

INTERNECINE BETWEEN THE INDIAN STATE AND THE ADIVASIS (INDIGENOUS PEOPLE) UNDER NEO-LIBERALISM: A CASE OF LANJIGARH RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The Anti-Vedanta movement at Lanjigarh had rocked the interior district of Kalahandi in the Indian state of Odisha. It was a fiercely fought movement (2002-2014) by the Adivasis (Dongria Kondh) against state of Odisha and VAL the mining based heavy metal MNC licensed under neo-liberal policy. The project had displaced 302 Adivasi families and was to mine in the Niyamgiri mountains to which the Adivasis were attached for livelihood and religious-cultural purposes. The displaced hence rallied around issues of cultural threats, environmental threats and inadequate R&R (Rehabilitation and Resettlement) measures against loss of livelihood and natural habitat. The paper analyses empirically: (i) the threats posed to Adivasi identity by this so called modernization process by endangering their cultural patterns, social relations, economic organizations and pristine ecosystem. (ii) how the civil society guided the movement to ensure implementation of relevant legal provisions like, 5th schedule of the constitution, Article 244 (i), PESA 1996, FRA 2006 and Odisha scheduled areas act 1956 meant to protect Adivasis. (iii) the inherent paradoxes of this development discourse based on neo-liberalism; as the state imposes a kind of development model with its right to develop its subjects (by over riding the subjects' right to experience development differently). It concludes that the state is being forced to share space with the civil society as a result of neo-liberalism.

Key Words: Collective mobilization, Tribal resistance movements, New social movements, Civil society organizations, Neo-liberalism

RESUMO

O movimento Anti-Vedanta em Lanjigarh abalou o interior distrito de Kalahandi no Estado Indiano de Odisha. Foi um movimento lutado ferozmente (2002-2014) pela Adivasis (Dongria Kondh) contra o Estado de Odisha e VAL a mineração baseada em metais pesados MNC licenciado sob políticas neoliberais. O projeto deslocou 302 famílias Adivasi e foi para minerar nas montanhas de Niyamgiri aos quais os Adivasis eram atacados por subsistência e por propósitos religio-culturais. O deslocamento consequentemente reuniu ao redor questões de ameaças culturais, ameaças ambientais e inadequadas R&R (Re-habilitação e Re-assentamento) medidas contra a perda de subsistência e de habitat natural. O artigo analisa empiricamente: (i) as ameaças impostas à identidade Adivasi pelo tão chamado processo de modernização por ameaçar seus padrões culturais, suas relações sociais, suas organizações econômicas e seu ecossistema prístino; (ii) como a sociedade civil guiou o movimento de assegurar a implementação de disposições legais relevantes como o 5º planejamento da constituição, Artigo 244 (i), PESA 1996, FRA 2006 e planejamentos de áreas de Odisha ato 1956 importaram ao projeto Adivasis; (iii) os paradoxos inerentes desse discurso em desenvolvimento baseado no neoliberalismo; como o governo impõe um tipo de modelo de desenvolvimento com seu direito de desenvolver seus assuntos (por conduzir mais o direito aos assuntos a experienciar diferentemente o desenvolvimento). Conclui-se que o Estado está sendo forçado a compartilhar espaço com a sociedade civil como resultado do neoliberalismo.

Palavras-chave: Mobilização coletiva, Movimentos Tribais de Resistência, Novos movimentos sociais, Organizações da sociedade civil, Neoliberalismo.

RESUMEN

El movimiento Anti-Vedanta en Lanjigarh sacudió entre los años 2002 al 2014 el interior del distrito de Kalahandi en el Estado Indio de Odisha. Este fue un movimiento ferozmente combatido (2002-2014) por los Adivasis (Dongria Kondh) contra el estado de Odisha y VAL, el metal pesado basado en minería MNC, licenciado por la política neoliberal. El proyecto había desalojado a 302 familias Adivasis y minó las montañas de Niyamgiri, a las que los Adivasis estaban ligados para obtener su sustento y para propósitos religiosos-culturales. Los desplazados se movilizaron en torno a cuestiones como las amenazas culturales, ambientales y las medidas inadecuadas de R&R, contra la pérdida de medios de subsistencia y del hábitat natural. El artículo analiza empíricamente: (i) las amenazas impuestas a la identidad Adivasi por este proceso de modernización, que puso en riesgo sus patrones culturales, relaciones sociales, organizaciones económicas y ecosistema primitivo; (ii) las paradojas inherentes a este discurso de desarrollo basado en el neoliberalismo, en la medida que el Estado impone un determinado modelo de desarrollo (afectando el derecho de los sujetos de experimentar el desarrollo de forma diferente); (iii) como la sociedad civil orientó el movimiento para asegurar la implementación de disposiciones legales relevantes, tales como el quinto cronograma de la constitución, el artículo 244, PESA 1996, FRA 2006 y los Odisha scheduled areas act 1956, para proteger a los Adivasis. Concluye que el Estado está siendo forzado a dividir espacios con la sociedad civil como resultado do neoliberalismo.

