norms and will harm the movement in the long run.

Building alternatives

By far the most innovative aspect of the PSC has been its attitude towards alternatives. Normally, protest movements do not consider it their responsibility to provide an alternative what they are protesting against. It is generally assumed to be the responsibility of the state or the other party to provide that alternative. What is novel here is that the movement considers it an important point to be able to articulate an alternative that would satisfy the conditions they are demanding.

There are a number of fall outs of this conviction. First, it means that the suggested alternative must be shown, at least prima facie, to be feasible, practicable and viable. It puts on the movement the responsibility that the demands it makes are not unrealistic and are not so to speak 'asking for the moon' and are not an excessive demand put forward mainly to up the ante and raise the level at which the final anticipated compromise would take place.

It also implies that authentic and detailed information be available if an alternative is to be worked out. Since the state is often the repository of this information, it leads to a demand for greater transparency in information exchange and towards a right to information (RTI). Many of the struggles therefore have had a component of RTI to their struggles, much before the RTI Act was passed by government. The strategy helped the movement develop scientific plans based on government data and was seen as part of the decentralised democracy with parallel people's power that the movement visualised.

It also implied that the movement had to go into the technical details of many things related to land water and energy management. The movement therefore required a close collaboration with technical experts. In fulfilling the demands of the movement and the questions it set, the experts themselves have had to evolve new ideas and innovative solutions. The close link between innovative and alternative technology and technologists has been a strong feature of the movement and has much to do with getting the government to accept their ideas at least on a pilot scale.

However, the limitations of such an effort should also be kept in mind. At best the movement could demonstrate outlines of an alternative. The contribution was mainly in the form of demonstrating a prima facie feasibility, practicability and viability of the possible alternative. Working out of an alternative to an existing government scheme or plan is, in its totality, an exercise that required information, funds and manpower of the same order of magnitude as the original government effort and this is well nigh impossible for the movement. Moreover, the issues involving restructuring were aimed at large irrigation systems and there was no 'scale model' that could be demonstrated for them as could be done for other spheres, for example watershed development, where alternative plans for watershed development could be developed or for sanitation where village level plans were feasible. For this reason, many of the alternatives proposed by the movement have remained at the prima facie level, and for lack of sufficient funds have taken unanticipated shapes like they have in Baliraja and in Takari.

Confrontation and collaboration

The requirements of maintaining a strategic confrontation and a tactical collaboration with the state has been an acknowledged problem for self professed revolutionary parties and movements whose ultimate aim has been the revolutionary overthrow of state power. The PSC has been able to maintain this balance quite well. One component of this has been the strategy of alternatives. This has often allowed the movement to gain wider acceptance, often cutting into the political base of the ruling parties themselves. It also makes it difficult for the government to dismiss the movement's demands out of hand and paves the way for negotiation. It also helped form a basis for further collaboration in detailing and implementing alternative arrangements. Thus it made it possible for the movement to maintain its strategic opposition even while engaging in tactical collaboration which was now grounded in the alternatives which provided a clear basis and reason for the collaboration.

However, this was also backed by a sophisticated choice of timing, form and of agitation. Election times were utilised skilfully to force candidates from all parties to take a stand on the issues the movement raised. Persistent questioning of this type had led to the now ruling party political leaders accepting and supporting the movement's demands when they were out of power creating a favourable climate for negotiations later on. Similarly, timing was often chosen to coincide with anniversaries of important social and political figures and memorable events. This helped the movement claim the combined heritage of all the figures it held dear. Most of the forms that the movement chose were militant, participative but disciplined. The Thiyya Andolans, or indefinite 'sit in's described earlier and the way they were organised created a whole set of activities and processes around them which helped root the movement among different sections and also created the informal networks of relations and processes that characterise a social movement.

The movement also had a clear sense of when to withdraw and an orderly withdrawal was an important component of the way the struggles were organised. It generally did not bite off more than it could chew. Though a whole charter of demands was often repeated during an agitation, it was fairly clearly divided into its long term and short term components. The main objective was seen as twofold. To create awareness around the long term objectives, and agreement was often sought from the government in principle rather than in great detail and to make actual progress on concessions from the government in respect of the short term demands. Moreover, the process of agreement on those issues also was related to an

orderly withdrawal. A verbal promise was never considered sufficient, it was insisted that the decisions be minuted and the minutes include future course of action. This enabled the movement to create an instrument of accountability in the form of a written document or minutes which then were used for implementation, follow up and subsequent agitation and struggle if needed. The ebb and tide of confrontation and collaboration with the government was thus seen in terms of a process that ensured progressive accumulation of strength; of increasing concessions without loss in militancy or strategic confrontation.

Combined with this was a strategy of utilising the space within the existing government framework and laws to push for expansion of existing scope of legislation. As part of this, PSC launched agitations for effective implementation of existing legislation in a more equitable and transparent manner. One such provision is the provision in the rules that alternative avenues for fulfilling project objectives that minimised displacement be considered before project is sanctioned and implemented. This clause is being effectively used to demand consideration of equitable and displacement minimising alternatives. The demand for a pani bhatta also arose out of a similar interpretation of interim benefit clause.

Participation in the movement

The participation in the campaigns of the movement has been very large. Participation in local campaigns and struggles has been quite large and in the decentralised protest demonstrations tens of thousands of people have been reported to have gathered at each of the taluka centres in the 13 drought prone talukas of the Krishna basin. The strength of the movement is indicated by the Thiyya Andolan that the movement organised in Pune in 2004. More than 7,000 persons had come all the way to Pune, more than 200 km away from their villages in order to participate in the Andolan. As pointed out earlier, each of these itself involved a process at the village level in which at least the active people in the village had to participate.

The different forms of agitations, struggle and outreach that the movement had evolved also facilitated the participation of people at various levels and brought into its ambit all sections of rural society. In different struggles, women constitute one third to half of the total mobilization. The movement also called on teachers, the youth, the dalits, those who toiled, the *bahnjan samaj* – in short it utilised the many identities prevailing in society for its benefit. An important component of this was the experts and technically and scientifically trained

persons who they sought to draw in by virtue of exhibitions, fairs and a discussion of the alternatives they put forward. The movement also maintained close interaction with emerging innovative technologies in intensive farming, organic farming and low external input sustainable farming. The importance of these interactions lies in the cross-bonds, the informal bonds that form across sections and identities within the movement and gives them the character of a movement rather than a campaign.

Leadership and decision making within the movement

As mentioned earlier, the leadership of the movement is essentially the SMD activists and leaders in the area. The PSC as a whole has also associated with it the names of renowned leaders through the two SMOs as well as their association with the various campaigns and actions of the PSC. Most of the local SMD leadership is drawn from rural youth who have had various degrees of professional and educational backgrounds, but a majority of them are well educated. All of them come from rural and farming backgrounds and many come from poor farmer or agricultural labourer backgrounds.

Initially the entire leadership was treated and treated themselves as activists. Exigencies of the situation have now also created a parallel hierarchy of leadership that is clearly visible. Prominent among the activists-leaders is Dr. Bharat Patankar has acquired a stature, length of political experience and acuteness and innovative thinking that is quite in advance of other activists in the region. There is also a second line of activists-leaders who have a comparable length of political experience and ability but do not have or are not conferred a similar stature. There is then the third rank of activist-leaders who have joined the movement much later and have a comparably shorter length of political experience. In spite of gender being large in the writings and demands of the movement, the presence of women in the activist-leadership positions is small and their contribution to decision making is even smaller.

Decision making within the movement is a complex process because the movement does not necessarily have a formal structure that determines the process. In this process we may distinguish campaign related decisions, SMO related decisions and long term decisions. However, one trend was quite clear, that in overall decision making SMD exercised a major influence and also provided the continuity of interrelated decision making that characterises a movement and confers it a constant identity over time.

Campaign related decisions were taken by the group of leading activists related to that particular campaign. The composition of this group depended on the campaign under consideration. If the campaign was not only about wider policy issues, but related to a particular project or dam or village/s, a substantial group of persons from that particular project or dam or village/s were chosen to be part of the decision making process. The meeting usually called the Karyakartyanchi *baithak* or the activists' meeting would be the body that deliberated and took decisions related to the campaign. It could and often did comprise persons/activists from different parties, and in many of the larger campaigns, the number of SMD activists could be outnumbered in terms of numbers as well as in terms of stature, for example, when leaders like Nagnath Anna participated in these meetings. As has been pointed out earlier, campaigns were carried out in a transparent manner and negotiations took place in the presence of the assembled persons, not necessarily at the negotiation table but outside or in close proximity and the results were immediately conveyed and ratified by the assembly. This was what created the trust and openness that characterised the movement.

The SKSS started out with a formal structure but soon the formal structure was as good as abandoned. Membership was in principle open to anyone agreeing with the programme and paying membership fee, though this was soon abandoned.. There is no process any longer of who is a formal SKSS member. In that sense, SKSS is now informally the PSC and all those who profess to be part of it are by virtue of that part of the movement. All calls given in its name are calls given by the PSC leadership. The Parishad does have a more formal structure and the dam affected are in any case a much more clearly defined entity than the drought affected. The Parishad sporadically asks for membership dues and enrolls members and asks for donations and contributions when the dam affected get their benefits and compensation. For this reason the Parishad has a more formal presence. Since most of the work is carried out by the activists and in the form of specific campaigns and actions, the decision making body of the regional activity of the Parishad is simply the group of activists looking after a particular campaign or action.

The relationship of the PSC and the SMD is a complex one. SMD has regional committees and a central co-ordination committee that takes its decisions. Regional centres comprising members within a region are virtually autonomous bodies though they do have to conform to the decisions taken by the larger group and the central leadership. Thus the PSC is led by

the South Maharashtra members of SMD. Normally larger policy decisions are discussed and decided upon in the central co-ordination committee. Important campaigns and agitations may also be discussed by the central body. However, for most part, the regional committees and their leadership are free to take their own decisions, especially day to day decisions, though of course they are expected to follow the guidelines that may be evolved by either the general body of the SMD or the central co-ordination committee from time to time. Many of the particular characteristics of the PSC come out of the shared perspectives between the central and the regional – in this case, the South Maharashtra centre – of the SMD. The group is fairly small (a little less than a hundred). Membership of SMD is characteristic of a political grouping and one can only become a member after understanding and agreeing to the basic documents that outline the basic principles of SMD and a fairly intensive interaction with and formal acceptance by the existing members of the group.

Recently, in the period leading up to the 2009 split, there have been more and more complaints about the violation of this decision making process and a loss of its collective character of the decision making within the SMD as well within the other fora in South Maharashtra in which SMD operates, including that of the PSC. The criticism is basically directed at Dr. Bharat Patankar for taking unilateral decisions without regard to collective processes. Dr. Bharat Patankar has always maintained that he has followed all due process wherever it was formally required. It is possible that both processes may be true and that the informal modes may have changed in favour of concentration of decision making in the hands of Dr. Patankar even while the formal processes have been observed. If this were to continue at least one of the important elements that made the PSC more than a series of campaigns and more of a social movement might be weakened substantially.

Resource mobilisation

Very often the resource mobilisation – in terms of financial resources above all – in left currents comes from the funds accumulated through trades union or mass organisations associated with the movements. Since both the SMOs lack a formal structure and membership, resource mobilisation through the formal structure is small. The Parishad may periodically have some contributions from members when it receives lump sum payments for compensation arrears and the like, but these too tend to be intermittent and not very large. Most of the resource mobilisation therefore has to come from elsewhere.

The issue may again be divided into two parts. Resources needed for campaigns and specific actions and resources needed to sustain full time activists and long term activity. Resource mobilisation for specific campaigns follows the same logic as that of campaign decision making. It is limited to those campaigns and the net may be spread as wide as across the state and beyond, as for example was the case for the Baliraja dam when resources were mobilised from many places in the state as well as outside in small sums. The resource mobilisation activity itself flows into the campaign activity and also becomes a tool for awareness creation and outreach. There have been many innovative strategies often built into the campaign itself, for example, the mobilisation of food packets for the 'Thiyya Andolan in Pune in 2004 mentioned earlier.

Resource mobilisation for full time activists and long term activity is a different kettle of fish. For those full time activists belonging to other organised parties, their sustenance as well as the ancillary resources needed for their travel usually comes from sources specific to that political party, while their incidental expenses and support required for participation in the campaigns is part of the resource mobilisation effort for that particular campaign. Resources for the sustenance of the SMD full time activists come from the resources generated by SMD. The SMD has a rule of a 'levy' for its members whereby members are expected to contribute one per cent of their income to the SMD pool for its full time activists. Though it is not paid by all members and it is not clear whether the one per cent rule is uniformly applied, the SMD does generate a pool of funds for its activists. Full time activists are paid a minimum subsistence amount out of this fund that can at best pay for their travel. This amount is generally much smaller than what would be needed to live life even slightly above subsistence level in those areas. Often this amount is supplemented by spouse's income or family support or small time assignments and other work which may be taken without hindrance of their political activity. In practice it may not be wrong to say that the SMD contribution supplements the other sources of income and allows the family to let the activist work full time. These amounts may be small or large, and often in cases like those of Dr. Patankar, quite substantial. Some activists have been supported by Trusts like the JM Trust or the Samaj Krutadnyata Nidhi set up by some of the Socialist leaders to support full time activists. In the early phase of SMD made conscious efforts to collect small donations from urban sympathisers but over time this practice has weakened considerably.