Palabras clave: Movilización colectiva, Movimientos Tribales de Resistencia, Nuevos movimientos sociales, Organizaciones de la sociedad civil, Neoliberalismo.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, micro-social movements in India have become an important form of collective action by the people to engage in resistance as they act on behalf of common interests or values to which they strongly adhere to. However, the new social movements (here after NSM) theory emerged in response to the proliferation of social movements during the 1960's that were very different in form as the social movements previously known were like the, labor movement, peasant movement, Dalit movement, etc. These classical social movements were characterized by hierarchical structures, loyalty to one social group or class and were concerned mainly with economic goals. These movements were long drawn and were fought on the lines of

classical Marxian thinking on class struggle.

Early 1980s onward micro movements in India have become points of convergence for diverse themes of protests that even resisted increasing commodification and monopolization of life supporting resources like land, water and forest, their sustainable use and unequal distribution, exploitative power relations behind this, the centralization of decision-making and disempowerment of communities caused by the development process. Movements by the landless, peasants, fishermen, adivasis / tribals and displaced people took up the issues of livelihood opportunities, dignity and Development. These people's movements are also against the violation of human rights, civil, political and natural rights which demanded systemic equality and justice within the larger framework of development. For example, the resistance movement

against the Hirakud project at Burla, Sambalpur in 1960s and the similar resistance movement against the Rengali Hydel Project in the 1970s, the well-known Baliapal protest movement during 1985-1990 against the missile testing range, the save Gandhamardan Movement in the early 1980s at Baragarh district against the mining of Gandhamardan hills by the Bharat Aluminum Company (BALCO), the Gopalpur protest movement against export based Tata steel during 1995-96, the Chilika Banchao Andolan against the Integrated Shrimp Farming Project (ISFP) of Tata group and Govt. of Orissa in early 1990's, and the tribal resistance movement at Lower Suktel dam at Bolangir in 2005 are some of the micro-movements (typically resistant movements) that had shaken up the socio-political lives of Odisha the south eastern state of India.

Apart from the above mentioned resistant movements that swept the state of Odisha, the other micro social movements that shook India in the past decades of course those ones based on the mobilizations of the development induced displaced were: (1) the Narmada Bachao Andolan against the displacement of a large population caused by the Sardar Sarovar and other dams on river Narmada in the 1990s, and (2) the violent agitations at Nandigram and Singur in West Bengal against the land acquisition for a petrochemicals project and Tata's Nano car project respectively during the mid-2010s. If the (ex post facto) study by Baboo (1991) was the sole study of the resistance by the Hirakud dam oustees, the studies by Patel et al (1988), Patel (1989) and Routledge (1993) were those of Baliapal resistance movement. Similarly when the study of Samal (2002) was based on the Chilika Banchao Andolan, the studies by Baviskar (1995) and Dwivedi (1999 and

2006) were all based on Medha Patkar led Narmada Bachao Andolan. Lastly the studies of Sarkar (2007), Banerjee (2006) and People's Tribunal (2008) all portray the violent agitations at Nandigram and Singur villages.

Objectives of the study

The paper in hand is a study of tribal resistance movement of recent origin in the Indian state of Odisha which was against displacements caused by a mining based metal industry namely VAL at Lanjigarh.

(a) The paper aims to bring out the threats posed to *Adivasis* identity by the modernization process ushered in by the project. Having shown empirically the endangered, cultural patterns, social relations and economic organizations among the *Adivasis*, the paper also highlights the serious environmental and ecological threats posed by the project. So it explicates how this micro-movement became globalised by attracting environmentalists globally. (b) It also aims to show how the civil society organizations guided the movement to ensure implementation of relevant legal provisions like, 5th schedule of the constitution, Article 244 (i), PESA 1996, FRA 2006 and Odisha scheduled areas act 1956 meant to protect *Adivasis*. (c) The paper further aims to bring out the inherent paradoxes of the contemporary development discourse based on neo-liberalism, as the state unleashes a particular kind of development model with its right to develop its subjects (by over riding the subjects' right to experience development differently). Lastly to conclude the paper points out how the state is being forced to concede space to the civil society as a result of its neo-liberalist ideology.

Methodologically speaking this is a qualitative exercise mostly based on data and information collected from both primary and secondary sources. Content analysis of the primary data is also used as an analytical tool. The paper is based on a case study of the micro movement which was in fact a resistant movement staged by the tribal people adversely affected by the upcoming mining based heavy industry in the interiors of Odisha. Further the paper is organized on the framework of new social movement perspective.

Lanjigarh's mining based Refinery Project

Lanjigarh is part of the Kalahandi district of Odisha. Tribal people like the *Dongaria Kondh*, *Kutia Kondh*, *Jharania Kondh* have lived in the Niyamgiri mountain range of Lanjigarh area from time immemorial. The *Kondhs* are a primitive tribe fully dependent upon forest products and forest based agricultural land for their subsistence. Again Kalahandi district (one of the three infamous KBK districts) has been notorious for its poverty and starvation deaths. Its rare distinction is its low agricultural productivity. It is also one of the poorest districts in the country. Because of its poverty it has been a hot breeding ground for the *Naxalites* (left extremist armed Guerrillas)

Vedanta Resources Plc (VRP) is a UK based MNC. The Company's original name was Sterilite Industries (India) Ltd. (SIL). In December 2003, it was launched in the London Stock Exchange as VRP in order to build Lanjigarh refinery in Kalahandi district of Odisha. The VRP was licensed for setting up of a refinery at Lanjigarh and mining of bauxite from

the Niyamgiri Hill Range. It started working through its Indian subsidiary named Vedanta Alumina Limited (VAL), based in Mumbai. This company in order to feed its Lanjigarh refinery was to mine bauxite from the Niyamgiri hills jointly with OMC (Odisha Mining Corporation) as per the lease agreement signed between VAL and OMC in October 2004. Both VRP and the VAL are headed by a non resident Indian business tycoon, Anil Agarwal. The major share holders in VAL were Barclays, Deutsche Bank, Church of England, and ABN Amro. The aggregate investment of the project was approximately, Indian Rupees 40000/ millions at that time. For this purpose, 723.43 hectares of land was required by the VAL. Out of which 232.75 hectares was private and most of this land belonged to the *Kondhs*. Most of the lands are categorized as forest. According to the office of the Collector, Kalahandi, 12 villages of the Gram Panchayat Lanjigarh and Batelima will be affected by the proposed Alumina refinery at Lanjigarh. From these villages 60 families were to be displaced and 302 families will be affected as their land will be acquired for the project. But in reality the plant displaced 102 families from their homes. Another 1,220 'project affected' families lost either all, or parts, of their farmland. So far, the project displaced two villages partially and two completely and the list will add on. Out of the 64 displaced households in Jaganathpur village, most of them are *Kondhs* who had been cultivating there for generations. On 23 January 2004, four tribal villages, Borobhota, Kinari, Kothduar, Sindhabahali, and their agricultural fields, in south east Kalahandi district, were razed by VAL, where from the villagers were forcibly evicted. Lanjigarh movement was not only about its large scale displacement

of tribal people, but also about the violation of environmental laws/ forest conservation laws as its proposed extensive mining in the Niyamgiri mountains threatens an entire ecosystem, implying even drying up of rivers flowing from the mountains. Further it is also about violation of 1996 Act of Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA).

VAL at Lanjigarh: With their mischief campaigns the local activists and groups with vested interests had already fed into the minds of the innocent *adivasis* and *dalits* that ‘Vedanta is a thug’ which is here to rub us of our resources and land. In view of the alleged illegal mining by VAL in the beginning the local activists had floated rumors that Vedanta is a monstrous MNC that is bribing key people in the Governments both at the center and the state. They tried to vindicate their stand by citing the hurried manner (over night) in which the application of VAL for diversion into forest land was cleared by the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF) on 28th March 2005 (although denied in the first clearance of 22nd Sept. 2004 by MOEF). May be Vedanta also had shown dreams to the affected people that it would make honey and milk flow in their villages. While the implementation of the complete R&R package was a time taking affair the displaced people wanted immediate compensations and R&R benefits. Neither had then the access to any authentic information about the compensation and R&R measures proposed. This allowed vicious rumors to float around. Hence although the primary causes of the violent resistance were: (i) ecological threats, (ii) large scale human displacements, (iii) little gain of direct jobs, (iv) poor compensation packages, and (v) delayed implementation of R&R measures, and

(vi) cultural threats because of loss of habitat and sacred landscapes, the major secondary causes were the popular distrust with corporate/VAL as well as the state administration and too much of politicization.