For a few years spanning the nineties and the early years of the twenty first century, the Walwe Sugar Factory helped support activists by providing them with bed and board as well as providing them with 'wheels', vehicles when they were needed to run campaigns or organise actions. This support, especially the vehicle support, which as the leading activist-leader was available mainly to Dr. Patankar helped the movement improve its outreach immensely and build a basin wide network and constituency. By the late nineties, however, relations between Nagnath Anna who was the moving spirit behind the Walwa factory and the SMD leadership, especially Dr. Patankar had begun to deteriorate and the movement felt the need to take a distance from Nagnath Anna. The support provided by him, especially the vehicles, became an issue. It was essential to procure that kind of support for maintaining the basin wide networks and continuity that had emerged. As a consequence, the SMD began a special drive to collect funds to buy a small car and gift it to Dr. Bharat Patankar on his 50th birthday that fell in the year 2000. An extensive campaign by SMD succeeded in its objective and the car was gifted to Dr. Bharat Patankar as a mark of respect and homage to the work he had put in over the years for the movement.

The gift probably created as many problems as it solved. The first problem was the maintenance and upkeep of the car and the fuel cost involved in the extensive travels that it had to undertake. Most of this was borne personally by Dr. Patankar or his family though the movement did contribute through the interest earned from a fixed deposit in a bank especially kept aside. For that purpose having the vehicle at his disposal greatly increased the scope of the movement and incessant travel has been the lot of the vehicle for many years now. However, it also greatly increased the distance between Dr. Bharat Patankar and the other activist leaders. Very soon Dr. Bharat Patankar became the sole face of the movement in most of the basin. The movement began to be more and more identified with Dr. Patankar the roving ambassador who carried it everywhere. This identification between the movement and Dr. Patankar was soon to become a problem and contribute significantly to the split that took place in 2009.

Handling contradiction

The remarkable success that the PSC has had in expressing itself as the movement of the drought affected and the dam affected and their mutual mobilisation for each other's demands obscures the difficulty of handling the contradictions between them. It is important

to realise that while at a systemic and a macro level, their interests may be shown to be historically and potentially very similar if not identical, at a micro level their interests are clearly and plainly contradictory. While it is nice that the dam affected join the mobilisation for the demand that dam projects be expedited and receive greater financial outlays and that the drought affected join the demand for better compensation, in any given project the command area farmers will be pushing for as large an increase in storage and availability of water as possible while the dam affected will be pushing for a similar reduction. The parties who were shoulder to shoulder in the Mumbai march do not sit shoulder to shoulder in Urmodi or in Uchangi or in any other project. They sit across each other.

It is only when we place it in this perspective that we see how remarkably successful the PSC has been, and also we should realise how fragile that ability is. It is only constant and creative application of negotiating and mediating skills that has made this possible. However, the case of the Uchangi dam, especially in the context of the split illustrates the fragility of the situation. Take for example, the case of the ceiling in Uchangi, whether it should be 4 acres or 8 acres. Who decides? It is obvious that Dr. Patankar felt that 8 was a more pragmatic figure since he accepted it, while SMDDD felt that that was tantamount to reducing the land pool to insufficient levels. It is also clear that eight is favourable to the drought affected while four is favourable to the dam affected. The issue then is one whether we can indefinitely continue to find a balance acceptable to both, or do we at some point have to make a choice. The presence of this contradiction at the heart of the identity one has created is therefore fragile and in the PSC has been continually resolved through innovative and creative means. The moot point is how long and how indefinitely this can continue. As we have said earlier, the movement is at a crossroad, but whichever way it goes, or rather, whichever way the two sections go, whatever the PSC has achieved so far will remain a remarkable success of making water a central point in welding an alliance of the drought and the dam affected.

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Chapter 8

Ek Gaon Ek Panavatha: Case Study of 'One village One water point' campaign in Maharashtra

Raju Adagale⁶⁷, Deepti Oak⁶⁸ and Suhas Paranjape

The *Satya Shodhak Samaj*⁶⁹ was established in the year 1873 by Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, the renowned social revolutionary as part of the *Satyashodhak* Movement⁷⁰. Traditional society in India was organized along caste lines and a brahminical caste hierarchy, so called because it placed the Brahmins at the pinnacle of this hierarchy. Mahatma Phule's *Satyashodhak* movement was a radical response to this hierarchy. It was a movement against Brahmin dominance and all brahminical rituals and practices. However, it did not attempt to reform brahminical caste society but offered a radical alternative to it. It proclaimed a *Satyadharm*, a faith based on a single Creator. It proclaimed the equality of all human beings, including men and women. It needed no intermediaries for the rituals it prescribed. Any *satyashodhak* could lead and/or perform any of the rituals of the faith. The movement found a strong following at the turn of the century and though it waned by the 1920s, Mahatma Phule's thinking influenced and continues to influence radical thinking in Maharashtra. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the great educationist Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil are among those who were strongly influenced by the *Satyashodhak* movement. Dr. Baba Adhav, who initiated and led the Ek gaon ek panavatha (EGEP) campaign, was also deeply influenced by the *Satyashodhak* movement.

Baba was also as deeply influenced by socialist thought, more specifically, by the democratic, Gandhian socialism that is a common tradition of the much splintered socialist parties, as distinct from the communist parties and currents in the country. He was active in the *Rashtra Seva Dal* (RSD), a youth and service organisation, modelled on the *Congress Seva Dals* during the freedom movement. He has championed the cause of workers in the so called unorganised sector and has initiated, supported and led many organisations of the unorganised workers and has been President of the National Campaign Committee on

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⁶⁹ Literally, the Truth Seekers Society.

⁷⁰ Literally, the Truth Seekers Movement.

Unorganised Labour. He also heads the *Maharashtra Rajya Dharan va Prakashgrast Parishad*⁷¹, the organisation of the project and dam affected fighting for their rehabilitation.

Baba is actively involved in leading and running the *Hamal Panchayat*, a trade union of the *hamals*, the head load carriers who worked in the market places in Pune city, and was instrumental in setting it up in the 1950s. The *Hamal Panchayat* is also an active partner of the *Mahatma Phule Samta Pratishthan*, which serves as an organising centre for workers of Pune's large service industry, including rickshaw and tempo drivers, ragpickers and waste recyclers, handicapped people and farmers. These unions meet frequently, sharing the best strategies for breaking the shackles of exploitation. The *hamals* are mostly first and second generation migrants belonging to the rural poor, predominantly landless and lower caste. Baba traces the origin of the *Ek Gaon Ek Panavtha* campaign to the conversations he had with the *hamals* in the late sixties.

The traditional Brahminical caste organisation was strictly hierarchical and based on notions of purity and pollution. Water played an important role in this hierarchy. All the *savarna* castes, that is, all the castes excluding the dalits (the erstwhile untouchable castes), could freely touch water without polluting it and therefore could freely draw water from water sources, especially wells. However, the dalits were prohibited from drawing water from wells since their touch would pollute the water. They would have to wait for a *savarna* to come along, draw water from the well and pour it into their vessels from afar, without touching them or their shadows.

It was expected that this pernicious practice would disappear after Independence with the coming into force of the Constitution of India. Unlike other trade unionists who restricted themselves to the economic interests of their members, Baba was alive and sensitive to the social and personal matters of his members, and during 1969, he was surprised to find that the practice of denying water to dalits because they would pollute it was still practised in some of the villages. Baba says that since in his own village this pernicious practice had been long discontinued he was extremely surprised and disturbed to find that it was still being practised.

Meanwhile, Baba became increasingly involved in politics. He stood for election in 1971 and lost like many other stalwarts who were swept away by the Indira wave then sweeping the country. After that one experience he did not participate in any of the elections at state and

⁷¹ Literally, Maharashtra State Dam and Project Affected People's Confederation.

national level, and kept away from party politics, and did not join any political party though he did become a councillor in the Pune Municipal Corporation. Moving away from party politics, he went back to his roots. On 27 November 1971, a day before the death anniversary of Mahatma Phule, he announced the formation of the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Samata Pratishthan, a foundation that would work for equality in the ways of Mahatma Phule. The Pratishthan organised a gathering of progressive minded activists once a year to discuss and identify issues and actions and chalk out a programme for the year. This it felt would greatly help solve the social and economic problems facing the poor and the disadvantaged.

As he moved away from party politics he began to take up more and more social issues. His RSD and *Satyashodhak* influence already had made him sensitive to social issues. In 1972, Maharashtra reeled under an unprecedented drought, a drought that everyone remembers. It was a defining moment for Baba. Drought meant water scarcity and his thoughts went back to his 1969 conversations. He began to wonder how widespread the phenomenon was and what would be the impact of the drought on the situation. It is from this that the idea of a campaign cum movement for a single common shared water source for all in the village – *Ek Gaon Ek Panavtha* began to grow in his mind. He announced the campaign on 27 November 1972, the first birthday of the Pratishthan he had founded the earlier year.

As a first step he asked people to explore the situation in their villages collect information and send it to him. He had also evolved a format to help collect information but information in that format was collected mainly from Saswad and other areas around Pune city. Later a system evolved: Baba would go to a district or an area and call activists from that area and discuss with them the situation of dalits and the situation with respect to water in the villages in the area. Based on that information, he would then select the villages from the area or the campaign and visit it. The general modus operandi of the campaign started with this selection. On selection, Baba along with many activists or other leaders accompanying him, would visit the village. During the first few visits, he would go to the *chavadi*, the village meeting place, now often the Gram Panchayat office, call the *savarniyas* (persons from the *savarna* castes) from the village and after a round of introduction would ask the *savarniyas* from the village whether the dalits were allowed to draw water from the common well. They soon found that the answers were not quite straightforward and gave a biased and false image of the situation. After realising this Baba and his companions changed their approach.

They began to visit the dalit *vastis* (settlements) first, taking the *savarniyas* they met along with them.

On reaching the dalit *vasti* and settling down, Baba would ask for water to drink. Openly drinking the water brought by the dalits demonstrated his commitment to eradicate untouchability and helped form a bond of trust with the dalits. According to Baba, it was also necessary to bring it to the notice of the *savarniyas* who accompanied them. Thus he attempted to win the trust of the dalits as well as the *savarniyas* accompanying him. He then proceeded to discuss the issues related to caste based discrimination in the village. The discussion would start from the issue of water but would soon become much broader, bringing out the various facets of caste discrimination in the village. This communication with dalits in the dalit *vastis*, he would attempt to understand the issue of caste discrimination and its extent. He would then go to the *savarna vasti* and approach the *savarniyas* and try to change their mindsets. He would appeal to them to allow dalits the use of water from common wells. He would attempt to involve the dominant groups and personalities from the village into the discussion. If he could convince the *savarniyas*, they would then allow the dalits the use of common water sources for drinking. It all sounds very simple but was rarely so. The results were often mixed.

In about three years from 1972 to 1975, Baba was continuously busy in the EGEP work and visiting villages for the campaign. As part of the EGEP campaign, Baba visited more than 400 villages from over thirty talukas spread over all parts of Maharashtra – so called Western Maharashtra, Konkan, Marathwada, Vidharba and Khandesh or Northern Maharashtra. He kept detailed notes of his visits, some of which he published in the socialist weekly *Sadhana*. In addition he may have given some 100 talks and lectures on the subject. However, EGEP was rudely interrupted by the imposition of the Emergency on 25 June 1975. Baba, like so many other opposition leaders, was arrested and was not to be freed till 1977, only after the end of the Emergency.

During the Emergency, some groups did try and continue the EGEP campaign. The *Vishamata Nirmulan Samiti* attempted to continue it in some places. Hema Railkar, Vilas Wagh (a dalit activist and publisher) and R. P. Nene (a noted scholar and communist activist) who were already associated with EGEP decided to form a group and continue the campaign. They were active till the end of 1976. They visited one or two villages a week whenever possible, mostly on weekends. They covered about 45 villages, most of them from

around Pune. However, the movement was losing steam. After his release from prison, Baba plunged into activity on a number of social and economic issues. EGEP continued but sporadically, it no longer attracted the kind of attention it did in the pre-Emergency period. Baba revised his book in 1978 and added a long afterpiece and the book was received well. But on the whole, EGEP lost the character of a rising and vibrant mass campaign. It remains now as a significant landmark in the social-political history of Maharashtra, as much for what it achieved as for the greater promise that it perhaps also showed but could not realise.

Analysis

Emergence of EGEP

It seems to be quite clear that the immediate factor in the emergence of the EGEP in 1972 was the severe drought in Maharashtra that led to water and food scarcity. Given the practice of denying water from common sources to the dalits, this was bound to lead to greater distress and in some cases, as the book shows, also to atrocities against dalits. However, it is important also to see that we do not see it simply as a matter of access. Underlying Baba's thinking on this is the idea of human values and dignity. Baba felt and posed it as a matter of devaluation. For him the thought that went into the denial of access was as important as the denial itself. Hence his insistence on access to a *common* source summarised in the slogan '*ek gaon ek panavtha*'. He saw the opening of the water source as a confluence or a coming together of people cutting across caste and class divisions. That was what he aimed at.

Equally important for Baba were the influences of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, the socialist thinker who stressed the importance of taking into account caste oppression as being as important as class oppression and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, especially the struggles he waged on the issue. In 1927, Babasaheb had led the famous agitation in Mahad at a public source called the *chavdar tale*⁷² to establish the rights of untouchables over public water sources. This is what has come to be known as the Chavdar Tale Satyagraha (See box 1). Babasaheb's concern on the issue is also evident from a later development. After the so called Pune Pact in 1932, Babasaheb wrote to Congress leader Thakkar Bappa detailing his programme for the untouchables which needed to be accepted and followed by the *savarniyas*. The first item on that agenda was the demand to open all public wells in all villages for use by the untouchables.

⁷² Literally, the tasty water lake.

Box 1: The historic Chavdar Tale Satyagraha⁷³

At the instance of veteran social reformer Shri S K Bhole the Bombay Council passed a resolution on August 4, 1923 to allow the dalits then 'untouchables' access to public places, to water from public tanks and to facilities in schools and *dharamshalas*. The Municipal Boards disregarded the resolution of the Bombay Council.

Four years later, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar decided to launch a Water *Satyagraha* in Mahad whereby the dalits would draw water from a public source and a Dharma Satyagraha in Nasik whereby they would enter and pray inside a temple to establish the rights of the untouchables. A huge public meeting was organised at Mahad under the leadership of Babasaheb on March 19, 1927 and on the following day about 5,000 men and women led by him marched to the *Chavdar Tale* (literally the 'tasty water pond') and washed their hands in its waters. The incident sparked new hope among the dalits and at the same time it impressed upon them that nothing can be secured without struggle.

There was a backlash. Upper caste Hindus 'purified' the waters of the tank by ceremonially pouring 108 pitchers of water into it. The Mahad Municipality withdrew the government order allowing 'untouchables' to collect water from there. Accepting the challenge, Babasaheb set up the Mahad *Satyagraha Samiti* and called for a new Satyagraha on December 25, 1927. He set out for Mahad with 200 people on December 24, 1927 and was joined en route by thousands of dalits. On reaching Mahad he found that a case has been filed in a court to the effect that the *Chavdar Tale* was private property. He postponed the *satyagraha* so as not to break the law.

Babasaheb filed a writ in the Court and personally fought the case seeking for the dalits the right to draw water from the tank. A decade later the Bombay High Court gave a verdict in favour of the dalits on March 17, 1936. It was a historic victory for them, both on moral and legal grounds (Source: Based on the account in Paranjape 2008).

Equally important was the fact that the dalit question had remained unresolved – that caste discrimination continued to exist. Significant social actions were taken by eminent social thinkers like Mahatma Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. In the euphoria of the immediate post independence period the image of the work done by this great lineage of social reformers and revolutionaries was strong and the continued existence of many forms of social and economic discrimination was ignored. Slowly, these were coming to the fore and being uncovered. As Baba embarked upon the EGEP campaign, each visit uncovered its concealed existence, uncovered atrocities. The non-resolution of caste issues, especially those of the dalits, in spite of the great tradition of social reform in Maharashtra was certainly an important factor in the emergence of EGEP.

EGEP also marks a significant departure from the earlier class based thinking and in this respect it was akin to the new social movements that emerged in this period. EGEP may be seen as the first major campaign based squarely on the *satyashodhak* movement that reached an all Maharashtra scale. In this it paralleled the emergence of the Dalit Panthers, which was

⁷³ Literally the Tasty Lake Satyagraha – satyagraha literally means the insistence on truth but following Gandhiji who made the term and its connotation popular denotes a direct action to assert and do what one thinks legally and/or morally right and true accepting all the consequences flowing from it. Since then it has become a form of protest.

the other non-class phenomenon that was sweeping through Maharashtra at that point. It had a direct connection to the Black Panther movement in the Western world.

Resource mobilisation and leadership

This was the weakest area of the campaign. As said earlier, there was no formal organisation for the campaign, no committees, no enrolment of cadre nothing much that would continue beyond the even constituting the EGEP visit to the village. As a consequence there were also very little resources needed for EGEP. The initial call went out through the weekly *Sadbhava* and Baba's writing in the *Sadbhava* constituted the main information link. The initial information on the village was supplied spontaneously by activists based on Baba's appeal and his meetings in the districts or regions. In terms of resources therefore the only resources were the resources needed – time and money – for Baba and his accompanying team to the EGEP village selected for the visit. Baba's companions on the visit had to find their own time and could sometimes bear some of the cost of travel. For the rest, the *Pratishthan* and the *Hamal Panchayat* bore the cost, and quite willingly. The *Hamal Panchayat* allowed Baba to devote whatever time he thought was needed for the campaign, in effect granted him a sabbatical from union work.

However, while this arrangement meant that very few resources were needed to run the campaign, it also meant that there was no long term structure in place to look after the campaign, and similarly there were no cadre and there was no process of development of leadership through sustained action. EGEP village visits were not followed up as a rule, though there was a follow up in many cases, it was not done as a routine. The only activity that had continuity through the series was the leadership provided by Baba and to some extent his companion. His companions however, were not fully committed to EGEP, they participated in EGEP by giving a small part of their time, saved from their other multifarious activities. This implied that there was no 'second rank' leadership for the EGEP, everything centred on Baba and he was, in that sense the sole leader of the EGEP.

The social network: potential for a movement

What makes the EGEP more than a campaign, though probably less than a movement was the very wide social network that got built around it, in spite of it being a campaign run virtually single-handedly by Baba. Mahatma Phule Samata Pratishthan had also tried to bring about a social network on its own. It attempted to bring together activists of different

progressive currents in Maharashtra on a common platform. However this did not translate into as large a network as EGEP.

The first to respond in significantly large numbers were the local youth. The active youth from villages used to take up EGEP work willingly and enthusiastically. The biggest impact was in Ambejogai tehsil of Beed district in the Marathwada region. An Ek Gaon Ek Panvatha Committee was formed in Ambejogai, which included among others, eminent people like Principal Bhagwanrao Sabnis, Shri. Babasaheb Paranjape, Prof. Madhav More, Prof. S K Jogdanda, Dr. Dwarkadas Lohiya, Shri. R. C. Deshpande, MLA Raghunathrao Munde, Shri. Kisanrao Dehsmukh (Adhav, 2005). Though most of them were upper caste, they rallied behind EGEP and took up the campaign in a systematic manner. To a large extent it operated independently in the tehsil. Prof. Madhav More and S. K. Jogdand were also part of Dalit Yuvak Aghadi which was supporting and participating in the campaign. This dalit group was very strong in Marathwada that time.

There were a number of dalit professors who were involved in EGEP. Some of them also belonged to the newly formed Dalit Panther. The relationship between the dalit Panthers and EGEP was ambiguous and there were differences within the Panthers in their attitude to the EGEP. Nevertheless many Dalit Panthers helped and supported the EGEP at a local level. A number of non- party progressive organisations supported and were active in the EGEP campaign. Among them were the *Shramik Sanghatana*⁷⁴ which worked among the tribals of Dhule and Nandurbar districts, the *Yuvak Kranti Dal*⁷⁵ (*Yukrand* for short) which was a socialist youth group and had a good following in those days, the *Rashtra Seva Dal*, and the *Vishamta Nirmulan Samiti*, which also used to host an annual gathering of like minded radical, egalitarian grass roots groups. Also prominently associated were a number of eminent personages. There was considerable support from the urban middle class intellectuals – academicians, theatre personalities, literary figures and the like. For example Vijay Tendulkar, renowned playwright accompanied Baba on many visits. As earlier mentioned, Sharad Pawar, an eminent political figure and a minister in the state cabinet then also, actively participated in EGEP visits to four villages of Maharashtra. Most remarkable was the number of people and local activists who would spontaneously come forward with discrimination issue.

⁷⁴ Literally, Toilers' Organisation.

⁷⁵ Literally, Revolutionary Group of Youth.

Baba had called upon people through the weekly *Sadhana* to collect and send him information and he would follow it up in the district or area meetings he organised. Baba relied on people supplying him the information. This activated people. They had to collect information, feel the need to do so, act on it and supply it to Baba. This activity did not originate in Baba but was a local phenomenon, there had to be a spontaneous urge that was activated by Baba's call. That is what made it to spread to so many villages. On the face of it looks as if it is Baba's personal campaign. However, here we have a meeting between two processes, the visible tip of the iceberg which is the EGEP activity carried out by Baba, and the other, an expressive movement from below which finds in Baba's call an opportunity to express what has so far been suppressed. It is this that takes it beyond being a campaign and towards being a movement. That it was also happening in a largely non-class context, in some sense even outside the conventional 'caste politics' prevalent in the village and also because it was a phenomenon in which the parliamentary parties of all kinds including the left and the radical left were prominent by their absence, also makes it part of the phenomenon of the new social movements emerging at that time.

Relationship to the State

How did EGEP view the State? A perusal of EGEP literature as well as the political currents that comprised its support base clearly shows that its relationship to the State was adversarial. It made demands of the State, but believed in mass action as the primary instrument and direct negotiation rather than the mediation of the State. In fact, Baba eschewed parliamentary politics after his defeat in 1971. From that time he started to move away from parliamentary politics and concentrated on mass organisation, mass action and in the social and political sphere. All this rubbed off on the EGEP campaign, especially since Baba was the main, almost the sole, leader of EGEP. In fact, some of our discussants saw in Baba's adoption of EGEP an attempt to achieve the political importance he could not achieve through parliamentary elections. However, the episode of the state sponsored EGEP shows otherwise.

Sharad Pawar who had accompanied R P Nene on some of the EGEP village visits and was instrumental in making the water source open for dalits was a minister in the state cabinet in 1974. During those visits the people from the villages tried to approach him with various local problems, for example, that there were no irrigation canals serving the area, or that

some *gramsevak* was not distributing food grains justly, etc. To his credit, Pawar refused to entertain these complaints, and in one such meeting he curtly told the audience that he had come there for EGEP and that he would not discuss any other issue but the opening of public wells to dalits.

1974 was the birth centenary year of Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, Maharaja of the princely State of Kolhapur and a renowned social reformer. The Maharashtra government set up a committee headed by Sharad Pawar to suggest activities to be taken up during the centenary year. One of the activities suggested was the EGEP campaign. The government had set up a committee to look after the state programme and invited Baba to join the committee. Baba firmly refused and laid out his reasons in an article in the *Sadhana* weekly. (Adhav, Baba, *Sadhana*, 15 August 1974). It throws a lot of light on what he thinks about the state and the EGEP.

He finds the state's position on EGEP unacceptable. In his view the government's EGEP has not been undertaken with conviction and commitment but is merely a political gesture towards Shahu Maharaj with the intention of expanding support. If the government were serious about taking up EGEP as part of a campaign against untouchability and caste, it would not have supported and honoured those who were doing the exact opposite. He points out that just at about the same time in 1974 the government had felicitated *ghanpathi* Brahmins⁷⁶ who recited the Vedas which preached the opposite and also facilitated the Jagatguru Shankaracharya's visit to Kolhapur openly advocating the practice of purity and pollution customs based on caste.

He then goes on to detail the various measures that Shahu Maharaj had taken to eliminate caste discrimination, and untouchability in particular and the strictness with which he enforced those regulations. He cites a number of examples that show the seriousness of intent and the scrupulousness of implementation that Shahu Maharaj showed. An order of 15 January 1919 lays down how the untouchables should be treated in the educational institutions run by the state and explicitly details and prohibits the many ways in which untouchability was practiced, including separate seating and denial of entry and common facilities.

A further circular mentions this order and observes that there is laxity in following these orders, urges strictness in observance and threatens punitive action. Another order (of 19

⁷⁶ Brahmins who recite the Vedas.

January 1991) lists public buildings, dharamshalas, rest houses, state run annachchhatras, etc, and waterfronts on streams and wells and declares that they shall be availed of without being considered to be polluted by the touch of any human being. Further it also makes the village officials, the *patil*, and the *talathi responsible for any such action*. He meted out exemplary punishment to a police official who had mercilessly beaten up Sambhu Lokhande, a *mang*⁷⁷ who was dismissed on the spot. He had organised a felicitation for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and personally attended it. He had provided capital to a dalit, Gangaram Kamble, to open a tea shop and made it a point to drink tea at his shop whenever possible. In short, through these examples he demonstrates the commitment that Shahu Maharaj had towards eradicating untouchability and caste discrimination.

He then goes on to contrast the attitude of the present government to the same issue. Baba gives the example of Pangari Kute village as an example of this attitude (See Box 2). After repeated unsuccessful attempts to tackle the issue at a local level, Baba had approached a top level government official and asked to probe into the matter of the atrocities in Pangari Kute. At the same time another sympathiser and a member of the ruling Congress Party had also written to the government in the same regard. They received two different answers from the same official the one addressed to Baba in Marathi and the other in English. The Marathi letter denied that any problem existed and said that after investigation Baba's complaint had been found to be without foundation; the English one, ostensibly from the same official said that the matter had been resolved amicably between both the parties!

⁷⁷ One of the untouchable castes.

Box 2: Pangari Kute, Washim,

Pangari Kute is an example of a long and protracted struggle waged by the dalits for water as well as against caste discrimination. It is a village with predominantly rain fed agriculture. Things had been simmering between the dalits and the savarniyas there for quite some time. At the entrance to the village is a Maruti temple and it has the common well of the village. The Maratha community is dominated by the Kutes, hence the name of the village and the dalit community is dominated by the Gayakwads. Kutemaster, a retired schoolteacher is prominent in the village and Dr. Vasant Gayakwad, a dalit and the son of Kutemaster's friend and colleague has had the leadership of the dalits thrust upon him.

Most of the dalits have converted to Buddhism, but old practices die hard and they have been adapted and re-incorporated into their Buddhist practices. One such is that of *pola* or the festival of the bullocks. That day, bullocks are treated specially, coloured, given good food, and they are brought to the temple and pooja is performed for them. The dalits after converting to Buddhism found a new way to celebrate *pola*. They put up the Buddhist *panchsheel chakra*⁷⁸ on a *pipal* tree near their *vasti* and took the bullocks there and performed a *pradakshina* of the tree instead of taking them to the temple. This had been going on since the sixties. In 1973, someone also put up a saffron flag on the *pipal* tree. The dalits were irritated. In your religion you don't allow us entry and now that we do something separately that too you intervene! With the help of Dr. Vasant Gayakwad they approached the court with the claim that no one should interfere with what they did to the tree they owned.