Back drop of the movement

(a) Disinformation campaign for collective mobilization:

These large scale displacements have aroused protests among the affected people against these developmental projects. It is needless to emphasize that these collective protests have taken the shape of social movements. To perceive the phenomena as social movements, one may rely on Alain Touraine (1985: p.749-89), three principles that must co -exist in any social movement, namely: (i) the principle of (group) identity, (ii) the principle of opposition, (iii) and the principle of (involvement in) totality. And we observed the operation of the three principles of Touraine as the tribals made a categorical issue out of loss of their cultural identity, organized themselves in opposition to the developmental projects in question and the state that facilitates the projects, and lastly the tribal population involved itself in the movement in totality as it is a matter of livelihood and identity for them. The theoretical framework of classical social movement that entails perceiving collective action through mobilization in the direction of institutionalization, is considered to be inadequate in the present context because of the complexity of this movement and also considered to be unsuitable for the absence of any specific political ideology and class basis of this movement. Having fought on the ground initially the movement

was later fought in the public sphere, i.e., in the media/ internet on behalf of the groups rendered destitute of development (symbolizing the psychology of underdogs).

Industrialization will open up employment opportunities to educated unemployed, and will generate work for the unskilled poor in the different unorganized and service sectors and in the near future the poor state of Odisha will overflow with milk and honey. This was the message disseminated from assorted quarters, the corporate, media, the government, the international aid agencies, the funded NGO's, and even the world-bank agents. But, from the beginning of these projects, the democratic state had maintained a stony silence on the questions of the exact nature of this project, how many villages were to be displaced completely or partially, or were to be affected directly or indirectly through this project and how many people will lose their homesteads, land, what will be the nature and extent of the rehabilitation and resettlement and what would be the nature and extent of environmental and ecological degradation, etc. The concerned corporate houses grossly underplayed the facts pertaining to displacement and environmental degradation and overplayed the facts pertaining to R&R. On the contrary the activist organizations and their ally NGOs overplayed the facts pertaining to displacement and environmental and ecological degradations but underplayed the R&R measures to come. The state and district administration along with the company officials launched an intensive public disinformation campaign to portray the resistance as misguided and manipulated the public opinion through media in favor of the projects. This is what Padel and Das (2008, p 594) called 'manufacturing of

consent'. However, there prevailed an environment of distrust for which both the sides were responsible. This was possible in the absence of authentic and complete information about the projects which was to come from the state Government / administration but it was silent.

(b) Politics of development and Politics of the movements

In the Niyamgiri area of Lanjigarh, local Congress and CPI-ML (particularly CPI-ML New Democracy, CPI-ML Red Flag and CPI-ML Liberation) leaders were active in the resistance movement. The project had provoked a serious political conflict between the political parties like the ruling BJD (Biju Janata Dal), and the opposition Congress. While the BJD advocates for the upcoming development in the area by revenue and employment generation through mega projects like VAL, the opposition parties point out the various adverse impacts on the ecosystem and biodiversity of Niyamgiri mountains although they support the industrial policy of the state in the legislative assembly. The politicization adds a new chapter when we heard that the local (Lanjigarh) tribal MLA, who was also Odisha's minister in charge of tribal development had been mobilizing tribal followers for staging a *dharana* (sit down on protest) in front of the Supreme Court of India in favor of the company at the time of hearing of the case. There was a rumor going on the area that 'Vedanta has been assured by an Oriya judge in the Supreme Court that the verdict will not go against the company if such a *Dharana* is arranged in New Delhi'. But in 2009 general election the Kalahandi Lok Sabha seat went to Congress. And there after the politicization of Lanjigarh project had