That started a series of harassment. It became difficult for the dalits to get things at the village shops including the ration shop. They began to be refused credit. It was the aftermath of the drought and they were finding it difficult to get work. They began to be beaten up at the slightest pretexts. The worst was the denial of water from the temple well. They had no one to turn to. This continued right into 1974 summer when things really began to get really difficult. Neither could they get work in the neighbouring village. There was no choice but to leave the village and most of the dalits did so.

For Dr. Vasant Gayakwad who runs a hospital in the Buddhist *vasti* in Pangari, this was not acceptable. He went to Akola and met the district authorities and registered a complaint about the whole matter. The issue began to receive media attention and the issue hotted up further. When the dalits carried the body of an old woman who had died to the usual burial place, the owner of the land objected and it was with great difficulty and intervention of the police that the dalits were permitted to bury the body 'this once'.

Everything pointed to continuous harassment and as a means of fighting this it was decided to hold a *Satyagraha* on 14 April 1974 in which a number of eminent persons would participate. It was important to resolve the continuing obstacle of every place that was customarily public and common to be declared private. The temple was declared private as was the well. Legal opinion favoured the customary access as important, on the basis of which untouchability was banned from hotels, even if they were owned and run by private parties. So a legal petition was filed. The state responded by a massive presence of the police and the declaration section 37 disallowing assembly of 5 or more persons. In a tense atmosphere the *satyagraha* took place. In such cases the arrests are normal. Not so in this case. Participants were arrested carted off to jail miles away and had to undergo another sentence of a couple of days.

In June Sharad Pawar had declared the government EGEP and the committee was requested to visit the village. The *savarniyas* in the village were arrogant enough to talk back at Sharad Pawar and finally the government had to withdraw without result. Tension has continued till 1975 when another *satyagraha* was scheduled. The well was opened and later it was decided that rules be framed for the use of temple and well. The process is dragging on.

What is important here is that even a modicum of resistance was capable of calling in social boycott and harassment. It is indeed a very good sign that the dalits in the village did not lose heart and held out for so long. One shudders to think of what must be happening in villages where they may not have the same staying power.

⁷⁸ The Buddhist circle of five principles.

Baba uses this example as one that clearly shows how a Government that has no firm commitment to its objectives is not able to tackle social problems like caste oppressions. If the State does want to help it is much better that it should firmly implement the social *legislation* that had been enacted in the interest of socially backward sections. People, particularly from upper caste, respected their social beliefs, norms and rituals more than they did government legislation on the issue of caste oppression.

Deepa Mahanvar's critique of the state sponsored EGEP

Deepa Mahanvar (1975) has challenged the state led EGEP campaign by saying that there is a need to revisit the villages to see if the situation in the village has really changed or not. She believes that speeches by the politicians cannot alone induce the dalit youth to work for the untouchability issue. She has questioned the local governance structures as to why they do not follow up after the EGEP campaign once the ministers have given their speeches and moved on. Instead the gram sevaks, police, school teachers are the ones still troubling the dalits from the villages.

She suggests that the committee working on the EGEP, instead of visiting new villages day after day, should visit one village and then pay attention to their problems and try to resolve them before they move to the next village. She questioned if any of the committee members had ever gone back to any of the three villages from Kolhapur district that she had visited.⁷⁹ She felt that if such precautions are not taken then the events could take an opposite turn and then the dalit community will lose faith in their work and stop co-operating.

EGEP and its critics

While the EGEP received a lot of support from grass roots dalit activists, its relationship with the other sections of the new social movements and in particular the radical dalit groups like the Dalit Panthers was always an uneasy one, and at times distinctly oppositional. It is therefore important to look at these relationships in some detail. There has been no detailed analysis of the EGEP. The following is therefore based partly on the published material of that time and partly on extensive conversations with some of the prominent leaders of the movements who were involved in one way or the other with the EGEP.

⁷⁹ She mentioned the three villages as Nimshirgaon, Solankur and Sonage.

Ambedkarite and Gandhian viewpoints

While there was a lot of involvement of the local dalit youth from the villages in EGEP, there was not much involvement of dalit leaders. It is also possible that dalit leaders felt somewhere that if they collaborated with EGEP, Baba Adhav may take over their leadership and political position in the dalit community and in the society at large and possibly they did not show much interest nor offered much help for the campaign. They used to stay on and watch from the periphery whereas the local activists would help actively.

Anil Avachat, Marathi writer and artist and a keen political observer, also suggests that the difference in the approach of the dalit leadership and Baba, was similar to the difference between the Gandhian and Ambedkarite approaches. Dr. Ambedkar wanted that the dalits should win their rights and gain self-respect in society. Mahatma Gandhi on the other hand was addressing the *savarniyas* and trying to build their change of heart and effect a smoother transition of the savarnas more smoothly. But he thinks that they did not differ that much on the issue of rights. Gandhiji also said that the dalits should be given access to water and land which they deserve by right. So he saw both kinds of actions are supportive to each other.

However, he felt that the present designation of dalits as *harijans* was far from the way Gandhiji meant it to be. Mahatma Gandhi says, “The untouchable, to me is, as compared to us (Caste-Hindus), really a ‘*Harijan*’- a man of God- and we are ‘*Durjan*’ (men of evil)” (Shah, Ghanshyam 2007). Many Dalits also began to call themselves *harijans* hoping that the caste Hindus would change their behaviour towards them. However, it has not changed things much. The upper castes may have begun to call them *harijans* but unlike Gandhi they do not see themselves as *durjans*. Without understanding the deep sense of *durjan* which for Gandhiji meant an admission of the depth of the injustice they had perpetrated, calling the untouchables *harijans* proved to be a change of name not a change of heart.

Cutting across party and ideological lines

However, the lines were not as clear cut as it would seem. Though on the whole, while the old guard of the Ambedkarite tradition in the dalit leadership mostly opposed or were neutral to the EGEP, some leaders like Dadasaheb Rupavate, according to R. P. Nene, made a strong plea to support EGEP. Similarly, Vilas Wagh, a staunch Ambedkarite was not only a close supporter but along with R P Nene accompanied Baba in the EGEP visits.

Nevertheless most of the organised Ambedkarite parties and their leadership were not actively involved.

The case was similar with the left. None of the left political parties had accepted EGEP campaign as part of its own programme nor did they include it in their poll manifestos. The only exception the Socialist party, which not only included it in their political manifesto but also passed a resolution supporting EGEP and resolving to set free common water sources for the dalits in at least 100 villages by the next Independence day, that is, 15th August 1974. Socialist leader Pannalal Surana was the person instrumental in this strong support (Adhav, Baba 2005). Surana had also accompanied Baba to some villages only out of personal interest and concern. During the EGEP campaign there was some attempt to influence political parties and motivate them to include the issue in their own political manifestos, but this had little result.

Kanshiram of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) who also considers himself the true follower of Babasaheb Ambedkar saw EGEP as a Brahmin ploy, based on the presence and prominence of Brahmins like R P Nene, Sulbhatai Bramhe, Hema Railkar in the leadership of the campaign. He too was of the opinion that this campaign was functioning at a very superficial level. The real issue of giving equal political rights to dalits was not being thought of in depth.

However, what is interesting is that at the grass roots, precisely all these currents were supportive of the EGEP. And here too, we see the imprint of the potential to become a social movement. We have here a cross bonding, the building of *informal* bonds cutting across the formal structures. Equally importantly, though there was no strong support from the formal leadership, there was also no strong opposition or a counter-campaign by the formal leadership. This again is a characteristic of the new social movements, in which a groundswell of informal initiative bypasses or neutralises the formal and traditional leadership.

R. P. Nene: Staunch support in spite of differences

R. P. Nene believed in the leftist viewpoint. His perspective was totally based on a classical Marxist understanding of the economic structure of society. He believed that class as part of the base was primary and that caste was part of superstructure. And once the base undergoes a revolutionary change the super structures of caste system will automatically change. He

always felt that question of livelihoods and the earnings of the people were more important than the issue of water and the practice of untouchability around water. But as he participated in the EGEP out of respect for Baba and his work as well as out of a close friendship he came to mould his viewpoint somewhat. Though he did not give up his view that caste was part of the superstructure, he did realise that caste was a reality in India and as ingrained in the society as class. It was not something that could be ignored in the expectation that it would automatically disappear. Although he was not convinced that a radical change could occur through EGEP kind of activity he did feel that such efforts were important. And while he was convinced that the effort was necessary at that point in time, never did he feel that caste can be challenged or overthrown through this. To the end of his days, and from an openly classical viewpoint, he nevertheless lent his support to caste issues. In fact, he was responsible in forming the small group that kept EGEP going when Baba was in jail during the Emergency.

Nene, a leftist, expectedly takes a long historical view and attributes the success of the campaign partly to the conjuncture of events at that time and also the efforts made. The conjuncture he outlines is composed of various factors: industrialisation, railways, different social movements, particularly the role of the Satyashodhak Samaj in the earlier century, Ambedkar's work. Always a keen observer, he did not ignore the dimensions of personal interest that also operated. He believed that Baba's loss in the previous elections, where he had relied on issues of class struggle and the strength of the unions he had organised but politically it did not take him anywhere and he turned to addressing caste issue. Nene believed that Baba did want to establish himself in the political scene through this campaign. However, according to R P Nene the campaign was limited to socialists and a few interested individuals. Although there was no stiff opposition to the activity there was no political response either. However, this is also connected to his way of thinking in which the organised political parties loomed much larger and he tended to ignore non-traditional, smaller groupings or informal channels.

Relation between the Dalit Panther and the EGEP

Both EGEP and the dalit Panther emerged in the same period and both were expressions of new types of movements around dalit issues. They shared an uneasy relationship. Though, as pointed out earlier, local Dalit Panther leaders supported and participated in the EGEP,

there were sharp differences and exchanges between them. It is therefore interesting to explore their relationship in some detail.

The Republican Party set up by Babasaheb Ambedkar went into disarray after his death and the leadership splintered, and continues to be so. By the late sixties dalit youth, especially those who wished to see a revival of the Republican Party and a return to a unity of all those who swore by Babasaheb's name, soon began to be disillusioned on two counts. On the one hand they became disillusioned with the various Republican leaders and on the other hand they also became disillusioned with the formal political structure. They set out to find a new path for the liberation of the dalits. The example they set themselves was that of the Black Panthers. Thus Dalit Panther was formed on 9th July 1972 (Limbale, Sharankumar, 1992). Namdev Dhasal and Raja Dhale were its prominent leaders and both were to go different ways.

Raja Dhale was a staunch Ambedkarite. He says, "The main foundation or the basis for the EGEP campaign was wrong. Through this kind of collective mobilization no concrete results would be found. If through this campaign Dr. Baba Adhav could have achieved something, we would have followed him and remained loyal to him. Dalit Panther was of the opinion that if there were no positive results from the campaign, what was the use of the campaign? Our main area of disagreement with Baba was that unless we talk of political power for dalits no change is possible. Water cannot give power. Dalit Panther was formed to do away with the caste system. Its understanding of origin of caste system greatly differed from that of the leftists or Baba for that matter. Our approach was bold and people were therefore fascinated by us. At that time we had a good following and people had a lot of hope in us. There was no impact of EGEP on Dalit Panther. Although we respected Baba Adhav who has given his entire life for a social cause, we did oppose his ideas on caste system. We felt that he did not analyse the caste situation correctly and hence his programmes too lacked that edge."

Namdeo Dhasal, the other important Dalit Panther leader was of the opinion that EGEP campaign should not remain 'symbolic' but should reach down to the grassroots (Saptahik Manohar 15 September 1974). If sufficient attention were to be given to the short term and long term aspects, then EGEP could have become a short term programme and part of the larger programme. However, the Dalit Panther had no time to distinguish between long and short term programmes against caste discrimination. No typical border line for the long and

short term programmes had been marked by them. They wanted immediacy, for them revolution was immediate and imminent. They very often, gave immediate reactions to all type of atrocities. That was most important, according to Raja Dhale. On the whole Raja Dhale and the Panthers kept a distance from EGEP and he and most of the Dalit Panther leaders considered it a 'soft option'.

Also, the Dalit Panther was more confined to the so called neo-Buddhist or the erstwhile Mahar community while at the same time EGEP was addressing an issue with a wider set of oppressed castes in its purview and that issue of constituency needs analysis. Vertical caste alliance is a major issue in the Indian context. The EGEP and the Dalit Panthers both evolved in similar period and both fought against caste oppression, though with different ways and means. So it was natural that there would be conflicts sometime and co-operation also. Baba Adhav says, "Dalit Panther was not involved in this whole campaign. They were more interested in the political rights and not mere entry into temples and common water sources. But they never obstructed Baba Adhav's efforts." The neo-Buddhists never opposed the whole campaign though they never took it on their party agenda. Emergence of dalit panther was through a need felt by the huge sizable middle class who formed the major chunk of the democratic nation. The Dalit panther emerged more as a protection for them as they were never active in revolutionary work."

Box 3: Testing the limits

Since the campaign run by Baba had a fairly systematic character, the ways of dealing with the issue had a common framework which was rarely tested by going beyond it. However it was continually being tested in small ways. In one of the incidents narrated by R P Nene, Ramesh Avhad, a dalit bank official, then a student, had accompanied the team to a village called Mhalunge. He took a bold step by telling the dalits to take the buckets directly to draw water from the common well without having a word with the leadership there. It was a bold move according to R P Nene.

At that moment though a little worried, all the dalits and the team reached the well, filled water and took the buckets home. At that time the Marathas present there reacted mildly, saying they should not be doing this. But things were happening behind the scenes. The Marathas and the vanis in the village had come together and decided on a complete social boycott of the dalits from that village, and by the time Ramesh Avhad and R P Nene reached the highway to return to Pune, this boycott had already begun to be implemented.

R P Nene came to know about this incidence only when a dalit villager came to Pune and explained the whole situation. They rushed back to the village and met the police. The Police sub inspector in charge was a good person. He told the villagers to end the social boycott as it was against the law. Within two days this boycott ended and normalcy resumed, not to mention that it was the normalcy of old, that of caste discrimination. It also showed the prudence in doing things up front without prior talks with the *savarniyas*, but also pointed out the limits it placed on radical action.

Source: Interview with R P Nene

The lack of militancy made the activists from Dalit Panther sceptical that the net result would be that Baba Adhav would make political gain by using the dalits' vulnerability. Dhale mentioned one of the incidences as an illustration. In Brahmanaon in Parbhani district, a dalit woman was physically and sexually harassed. At the time, separately, Dalit Panther was involved in anti-atrocity activities and Baba was investigating and following up on the EGEP issue. This is one of the issues where Dalit Panther and Dr. Baba not only had different viewpoints but also strongly clashed. Meanwhile, Dalit Panther had organised a public programme in Pune in which Baba expressed a wish that the Dalit Panther and he should honour the assaulted woman by offering her a sari. Later Baba Adhav himself invited the woman from Parbhani to such a programme. The Dalit Panther had a different perspective. The woman, who had lost her dignity and self esteem, would not regain it by being honoured or glorified publicly. If at all Baba wanted to offer her a sari, it should have been done in her own village. That is what they (the Dalit Panther) would have done. The distrust and heat generated continued for some time. The day Baba was offering saris to the Brahmanaon victims Raja Dhale and Namdev Dhasal were being felicitated in Pune and Baba Adhav who had been requested to chair the meeting refused ostensibly because he was a member of a political party (See Box 4).

Box 4: Brahmangaon: Stripped of livelihood and honour

The incident at Brahmangaon was to be the site of a contestation between Baba and the Dalit Panthers. This village is situated two and half miles from the district place Parbhani in Marathwada region. Baba travelled from Parbhani to the village and he found it having the imprint of power; it was lush green even as the state reeled under drought. He reached the village the day following a press conference in which the questions asked exposed the biases of the *savarniyas* regarding the incident.

The incident in question involved two women who had gone to the neighbouring village of Soune to collect wood. They were found collecting wood from the shrubs growing on the bund of a Maratha farmer and were stripped and beaten. They had been told not to do so. After a lot of effort a case was registered under sections 392 and 354. The case is still pending.

The dalit population in the village is predominantly Buddhist but also includes a few Matangs, Kalals, Variks, etc. The dalits are practically all landless. There were no Mahar vatan lands in the village. The rest of the households are all Marathas, except for a couple of Brahmin and a few Muslim families. There is a lot of landlessness in the Marathas as well and so most of the agricultural labour is performed by the poor Marathas. As a consequence, dalits have very little employment.

The dalits have to depend on the commons and on casual employment. A few of them have menial jobs. Of the two women victims of the incident, one was married to a peon and the other was married to a peon who had lost his job and was now bed ridden due to illness. They were doing what all the dalits were doing to earn a livelihood. They scoured the commons and the bunds and the crop residues left behind in the fields, collected firewood, fodder and the like and sold these bundles for measly amounts. The incident had left them shocked, not only on account of the atrocity committed, but the implicit denial of the only form of local livelihood that was left to them.

The Brahmangaon incident attracted a lot of media attention then and was to form a bone of contention between the Dalit Panther and Baba. Raja Dhale cites the attitudes around the incident to bring out the clash of viewpoints involved. While the Panthers wanted more militant action, Baba decided to call the women to Pune and offer them saris as a mark of restoration of honour in some symbolic sense undoing the stripping they had undergone. The Panthers rejected the symbolism and found it demeaning. Baba nevertheless went ahead with his plans. The incident remained a contentious issue between them.

Source: Adhav 2005 and interviews with Baba Adhav and Raja Dhale

Within two years Dalit Panther split into two different groups one followed Marxism and the other Ambedkarism. The split was clearly based on the ideological and leadership conflicts between Namdeo Dhasal and Raja Dhale (Limbale, Sharankumar, 1992). Some of the Panthers later merged into the left movement. While discussing some of these issues, Baba Adhav expressed the opinion that Dalit Panther should not split, otherwise history would never forgive the Dalit Panther leaders (Adhav, Baba, Sadhana, 28 Sept 1974). The Dalit Panther were not amused. On the contrary, thinking that Baba Adhav wanted to take political advantage of Dalit Panther, they sarcastically offered him leadership if he would renounce his religion and convert to Buddhism (Limbale, Sharankumar, 1992). The distance remained. To the end, the Dalit Panther never worked in collaboration with and never supported the EGEP campaign.

Impact

If we judge EGEP by the impact it had in actually achieving a single common watering source in the village it covered, all accounts agree that while the short term success was striking, it was likely not to have been sustained in the long run. In fact, it is this lack of sustained success that is at the heart of the Dalit Panther rejection of EGEP whether it is Dhasal's criticism that it should not remain symbolic or Dhale's offer of becoming a staunch follower if EGEP would have truly shown results.

However, there was another important impact that it had. And this was that of dragging the issue of the dalits on to the centre stage. Baba's book *Ek Gaon Ek panavtha* shocked many people out of their complacency in those days. On that count, Dalit Panther and EGEP stand together, because in their own ways, they brought the issue out from the dark of the back stage and dumped it in the harsh light of the centre stage, to be confronted, justified, and opposed but not to be ignored. In fact, as Dhale points out in his interview with us, the Panthers had been bringing on this issue even more than the EGEP, and that the leftists often looked for new insights from the Panthers and not from Baba.

Sunita Deshpande has this to say of the book and its impact:

“Ek Gao Ek Panavatha (1976) was something of a literary event in Marathi literature. It was one of the earliest examples of ‘reportage’ in Marathi. On the surface each ‘entry’ is an account of a visit and the various encounters that took place during the visit but gradually a very complex web of social relations becomes discernible. One gets a picture of reality prevailing in the rural Maharashtra which normally escapes the routine and academically disciplined research’.

“The contents of the book were a slap on the face of those who had complacently proclaimed that untouchability was a relic of ancient times. Due to the success of the book and this movement, the Dalit movement in Maharashtra got a much needed shot in the arm. The postscript which Adhav wrote for the book examines at a theoretical level the issues raised in the book and brings the story of the movement up to 1978.

“The book is remarkable for its style too. Adhav writes in a simple, homely language. His rendering of the persons, situations are picturesque. With a few short sentences replete with the dialectical varieties of Marathi, Adhav recreates the scene before the ‘mind’s eye’. The style, so effective in its directness is capable of arousing the reader out of his complacency and making him indignant with the way the low caste people are being treated in our society. Indeed the style of the book is an example of a committed work of literature.”

(Deshpande 2007)

It is interesting to study the book from this perspective. In the account of each visit, the situation about a single water source occupies very little of the total span of the account. It is a common thread, but more as a common occasion, a so called ‘entry point’ for the larger issue of dalit oppression itself.

Box 5: For a mouthful of water . . .

The following account of the incident of Tupache Borgaon village is given below in a close transliteration of Baba's original text from the *sadhana* weekly. It illustrates both, Baba's style as also the harsh and tragic reality underlying the EGEP cases.

"It was about 3.30 pm. I entered the village with apprehension. Given the drought would anyone be at home? . . . How would the villagers react?.. After all it was murder . . .

I found Shrirang Gayakwad sitting on his doorstep. . . I introduced myself. He unfolded a mat for me. After a few minutes of silence he began to speak. Shevantabai also began to talk.

'See, Brother, these are our daughter's children. Ashok and Sunanda. Their mother died of snake bite. Must have been eight or nine years ago. Ashok must have been 7 or 8 then. There were four younger children. They had no one to look to. We brought these two here. Ashok grew up here. He would tend cattle, work the plough, weed . . . A farmhand's work. He liked farming. He didn't do much in school. May be for a couple of years.

'He had his food in the morning. Took his lunch with him and took the cattle to graze. . . . And then in the afternoon, we hear this shouting. That Ashok was beaten up! For a mouthful of water, Amrut Wani's Sharanappa beat up Ashok!

Ashok was grazing his cattle. He was thirsty.

He asked the Wani's son to pour him some water.

Sharanappa said 'I won't'

Ashok said, look I will touch your bindagi, come, I am really thirsty.

Ashok was sitting with his hands in front of his mouth for Sharanappa to pour some water into them. He made a gesture with his hands. Recoiling, Sharanappa hit him with his stick. It hit Ashok on the back of his head. A fatal spot.

The child fell senseless to the ground. The other children panicked. And ran away. . . . We tried the usual spells and chants . . . readied the bullock cart . . . put him in it . . . Went to the dispensary in Naldurg . . . The doctor directed us to Usmanabad . . . They took photos there . . . we did everything . . . but the child died. . . for a mouthful of water!

The mouthful of water Ashok did not receive was flowing through the eyes of the old man and woman. The Wani child is hardly 13-14 years of age. He may still be in primary school. The well was not too far. But being Lingayat, there were very strict norms of purity in the Wani household. Sharanappa's mind was saturated with all that.

The bones in Ashok's neck had been thoroughly mangled.

The police will put it away; it was after all two children fighting.

Who knows what will happen in court?

Will Ashok's soul find justice there?

. . . Our society is fast asleep, oblivious of all this.

Source: Adhav 2005

In this narrative therefore the absence of a common watering source is a mark of the *depth* of oppression. In something as trivially routine yet as vital as drinking water, which therefore should have been freely available to everyone on both counts, both because it is so trivial a matter or because it is so vital a need for everyone, that its denial then functions as materialised symbol of dalit oppression. Also within Indian tradition it is the first thing one is expected to offer a visitor. The pattern is the same with the village visits. Discussion starts with water but seldom stays there. The important point here is that though the campaign

fails in its ostensible objective, it succeeds greatly in the embedding objective, that of exposing dalit caste oppression.

The core promise: the annihilation of caste

What is important here is that the core promise of the movement is *not* access to water though it certainly aims at that as one of the result. For Baba the EGEP is a revival of the *satyashodhak* tradition, a means of its resurgence. He has said this explicitly when he announced the EGEP campaign in 1972 and later. If he starts with water, he does so because of the multiple layers that water accumulates. It is also included in the actions of those he follows. Mahatma Phule opened his own well and tank for the dalits, Shahu Maharaj decreed all water sources open to dalits and Babasaheb led the *Chavdar Tale* campaign. He was in that sense following in their footsteps.

This is clearly implicit in one of the strands of the argument he takes up in his 1974 Independence Day article. He points out that in response to the EGEP, instead of implementing EGEP the Social Welfare Department of the Government of Maharashtra was then planning to sanction one well for each of the dalit *vastis* in the villages. On the face of it many would welcome the step. How long, they would argue should the dalits go on suffering? The point, Baba says, is not that, it is something else. This assistance will go towards helping maintain 'orthodoxy' within the village. It is in effect a subsidy for protecting caste discrimination, a subsidy that could be better utilised by ending caste discrimination and having a common source.

This is a real dilemma. Because EGEP can be seen as exclusion of dalits from *access* which puts solutions squarely in increasing access, leave aside common source or not, or it can be seen as an exclusion from *equal status* where it would no longer be an issue simply of access, but an issue of access *plus*. Subsequently, the state has acted upon the former interpretation and has taken up a drive to expand *independent access* to water for the dalits. This has driven the issues involved underground not eliminating them but making them invisible and blunting their edge. But as subsequent events have shown (For example Paranjape 2008) they erupt when the carefully laid out arrangements for separation of access break down, for example, in bad years.

Identity: dalit or bahujan?

A similar logic is at work in which identities are implicit in the way the EGEP used to function. Kanshi Ram finds EGEP brahmanical. The Panthers find it `soft' and vacillating. The insistence on involving the *savarniyas* is also seen as a thorn in resolving the issues. The crucial issue is what is the identity that is expressive in EGEP and what is it trying to build. Anyone who goes through Baba's writings will find it difficult to maintain that EGEP is brahmanical in its orientation. Everything that Baba writes is saturated with Phule's *satyashodhak* standpoint and is explicitly anti-brahminism, even in places, anti-brahmin. The presence of those born Brahmins like Nene, Railkar or Brahme can hardly be a sound argument for attributing a brahminical identity to EGEP. This attribution stems mainly from the seemingly `collaborationist' stand with respect to the *savarniyas*. That is the nub of the matter. Baba himself is a militant activist. He has led many militant struggles, has supported militant causes. This apparent collaborationist character of EGEP does not sit well with the rest of his activity.

However, this can best be understood on the basis of the unarticulated identity that he is attempting to build. It is unarticulated explicitly, not because it is unimportant, but because it is so self evident that it need not be disputed, it is obvious and therefore implicit. That is the identity of the *bahujan* samaj, literally the majority of society. However the *bahujan* identity also has clear delineations for a *satyashodhak* and a Lohiaite socialist. On the one hand it is the majority that suffers caste discrimination in a brahminical society, comprising largely the non-brahmin castes, and it is the toiling majority, those who labour. This identity is easy enough to identify in his writings. What is important is the role that it plays in shaping the particular way in which EGEP played itself out on the ground.