become faster and intense. Mr. Bhakta Charan Das the then Congress MP from Kalahandi had been mobilizing support from congress leadership and pro-congress intellectuals at New Delhi against the project. Not surprisingly based on its Forest Advisory Committee report headed by N C Saxena the MOEF (Ministry of Environment and Forest), Government of India had withdrawn the environmental clearance for VAL (on 24th Aug. 2010) and tried to dump it. Two days later (on 26th Aug.) Mr. Rahul Gandhi, the then Congress general secretary made a huge rally at Lanjigarh and claimed that as the supporter of tribal people in Delhi their union Govt. had denied environmental clearance to notorious VAL for mining in the Niyamgiri range. Thus Congress led Union Govt.'s predetermined decision to stall VAL project rendered the Saxena committee report irrelevant or a mere ploy. Quickly the Govt. of Odisha assured VAL of alternative mining fields. Following this the MOEF issued two show cause notices on Sept. 01, 2010 to VAL alleging non-compliance of environmental conditions by its refinery plant and CPP both at Lanjigarh and threatened its closure (Financial Chronicle, Sept. 01.2010). On 3rd Sept 2010 Bhakta Das the Congress MP in a press conference at the state capital demanded the closure of VAL refinery (when on the same day the 'Save Vedanta day' rally was organized at Lanjigarh by BJD youth wing). Following the MOEF, on Sept.17, 2010 the National Environment Appellate Authority also suspended the environmental clearance to VAL that was granted to VAL in 2009 (Indianexpress.com: 18.9.2010). A desperate Odisha Govt. through OMC moved to the Supreme Court on April 2011 against MOEF's withdrawal of environmental clearance to VAL at

Lanjigarh for its bauxite mining at Niyamgiri hills. Thus VAL had become a prestige issue for the BJD the ruling party in Odisha, as the Govt. at the Centre led by Congress party was persuaded by Congress leaders from Odisha, precisely to discredit a non-congress Govt. in Odisha. Hence during Sept.10-12. 2010 the BJD activists sat on *Dharana* in front of the State Governor's office when the Central Govt. withdrew environmental clearance from VAL project at Lanjigarh but granted the same to the environmentally sensitive Polavaram project of Andhra Pradesh that had a Congress party Govt, in power. But interestingly in both the projects *Adivasis* were the Project Affected People. Having displeased the Vedanta group (through VAL) which is a powerful MNC (with strong political clout in UK and Europe) in the areas of mining, metals and oil rigging, the Congress led Union govt. had compensated Vedanta's losses otherwise by facilitating its majority equity stake in Cairns India Ltd (CIL) (by holding back the bidding by ONGC the central PSU giant in oil exploration) (TOI: Sept 25.2010).

Anatomy of Collective mobilizations and Violent resistance

The extent of repression was very high on the tribal people from all the corners, by the state administration/police, the CRPF and finally the local mercenaries of the VAL. Violence was inflicted on the tribal people because of their opposition to the mining based refinery project. The tribal people obstructed the project activities by the company, like land surveying, leveling, boundary wall construction, etc. Along

with these activities they organized sit-in demonstrations (*Dharanas*), protest public meetings, and protest-marches. The sequence of events involving the three movements is as follows:

Lanjigarh Movement (Chronology of major events):

The SIL (parent company of VAL) had signed MOU with the Govt. of Odisha in 1997 for the mining based refinery project at Lanjigarh. There were reports of land acquisition and illegal mining by the VAL in Niyamgiri Hills even before it got environmental clearance from the MOEF in September 2004, and it signed the formal agreement with the OMC in Oct 5, 2004 for mining lease.

22nd June 2002: The formal protest against mining based aluminum plant by VAL started on 22nd June 2002 when thousands of tribal people lodged written petitions to the Chief Minister opposing the Vedanta project at Lanjigarh in Kalahandi district.

26th June 2002: *Gram sabha* meeting by the DM was cancelled by the villagers of the Batelima and Lanjigarh panchayats who demanded to scrap the project.

23rd Jan 2003: The then DM of Kalahandi allegedly acquired no-objection for the land acquisition from the tribal Panchayats/ *Gram Sabha*.

March 2003: In March 2003, people resisted the survey work of the VAL several times and snatched the survey instruments. FIR was lodged. Police and tribal people clashed, and 7 people were arrested, police was counter attacked and arrested people were taken back by the villagers.

2nd April 2003: Lingaraj Azad, the state president, *Samajabadi Jana Parishad* (SJP) a movement organization, mobilizing the tribals for

their struggle, was arrested by the police at Lanjigarh in the morning of 2nd April 2003 and subsequently violence broke out. Tribal people agitated and were attacked by the youth club (allegedly funded by Vedanta). The violence spread to village Basantapada, breaking houses, properties and unleashing terror. Violent protest by the affected people continued and police canned (*lathi charge*) tribal women on the road. Alleged mercenaries, of Vedanta continued to intimidate the villagers.

By the end of January 2004 the DM of Kalahandi, Saswata Mishra had persuaded several Kondh villages to accept the financial compensation and concrete houses from VAL. But a sudden order was issued to evict the villages and their houses were bulldozed even without the compensation apparently because of the refusal by the tribal people.