The issue of untouchability and dalits cuts right through this identity and we can see EGEP as an attempt to re-forged this identity by healing this cut. Even though the non-dalit *bahujan* sections practice untouchability, he wants their co-operation in the EGEP campaign because he is hoping to *rebuild* the *bahujan* identity on the basis of action against untouchability. It explains, why he insists on the *savarniyas* accompanying him, why in spite of everything he does not open a general campaign *against* non-dalit rural sections in general. The motto seems to be to stand firmly behind the dalits, but use persuasion and legal avenues rather than direct militant action.

Is it possible to build a *bahujan* identity that *includes* the dalits on an equal footing? This is the moot question. And the largely unarticulated implicit answer embedded in the practice and writings of EGEP is yes. That itself is problematic. Traditional caste society in India, and its rules and practices, represent a nested and overlapping system of oppressive hierarchies. The division between oppressors and the oppressed and the collective identity of the oppressors against the oppressed would be a similar nested and overlapping set of identities. Militant and revolutionary identities would again be such a set of *militant* identities. What this implies is that it will not do to sacrifice the militancy of one level in favour of a larger identity. Perhaps this is what was happening with EGEP and keeping it back, preventing it from being or becoming a radical and new social movement.

Just short of becoming a social movement

In the end, we find that the EGEP campaign practically withered away, and along with it the potential that it had of becoming a social movement. In retrospect, there were a number of factors responsible for this. Firstly, the whole institutional arrangement of EGEP was not conducive to the building of a movement. Organisationally, there was no social movement organisation that could hold together a movement and carry it forward. There were informal institutional arrangements, but they were informal and temporary. There was no strong and stable organisation that could represent the long term interests of the movement, groom cadre for it and accumulate the necessary leadership and resources for it.

Secondly, it served an important purpose and its work represents all that a movement would do in its preparatory phase. It had a striking effect in highlighting dalit issues from a *satyashodhak* viewpoint. The book and the series of articles in the *Sadbhava* weekly exposed the myriad forms that caste discrimination and oppression took. It highlighted many of the features that would become action points for the dalit movement later on.

Thirdly, in some ways it was the success of the above which led to problems for its continuance. The wealth of information on dalit oppression that it created fed into the making of an independent militant dalit identity rather than into a militant bahujan identity that included the dalits. Given that the EGEP was shaped by the latter, this also led to a weakening of the basis for an EGEP campaign.

Lastly, events overtook EGEP in their sharpness and ferocity. The basic underlying premise of EGEP was that the contradictions within the *bahujans* could be overcome peacefully,

though it would require firm action, especially those among the dalits and the large mass of non-brahmin and toiling castes. However, this was belied by the turn of events. The *namantar* movement, the movement for the long pending renaming of the Marathwada University after Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, resulted in a series of ferocious and brutal riots. The various subdivisions between castes began to matter in terms of demands and mobilisation. The issue of nomadic tribes and of the non-Buddhist sections among the dalits also began to acquire an importance of their own. Caste related women's issues like those of the *devdasis* and deserted women began to come up in a big way. Most of these are phenomena that were brought to the centre stage by Baba's own book on EGEP. However, what they did was not to strengthen EGEP but to initiate separate action on those issues. EGEP in some sense disappeared into all these streams, carrying out a historical fertilisation of these currents on what it had uncovered. It could not become a social movement on its own, but remains an example of a campaign that contributed in plenty to the groundswell of the new social movements that grew around it.

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Chapter 9

Characteristic features of social movements around water: Conclusions

The discussion on the seven case studies shows that they mainly focus on civil society/NGO guided collective mobilisation initiatives around water. As may be clear by now, the degree to which they may be classified as social movements in the full sense of the term is varied; while some can be clearly classified as social movements (the Pani Sangharsh Chalwal and the Hirakud movement) others share many elements even though it may be difficult to apply the term to them in its full sense. Nevertheless, what is important is that all of them seem to have had the potential to become full fledged social movements built around water issues. It is then an interesting problem why only some of them could become full fledged movements, while others could not, albeit to varying degrees.

A comparative analysis of the macro context and more micro level analysis of the processes associated with such movements such as genesis, development of a particular movement, construction of leadership, methods/strategies of collective mobilization, establishment of organizational structure, hegemonic links with other political processes, identity formation as per the issue as well as with respect to the profile of the participants etc. will help develop a better understanding of this spectrum of social movements around water in India. It is this task that this concluding chapter attempts.

Factors behind the emergence

Detailed analysis of these cases reveals that there are various factors responsible for the emergence of movements around water in India. While some of the factors are related to a wider context, local contexts are also as if not more important. For example, for the Kengrehalla Rejuvenation Movement in Karnataka, the larger factor behind emergence of this movement was water scarcity and resultant contestation between town and village users and drying up of the Kengre stream, but the immediate trigger was the proposal to construct a six metre dam across the Kengre stream and a decision to shift the site of the same from a river to a stream. The Palathulli movement led by Malayalam Manorama in Kerala was premised on the perception of water scarcity and a series of consecutive droughts in Kerala. However, another important factor behind the emergence of this movement was also its

need at that point to project itself as a socially concerned organization in view of the competition it faced from *Matrubhumi*, another widely circulated newspaper in Kerala. *Matrubhumi* was reporting on the growing water crisis and the conflicts around water.

The movement led by Bhavani River Protection Joint Council (BRPJC), Tamil Nadu came about as a result of rapid industrialization, rapid growth of water consuming industries in Bhavani river basin and resultant heavy industrial pollution especially in the Lower Bhavani basin in the mid 1980s, but it was also important that it could focus on South India Viscose, the main industry polluting it as the major culprit.

The movement led by Sambalpur Zilla Krushak Suraksha Sangathan in Orissa emerged on the background of rapid industrialization in post 1990s resulting in water diversion from Hirakud reservoir, one of the major water sources traditionally designed and used for irrigation rather than industrial use. However, it was as important that it could draw upon its strength as a farmers' organisation dealing with local farmers' issues. The movement evolved in three stages, initially it emerged as an expression of the farmers' unrest over under-pricing of paddy, then led to monitoring canal reservoir project and finally to a movement against diversion of water from agriculture to industry. It is interesting to see how the SZKSS which was initially a farmer's movement geared itself to organise around water. The rapidly changing context in Orissa where industrialisation was seen as the main route to development prompted the government to divert its crucial water resources to industry. From a demand for increased price for paddy the masses got organised into opposing the allocation of water to industry over agriculture. The wider political context of neoliberal policies shaped the emergence of this movement.

The two movements from Maharashtra are both grounded in the background issue of drought in Maharashtra but have taken distinctly different courses. The severe Maharashtra drought of 1972 and the very particular problems faced by dalits around water and resulting in different kinds of atrocities against Dalits were the background for the Ek Gaon Ek Panavtha movement led by Dr. Baba Adhav. However, in taking up the issue on the basis of his discussions in the Hamal Panchayat, a trade union, also led to a non-class framework centred on Mahatma Phule's Satyashodhak movement and emphasised the value of human being in the face of water. The latter is important for what it could achieve and also for what it could not. The Pani Sangharsha Chalwal which originated from the Mukti Sangharsh movement of the mid and late 1980s and that has now spread in the 13 drought prone

talukas of the three districts of southern Maharashtra - Sangli, Satara and Solapur – also focused on the issue of drought but followed a different course. Initiated first very clearly as a mass movement fighting for the rights of wage of labourers working on the EGS schemes in the wake of drought; it quickly became a talukawide movement for emancipation from class, caste as well as patriarchy and raised the demand of drought eradication. The main demand the movement raised was that of equitable distribution of water for livelihoods for all. However, its subsequent progress and strength are not only related to the general context of drought, but very much related to the demand for equitable access of Krishna waters for the drought prone regions within the basin. Megh Pyne Abhiyan emerged in North Bihar in the socio-political context of floods. North Bihar is a region characterised by floods particularly after the 70's. The solution to floods is seen in relief work, with little understanding of what causes them. This resulted in a mushrooming of NGOs and civil society groups that looked at floods as a mechanism for their own survival. This overriding emphasis on relief has in fact created dependence amongst the local community which has not been able to look for local and sustainable solutions to the problem. It is amidst this politics of flood that Megh Pyne Abhiyan emerged. It sought to get people out of the dependency mindset and look for solutions in their own environments through local knowledge base. The strong presence of grassroot organizations working since decade in the four districts of North Bihar having collective history of social work including issues such as social mobilization, floods management, social awareness with regard to gender-related violence, agricultural practices, livelihood enhancement, community health, upliftment of backward castes, decentralized governance contributed significantly to the emergence of MPA.

These varied range of factors can be seen to have included immediate water related concerns such as water scarcity, equitable water distribution, water pollution, water allocation etc, broader structural conditions related to wider contexts leading to disillusionment/discontent among different stakeholders such as drought, famine, industrial growth, setback in agriculture etc, and also to a variety of local factors that helped shape the identity of the movements. In other words, though movements around water see themselves as such, they emerge and acquire their identity and character through a complex relationship to other broader issues as well as contexts including inequalities arising from structural conditions and particular local characteristics which shape them and their reach and sense of identity.

These differences have given rise to different characteristic features of the movements around water.

Forms and methods of collective action/mobilisation:

The cases also show that movements around water have involved a wide variety of different kinds of collective action. They have involved opposition to government policy as also different degrees of collaboration; they have involved collective mobilization of people and experts in order to provide alternatives; they have involved novel ways in putting out their appeals to different stake holders like dialogues with religious and media groups for example; and they have involved the use of conventional forms such as media campaigns, agitations with public support, public rallies, fasting, strikes, forming fronts with diverse local organizations as also innovative combinations of old and new forms. Understanding these specific forms/strategies of collective action becomes important as it reflects the character of the movement as well as is important in how far the set of particular collective actions helps them acquire the character of a movement.

In this context it would be interesting to see how different factors that are responsible for the emergence of a particular movement shape particular forms of collective action And how they in turn involve various strategies/techniques of contestations which in turn shape the nature of the movement. It would be also interesting to look at which are the specific issues around which contestation takes place and how the issue that is posed as the main objective of contestation shapes the strategies that are adopted. In discussing the emergence as well as sustenance of collective action it would also be interesting to look at how different movements used different strategies/methods of contestations and what these tell us about social movements around water issues.

In case of Kengrehalla Rejuvenation Movement collective action was initiated and held together mainly through the activity of opposition to the proposed dam – a course of action that brought together all the local groups to close their ranks. However, while the contestation around the dam formed the so called backbone of the movement, it was also sustained through other activities such as providing/suggesting various alternatives to the city-dwellers that would make the dam unnecessary and help urban dwellers fulfil their own needs without resorting to building the dam. We may note here the various alternatives are still well connected to the contestation around the dam proposal. These activities held the

groups together for long since here they were the main stakeholders in the contestation over the dam. In accordance with this, besides the conventional forms of mass action of mobilizing the villagers, engaging with the government and organizing protests aimed at the contestation over the construction of the dam,, the additional strategies that were adopted by the movements included things like use of statistics and data to convince the government and the city dwellers, talking to the city dwellers, awareness campaigns among city dwellers, use of media, initiating dialogues with different contending parties, urging city dwellers to take up roof water harvesting and providing the necessary support for the same, urging forest department to plant diverse species of trees for water conservation, and agitating for the construction of 13 tanks to meet the rural and urban water needs – all of which were not necessarily protest activities but were more in line with the activity of advocacy and awareness raising groups. So long as the latter were closely connected with the contestation over the dam, there was a stronger element of a social movement, but once the government gave up the proposal of building a dam, the expressive character of the movement changed qualitatively and so did its forms of organising.

In the case of the Palathulli campaign in Kerala, collective action was initiated mainly in the form of various kinds of appeals put forth by MM. However, what is interesting to see is the range of activities that it set off. These activities were, in many ways, spontaneous and multi centred and the campaign was sustained through the news that was exchanged through MM. This is indeed a novel way of initiating and sustaining collective action, in the mould of new social movements, that take the emphasis away from class and conventional groupings and also utilises the media in a new way. MM seems to have a specific interest in the issue and its motive was of presenting itself as a socially concerned organization and was contesting the idea that news papers only report news of scarcity or water inequities but cannot provide alternatives. Accordingly the strategies comprised writing editorials to create awareness regarding water harvesting and effective use of water and exchanging news about such alternatives. It did this through not only its editorial pages and write ups in the newspaper, but also by introducing helplines, phone in programmes, and distribution of manuals on rain water harvesting and providing technical support for doing this. It had therefore cast a wide net and not limited itself to the power of the pen alone. These were the factors that shaped the form of collective action. But the main point is that it seemed to remain a campaign and does not seem to have led to the kind of expressive element that social movements show.

Given the impressive range of multi-centred activity that it triggered, it is interesting to look at whether or not it could have gone beyond a campaign. For that to happen, there would have had to be greater cross bonding between the collective actions that were being spawned as a result of the campaign and the provision of an institutional space where the cross bonding could grow into an expressive identity. While the institutional space provided by MM was sufficient to trigger action and spawn local initiatives, it had neither the vision nor the resources to provide this space. We think that the Palathulli campaign showed that there was significant potential of its becoming a social movement, but the framing of what the campaign was supposed to achieve and the institutional and other resources necessary for it were fully controlled by MM and this constraint never allowed it an identity in its own right. The campaign thus weakened and relapsed into a regular news feature somewhat like a periodic supplement devoted to specific issues.

The Bhavani river pollution case in Tamil Nadu demonstrates how the collective action that was carried out through agitations conducted by BRPJC with public support and participation led to a strong sense of identity around the issue that cut across other affiliations and helped form bonds across conventional divisions. The BRPJC as an SMO provided the institutional space for the various participants in the movement to interact and come together. Even as it included agitations like public rallies, picketing the company employees and management, fasting, strikes etc it took care to project itself as doing this without disturbing the public life and law and order. It emphasised the principle of non-violence and scrupulously followed it while conducting collective action. The collective action that was carried out at the initiative of the council acquired the characteristics of social movement largely because of the severity of the issue. The adverse effects on the drinking water supply, irrigation water quality as well as the fisheries in the reservoir, river and tanks and the aquatic eco-system, had a felt impact on and the life and livelihood of all the people who lived within the Bhavani river basin and those who depended on the Bhavani water for their various economic activities. There was a strong common and collective perception of increase in pollution and environmental degradation among the public. What is interesting, however, is the ability of the movement to overcome the stakeholder interest of those who were working in the polluting industries and those who depended on them directly and indirectly. At the same time, it was also the efforts taken up by other local NGOs on the issue that provided specific political atmosphere enabling the council to carry out collective

action with greater public support. In the contestation the initial focus was on SIV pollution issue and various strategies were adopted including awareness programmes among the stake holders, mobilization of public and agitation against industrial pollution, pressurising government, taking up pollution issues to the high court, obtaining expert and scientific advice, media coverage, seeking support from other likeminded NGOs, participation in various committees, etc. This varied activity helped maintain a long term action and identity. This initiative may be seen as an example of social movement around water that may also be classed as a new social movement because the identity that it expressed was not based on traditional/conventional class or economic divisions but cut across them. Though, as a movement, it has weakened somewhat in its later stages, it has managed to forge a strong identity of those affected by pollution of the Bhavani river basin waters.

As we have seen earlier the movement in Hirakud command area evolved in three phases starting with the farmers movement around pricing of paddy and later organising to monitor the work of the Sason canal and in the third phase to opposing the diversion of water towards industry. Various strategies of contestation involved agitation, campaigns against district collector under the leadership of SZKSS, launching of protest campaign against government, various innovative ways of expressing demands like writing letters to CM, hunger strike, declaration of farmers' convention etc. Specific innovative strategies were developed in this third phase of the movement, for example, protest human chain demonstration, interactions with the policy makers and civil disobedience movements. The production of high quality audio CDs comprising motivational songs and many other publications were also some of the strategies. In the three phases of this movement, the forms of contestation have not changed very much, although the new political context has compelled the organisation to form a broader base for effective change.

Ek Gaon Ek Panavtha (EGEP) was a campaign that was carried out under the banner of Mahatma Phule Samata Pratisthan. At one point of time it had received a tremendous response from the grass roots. The campaign was not simply run from above, but very often there would be an invitation from particular villages in the form of a response to the campaign. It is interesting to see here that though access to water was the main issue of contestation behind the campaign it was framed in a manner in which denial of access to water was a denial of essential humanity and so it was also understood that it was a gateway to a larger issue and a means of starting a dialogue process to initiate a radical change in the

caste and class structure of the society then. It was due to this broader appeal that there was collective mobilization that emerged and was backed by a broad support in terms of organization, structure and ideology by groups and organizations outside the mainstream of the electoral political party system. The Mahatma Phule Samata Pratisthan was not an organization formed around the issue of water; instead the issue of equal access to water was being used for strengthening a bahujan identity in order to take their larger anti caste/class politics ahead. Though it was a campaign the strategies that were used did demonstrate the characteristics of a mass movement such as an expressive bahujan samaj identity tied to the satyashodhak movement and forms of mass mobilisation and awareness programmes along with lectures, workshop etc, at times approaching government authorities in order to gain justice.

As discussed above Pani Sangharsha Chalwal (PSC) is a movement carried out mainly under the core leadership of the SMD a radical political group. In this case the collective action evolved mainly through two main phases, the first focusing on the struggle of the drought affected for access to water and the second in which this struggle was joined to the struggle of dam affected. This is somewhat of an innovative attempt to bring together these two facets with conflicting demands and conflicting nature of issues.

As remarked earlier, this made it possible for the movement to acquire an expressive identity that embraced both these sections and looked on them as two sides of the same coin, the struggle for a just and equitable access to the Krishna waters. Thus a wider core expressive identity of those seeking equitable water access within the Krishna basin was formed. However, it did not get reduced to a simple farmers' or peasants movement because through the combination of struggles and campaigns that the leaders took up (like the issue of Babri masjid, the Vidrohi Sahitya Sammelan) and through the style and framing of the issues, it acquired a multiple layers of traditions which were explicitly acknowledged – starting from the Buddha and extending through Shivaji, Marx, Mahatma Phule, Shahu Maharaj and Babasaheb Ambedkar up to the tradition of environmental movements. In spite of a core old movement peasant base and identity it also managed therefore to incorporate elements of the new social movements. The movement involved both policy level strategies and agitation strategies. One such strategy was of supplementing oppositional agitations with constructive engagement with the government to build on interim gains rather than a simple

oppositional engagement. Another classic strategy was of conscientization where issue-affected people themselves participated in defining the issue, working out alternative strategies jointly with experts and mobilised for collective action in order to realise those strategies. The important aspect of this was the readiness to accept marginal gains and policy level assurances, to utilise the space within the existing government framework, to make compromises at micro level, even while leaving options open for subsequent struggle. A number of innovative agitation strategies described earlier were *pada yatra*, *tbhiyya Andolan*, *Chavani Andolan*, signature campaigns, non-cooperation, Simultaneous agitations, written assurances and rigorous follow ups, all of which aimed at militant mass action in a transparent and open manner.

MPA tried an innovative approach of bringing together four local organizations together on a common platform. These organizations Kosi Seva Sadan (KSS), Samta, Ghoghardiha Prakhand Swarajaya Vikas Sangh (GPSVS) and Gramyasheel all came from a broad Gandhian tradition, influenced by the JP movement as well as by the Bhoodan movement. The main challenge for the leadership of MPA was to challenge the notion of a “typical development project” which had led to isolation and had been delinked from broader development goals. The leadership therefore used continuous dialogue at the grassroots level as its strategy. Facts related to flood management were brought out and people were made to think in terms of alternatives that could come from their own thinking. One of the major issues discussed was that of drinking water scarcity before and after the floods and how rain water harvesting could play a critical role in addressing it. These dialogues were conducted across the four districts with different sections of the society. It is this democratic form that finally culminated in the formation of the MPA. After these deliberations rain water harvesting was accepted in principle, but to ground it the MPA had to use different strategies and forms. It had to install a few community based rain water harvesting structures to test its acceptability and technical feasibility. It took up a jal samvad yatra or water dialogue journey in four districts of North Bihar. It also took up a campaign of water quality testing, installing water purifiers, advocating the revival of old dug wells and promotion of SRI for enhancing paddy production. In this process, MPA was constantly building the capacities of its activists in terms of challenging the norm. In its third phase it has been organizing communities to address some of the broader development concerns.

These varied forms of collective actions indicate that all movements around water are not necessarily mass movements. The discussion also indicates that the different and shifting demands on the social movements in its different stages force them to innovate and to

change their forms and strategies which in turn shape their nature. Many a times they take a form of a campaign led either by a singular charismatic leader or by committee of individuals or at times by an organization with formal organizational structure such as presence of office bearers. In other words, movements around water can be placed differently on a spectrum of social movements. Not just that a single movement also sometimes has shown characteristics of a mass struggle and also that of a NGO led campaign. While drawing from the analysis done by Kameshwar Chaudhari we may argue that the use of such varied strategies of mobilization show that movements around water demonstrate confrontationist as well as collaborationist character or a combination of the two.

Resource Mobilization and Leadership Role

Theories of resource mobilization were developed to understand the process of mobilization which appeared many times stronger and instrumental in initiating as well as shaping collective action rather than simply the presence of grievance and discontent. Thus, besides the macro processes and the wider context such as historical conjuncture and broad structural conditions as well as the forms of collective action and character of framing of issues, it is also important to look at more micro level processes related to resource mobilisation such as organizational structure, methods of mobilizing funds, organization of leadership etc. All these things do have an impact on how a particular collective action gets evolved. For instance, method of funding has been considered an important factor in understanding whether a particular movement can be called a movement or not. For example, Omvedt in her analysis of New Social Movements in the context of the ongoing debate regarding inclusion of funded agencies in the purview of social movements argues that though externally funded NGOs sometimes are connected with the mass movements of the time they are neither political nor movements (Omvedt 1996). Thus it is an interesting exercise to also see how these things are placed when it comes to looking at specific cases of movements around water.

Our sample of movements around water shows a variety of different forms of organisation and methods of mobilising resources. In case of Kengrehalla Rejuvenation Movement there was an unregistered committee with office bearers who were some of the respected individuals in the city and it was this committee that formed the formal SMO. The leader was a reputed journalist who was a benevolent leader, was creative and had an influence on

the people of the region. If we look at the informal processes of decision making, we see that it was the leader who finally took decisions and exercised leadership. However, some women from the community also did take on leadership. At the same time there does not seem to be any formal fund mobilisation and everyone seems to have participated at their own cost. The leadership of course contributed largely and this also earned them the right to decide. The KRM was a loosely knit organisation and the terrain of decision making was left rather fuzzy allowing enough space for it to be described as democratic and yet deciding almost unilaterally.

In contrast the Malayalam Manorama Palathulli campaign did not have a formal organizational structure of its own. It was carried out as a CSR activity of that particular news paper house so it was MM who acted as a leader and a funder. These differences also led to differences within these collective actions in terms of how other resources such as financial aid were mobilized. In the case of MM since it was a campaign of a news paper, it was CSR unit of the corporate house that was the mobilizing agent in terms of finances; on the other hand in case of Kengrehalla Rejuvenation Movement main sources for the funding were government schemes for the works component as well as local community for other organisational and agitational work.

In contrast to these cases, the Bhavani river pollution movement has a formal SMO that has the structure of a registered NGO. Thus, the BRPJC is a registered NGO that consists of 21 members with a Governing Body comprising seven executive members, including a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and two Co-ordinators. The residence of the President functions as the Council Office. However, there is a process of wider consultation during the decision making process. Even though Bhavani River Protection Joint Council (BRPJC), a registered NGO is the leader in this case, initially the issue was taken up by leading NGOs in TN such as Green Movement, INTACH, and various regional NGOs and other stakeholders and they have continued their contribution to the process. It is in fact, these informal bonds that give the movement its character. As far as funding is concerned, the BRPJC does not receive any formal funding and has been raising resources locally as and when needed. Importantly it has been the President who has raised resources, but it also receives donations from NGO's farmer's and environmental organisations working in the basin.

In case of Hiraikud, SZKSS is not a registered body but it has clearly defined titles and roles. The General body of SZKSS comprises of the Presidents and Secretaries of each of the constituent organizations which are part of SZKSS and eight other district level prominent members. A President, a General Secretary, a treasurer and 4 vice-Presidents run the office as office bearers. The SMO structure here reflects its composition well. However, in the decision making interactions while the SZKSS acted as leader, the SJP has also had an important role to play and in the later phase the POKSS has also been an important partner in the process. SZKSS does not have regular funding, depends on the funds raised by the organizations that come under SZKSS. Office bearers many times spend from their pockets. Programmes, meetings are organised very economically with minimal financial spending. SJP depends on funds given by likeminded organizations. The President as well as other office bearers and members are farmers though not small farmers. Though women have been noted to have an important role in protest activities they are not office bearers and are not prominent in the organisation.

The EGEP too had the Mahatma Phule Samata Pratishthan as the formal SMO. However, the organisation of the campaign was much more diffuse. We had spontaneous decision making by communities from below combining with action taken from above by a small group of individuals led by Baba Adhav. There was no formal organizational process per se with office bearers through which decision making took place. Dr. Baba Adhav was a leader of the movement. However the EGEP could spread all over the state and have an impact on movement activity in the 70's mainly because of its widespread linkages with different organisations. Baba Adhav, himself was active in different social movements like that of the hamals, youth groups, peasants etc. These affiliations were widely used to spread the message of the campaign. These affiliations were also central in raising the finances for the movement. The entire campaign was financially supported by the Mahatma Phule Pratishthan and the Hamal Panchayat, both having membership of the toiling masses. Charismatic leadership had a central role to play in the spread of EGEP.

In the case of the PSC there are not one but two formal SMOs involved, the SKSS looking after the demands of the drought affected and the MRDPS looking after the issue of the dam affected. While the former is an organisation mainly within the PSC region, the latter is a statewide organisation, though the regional unit has a high degree of autonomy especially with respect to regional issues and agitations. However, the decision making process draws on a wide range of leadership according to the issue and scale of action, but the SMD

provides the continuity between all the struggles and the two flanks and SMOs of the movement. Funds for full time activists come partly from the SMOs but mainly from political sympathisers and supplementary work supported by some NGOs. In the immediate post-Mukti Sangharsh phase, the Walwa Sugar Factory also provided substantial logistic support especially in respect of transport and associated expenses. Later, the vehicle that was provided to Dr. Patankar by sympathisers reduced the dependence on the Walwa factory. What is important here is both, the wide political spectrum that is mobilised by the two flanks of the movement, as also the fact that the continuity between the different actions is ultimately provided by the SMD leadership. This explains both its wide reach as also its ability to retain its multi layered distinct identity even though it is under strain by the recent split.

MPA's main resource base was its people. A single individual motivated to change the flood relief approach in North Bihar was the only asset to begin with. The tying up of different organizations later into MPA added to this resource base. Later on however the MPA went into a project mode and through funds from various donor agencies was able to demonstrate that rain water harvesting can be a solution to the chronic scarcity of drinking water in the pre and post flood situation. Its organizational structure has been loose and informal. Leadership has changed from time to time in each of the districts. In this respect it differs a lot from the other movements we looked at.

Unlike the theories of Resource Mobilization, theories of New Social Movements look at the macro processes. Though there are internal variations in the manner in which they look at social movement phenomenon, as Canel puts it, 'they all explain the emergence of SMs in reference to structural transformations and long-range political and cultural changes which created new sources of conflict and altered the process of constitution of collective identities' (Canel). In this context Gail Omvedt in her theorization regarding social movements in India looks at environmental movements in India as one of the important New Social Movements. As she argues, "environmental movements arose in India because people, both in the cities and villages, of all castes and classes and genders, were affected by the ecological destruction of world capitalism" (Omvedt 1993:146). She does not see environmental movement as occurring independently but on the other hand looks at environmental movement and farmer's movement in India as part of broader peasant movement (ibid). In the light of the theoretical formulation it would be interesting to see

whether this analysis can be stretched further to look at movements around water in India. This would require the analysis of the larger processes of ideology/identity construction as well as that of the links that these movements are forming in the process.

Ideology and Hegemonic Links

The movements vary widely in their ideological orientation and political linkages. In case of Kengrehalla Rejuvenation Movement, initially the relationship with the government was antagonistic but once the dam proposal was dropped, it has improved considerably and the government has generally been supportive of the movement. The movement has not proclaimed adherence to any specific ideology, however, the leader is considered to be close to the BJP. Its sole mission is to conserve every drop of water. In the words of its leader "no water enhancement and extraction without conservation" This emerges as the core principle of the movement. The participants profile is also not specific, and shows participation of all castes, classes and women. The movement also proclaims to be non political in nature despite the evident proximity of the leadership to the right wing party. In terms of ideology, one may say that though initially its sharp contestation with the government over the issue of the dam had the potential of sharpening its expressive identity, subsequently, it has become a diffuse well meaning initiative with no clear expressive identity and contestation that is so essential for a movement.

The BRPJC, too was in many ways a movement with a so called non-political approach, but it's focused and uncompromising opposition on the pollution issue gave it a much sharper edge and provided a focus for contestation that helped form a less diffuse and less collaborative identity. Though the BRPJC has formulated 15 aims and objectives to be achieved, the core promise can be perceived as targeting to protect the river from pollution and maintain its multi functionality in terms of services for preserving the livelihood of mainly poor farmers in the basin.

Also, besides the support it received from local likeminded NGOs, the council managed to bring in and work in collaboration with people from different strata of society: for example, school and college students, farmers, women, middle and upper class communities, academic and research persons, government officials, and key social activists in the country. However, no formal links were formed with the political parties even though it is said that some political parties extended their support to the activities of the council. Nevertheless, the

council did not hesitate in seeking the help of individual elected political representatives to take up the issue in the legislative assembly and the parliament. What is interesting here is to see that the council had a complex relation with the political parties. Though the council took an overall non-political approach, its activities did influence the political opinion of the time, and forced politicians to take up and engage with the environmental issue for at least gaining votes. It also helped that most of the council members were well-known personalities in the basin with good educational background and though caste/class profile is not specified, 'good educational background' does indicate the possibility of their being influential higher middle class/upper class persons. What is interesting in this case is that a clearly focused contested issue and an uncompromising stand on the issue helped it acquire the character of a mass movement in spite of its ostensible non-political standpoint.

In Hirakud, one of the important linkages that the movement under the leadership of SZKSS forged was with other movements in the command area which resulted in a coordination committee called Paschim Odisha Krushak Suraksha Sangathan (POKSS) and played an important role in intensifying the movement against water diversion. Before POKSS came in to being it was the SZKSS and Samajbadi Jana Parishad (SJP), socialist organization/political party that led the movement against paddy under pricing in the first stage. Apart from this, SZKSS also had linkages with Pani Panchayats, industries, mainstream media, organizations and associations like bar associations, citizen's associations, University students and local intellectuals etc. It had an oppositional stance with respect to the government. Though the movement did not profess any particular ideology the socialist current was dominant and it influenced the activities and may be said to be responsible for the characteristics this mass movement acquired.

Unlike all these other cases, the EGEP was a campaign carried out under the leadership of Dr. Baba Adhav and a small core of leaders under the banner of the Mahatma Phule Samata Pratishthan. However, there was widespread support from Dalit Professors, local dalit youth as well as other progressive organizations such as Shramik Sanghatna, Yuvak Kranti Dal, Rashtra Seva Dal, Vishamta Nirmulan Samiti as also middle class sections from urban areas such as academicians, famous theatre personalities etc. Since it was a campaign that was seen as part of a larger movement for the rejuvenation of the Satyashodhak movement it had two clear ideological roots in Mahatma Phule's thoughts and in the socialist tradition in the country and this is also clear from the way the groups gravitated around it. However, it also

needs to be noted that all parties including left parties were rather lukewarm to the campaign and it was the smaller groupings that were proliferating during the seventies which were mainly gravitating towards the campaign. Though the movement essentially withered away after the late seventies, it left its mark on the several other groups and movements that participated in it in different ways.

Though PSC took the form of a movement unlike the campaign of EGEP one has to look at the context of its emergence through the already existing socialist/Marxist movements of the time. Various local level leaders and activists from left parties formed one of the major hegemonic links.

This movement has been creative and persistent enough to garner support from pro-people scientists and other experienced technologists who contributed their experience and technical skills to the movement. Earlier PSC had formal membership structure which no longer seems to exist and now functionally all the affected people are members.

The MPA draws its members from a broadly Gandhian tradition. These member organizations were also inspired by the sarvodaya movement, Bhoodan movement and of course JP's Sampurna Kranti movement. Its key objective was to make people change their thinking around floods and question the flood politics of the region. It is evidently not involved in party politics and has emphasized on educating the communities to articulate and resolve their own concerns. In that sense the ideology was very clear in its search for seeking solutions by oneself.

For us an important question was also as to how these movements have addressed the class caste and gender question? This we assessed through understanding the class, caste and gender profile within the movement.

All of the mobilisations we studied were located in the different rural and tribal contexts of India. Except for the two Maharashtra cases none of the others were driven by a strong political ideology. The POKSS did have a socialist strand within it, but it did not drive the organisational goals or strategies. In fact the movement claims to be non political in nature and comprises of various organisations that come from different ideological strands. The Palathulli campaign advocated water conservation which according to MM was an agenda that cut across different groups and ideologies as well. Similarly the KRM that started out with an anti dam movement gravitated towards being a promoter for water conservation and did not vouch for any ideology. The same is true with Megh Pyne Abhiyan in Bihar and the

BRJPC in Tamil Nadu. None of these movements with the exception again of the two Maharashtra cases and partly the Orissa and Karnataka cases had a caste, class or gender character to it. They were focussed on water either addressing its quality or its quantity. Precisely for this reason the membership profile was not a matter of concern to any of these mobilisations. There was no conscious attempt made to ensure that different social groups participate in organisational activities.

In the Hirakud case for example the membership was largely drawn from farmers, initially large farmers who grew paddy and fought for better prices for paddy. Later on smaller farmers and some landless households too joined in the struggle when it became an anti state movement against diversion of water to industries from agriculture. Women or women's question was certainly not seen as important for the movement as is evident from their singular focus and also their absence in the organisational decision making. Women were however seen in the forefront of the struggle. As far as the Bhavani issue is concerned, most of the council members are well-known personalities in the basin with good educational background thereby largely reflecting the class and caste profile of the key members. However the movement also had active participation of all the affected people in the basin that included fisher communities and farmers and simply inhabitants of the basin who had to suffer from the polluted water. Thus a collective identity that cut across different social groups of people was formed around the question of water quality. But the movement does not go onto looking at specific questions in the context of water that affect different social groups.

MM clearly had a corporate agenda which did not specifically appeal to any particular social group. Thus water scarcity was posed as the central concern and not its equitable distribution. KRM challenged the urban and rural divide, so in that sense it did have a class character to it. It also challenged the hegemony of the state by opposing the dam on a stream, but did not challenge the structural inequities within the rural community when it came to questions of water access and decision making.

Both EGEP and PSC were located in the broader ideological context which challenged caste, class and patriarchy to an extent. This ideological bearing did reflect at least partly in the way they posed the water question. In the case of EGEP this was explicit as they were mainly concerned about caste discrimination in access to water. Water was thus seen as a powerful medium to convey caste discrimination. PSC through its focussed agenda on

equitable distribution of water was committed to addressing the caste, class and gender question in the context of water. It had women in the forefront of the struggles, however despite its strong ideological stance; it was not able to ground ideas of equity when it came to caste and gender.

MPA did not necessarily focus on social differentiation, although its politics was directed to the poor who were repeatedly affected by floods in that region. It can be described as a new social movement as it did not necessarily hope to address the material concerns of the poor, but appealed to the people to think about their own development. MPA used water as its entry point simply because the politics of floods was so predominant in the North Bihar context.

Across the cases we therefore see that movements that had ideological roots and an understanding of larger social inequities made an effort to build it into their water agendas, but for other mobilisations the water question whether its quality or quantity were the primary concern.

Impacts

Impacts of the movements varied as much as did the contexts of emergence, forms and strategies of these organisations. Hiraikud struggle which came up as a result of low prices for paddy and later as a response to the rapid process of industrialisation was able to change the politics of the region. The outcome of its first struggle was that farmers were able to make their point and get a higher price on the paddy. They were also successful in getting an investigation done by the Crime branch into the corrupt practices in the canal construction. Corrupt engineers and contractors were arrested. The movement against diversion of water is an ongoing one, but it has become one of the most contentious issues in the region and all political parties as well as the government bureaucracy have had to sit up and take note of it. Strong networks of farmers and formation and strengthening of youth groups has been one of the most significant outcomes of this movement. The movement has also drawn the attention at the national level. In many ways it has challenged the politics of neoliberalisation and rapid expansion of industries at the cost of people's livelihoods. In the Bhavani basin the singular victory has been the closure of the SIV. Stringent rules and regulations on the question of water pollution have come in place now as a result of this movement. The demand of the people in the basin however was not the closure of industries, but the

greening of industries. With closure of SIV many industries are hesitant to set up units in this basin, thereby affecting the non farm livelihood options of the people. The Bhavani basin struggle had been able to impact the basin level politics and the formulation of new rules and regulations as well. KRM was successful in its first struggle and the dam site was shifted from the stream to the river. They were also successful in mobilising government resources for water conservation programmes, forest rejuvenation programmes, rain water harvesting etc. The strength of this movement was to successfully spread the word for water conservation and its sustainable use. Its main success however is reflected in the way the urban rural divide was bridged. MM was also successful to a great extent in spreading awareness of roof water harvesting. The case demonstrates the crucial role media can play in building water awareness at a fairly large scale.

The EGEP created tremendous impact in the social movement politics at that time. However, its aim of creating one common water point in one village was not always visible everywhere. In many ways this campaign ushered in an era of new social movements in the Maharashtra politics. The left parties that have traditionally been lukewarm to the caste question, at least were made to think about caste discrimination and its role in political mobilisation.

The PSC has been able to make a substantial impact on the water politics of Maharashtra. It carried forward the work of Pani Panchayat which for the first time spoke about equity in the context of water. PSC was able to establish these principles in a substantial way. Its major achievement has been to establish water as a means of production like land and therefore the demand for its equitable distribution. Another significant achievement is seen from the point of view of bringing together the conventionally contesting groups like the dam affected and the dam beneficiaries. It has also been able to bring in the polarised debates of local vs exogenous water to the forefront and present a view that states the need to integrate the two. PSC has challenged the scarcity discourse by bringing in the distributional aspects of water.

MPA was able to instill confidence amongst the people to think for themselves and the solutions to the water crisis and other developmental issues. Their own solutions to addressing water scarcity before and after the floods was encouraged

Final comments

Collective identity formation in social movements is a very dynamic process. Most collective actions occur when actors are able to define themselves, other actors and also the stake of their relationship. These identities often can change, get reinforced or weakened depending on the focus of the action. In all these cases, collective identity has gone through shifts, depending on the thrust of the movement. In KRM it is quite evident that the anti dam struggle was very strong in building an anti-urban, rural collective identity which got diffused when it became a water conservation programme. For MM the identity revolved around a general notion of concerned citizens while for the EGEP the identity was clearly focussed on caste and discrimination as a result of that. PSC was a mix of various kinds of collective identities trying to mesh together, for example, the dam affected, and the drought affected as well as the dam beneficiaries and often these identities also came in conflict with each other. Social movements around water have emerged and been sustained in varying contexts. We have looked at how different factors both at the micro and macro level have contributed to the sustenance of these movements and finally to shaping the outcomes. Organisational, strategies, forms, leadership patterns, resource mobilisation skills etc contribute significantly to the movement goals and outcomes as much as the macro socio-political contexts. Political opportunities have existed in various forms across each of our case studies. In some cases it was the consolidation and growth of Marxist ideologies and student politics that culminated into the formation of movements that later took on the water issues, in other cases it was the rapid industrialisation and the resultant pollution or the diversion of water to industries that led to the formation of collective identity.

This study has opened up a new area of work in social movements and our attempt here has only been to modestly lay out the key characteristics of social movements around water.