7th April 2004: *Niyamgiri Surakshya Samiti*, a movement organization of about 1000 tribal people, took a vow and engaged themselves in protection of the forest land and water from VAL. It has been formed by the people to protest against the sanction of lease of the Niyamgiri hills to the company. Hence it launched the *Vedanta Hatao* offensive.

27th March 2005: This series of events lead to the alleged murder of Sukra Majhi a Kondh leader.

11th November 2005: On this day, a big protest rally was organized by local tribal people at the gate of the VAL refinery at Lanjigarh.

5th December 2005: Protest was organized by the *Adivasis* from Rayagada and Kalahandi districts at state capital Bhubaneswar in front of the state Legislative Assembly on 5th December 2005.

16th May 2006: On that day, a huge meeting was organized in

Lanjigarh where nearly 10,000 people from the affected districts of Rayagada and Kalahandi demonstrated against the construction of the refinery. Also the women network came forward to strengthen the protest.

3rd August 2006: Tribal activists of Lanjigarh movement reached London UK with NGO assistance and raised questions about violation of human and environmental rights at Lanjigarh area by the VAL. It created embarrassment for the Chairman and the CEO of VRP. Having seen the aggrieved tribal people of Lanjigarh at the shareholders meeting in London some share holders of VRP raised questions in the annual meeting (2005) and blamed the company for concealing information about the tribal protest.

23rd Nov 2007: By a ruling the Supreme Court of India had stalled the VAL mining project at Lanjigarh. Then the movement was lying low for almost two years as the Lanjigarh project of VAL was pending with the Supreme Court for clearance. Finally, on August 11, 2008 keeping aside the unfavorable recommendations of the Central Empowered Committee the Supreme Court gave a go ahead (with riders) to VAL for mining at Lanjigarh. By that time (in 2007) VAL's refinery plant at Lanjigarh had become operational despite the massive resistance.

20th October 2008: A mass convention was organized at Bhubaneswar the state capital by several movement organizations against the verdict of the apex Court that gave go ahead to VAL.

17th January 2009: More than 7000 people all over Niyamgiri region staged protest at Lanjigarh against the proposed mining based plant which was considered to be a mass convention against the Supreme Court verdict (Aug. 2008). Protesters were mostly *Dongaria*

Kondhs who assembled at Samelbhata village and marched shouting slogans.

27 January 2009: Over 10,000 men, women and children formed a 17-kilometre-long human chain around Niyamgiri Mountain. People in the chain held placards saying 'Niyamgiri is Dongria Land. Vedanta cannot come here without our permission. We say No!'

25th July 2009: With renewed vigor the movement activists again organized a rally on at Lanjigarh where thousands of tribal people from the Niyamgiri mountain and Lanjigarh staged a protest against Vedanta's mining and refinery project that will destroy the sacred Niyamgiri mountain along with its perennial streams making rivers, and religious beliefs of thousands of *Dongaria Kondhs* and *Dalits*. Allegedly the company mercenaries came on motorcycles to stop the vehicles of senior activists and the activists had to retreat finally. Local police did not cooperate in this matter.

The then Lok Sabha MP from Kalahandi, Bhakta Charan Das of Congress party had worked as a go between the movement organizations of Lanjigarh and the Union Govt. and Congress leadership. After getting elected in 2009 Das had organized at Lanjigarh the Save Niyamgiri Convention on 6th June 2010 along with the movement organizations where he had roped in the noted environmental activist Vandana Shiva to speak.

On 12th Aug 2010 Shiva's Navdanya organized a conference at New Delhi in the Constitution club on 'Niyamgiri a test case for Forest Rights' where apart from environmentalist Shiva, Congress MPs like Bhakta Charan Das and Mani Shankar Iyer, and senior academicians like T K Oommen and Usha Ramanathan participated. As it looks Das had mobilized intellectuals at New Delhi to stall the Lanjigarh

project of VAL. The *Donagria Kondh* leaders Lado Sikaka and Sana Sikaka were taken away on gun point allegedly by police (as they later on surfaced at the Lanjigarh police station) on 9th August 2010 while traveling by a vehicle to catch a train to New Delhi from Raipur, apparently to attend the above mentioned 12th Aug. Navdanya organized seminar where the congress MP, Das was to present them to media glare. Later the Kalahandi SP admitted that they were examining the Maoist links of Sikakas.

On the other hand to show its corporate social responsibility VAL had engaged itself with district authorities (Kalahandi) to launch a Malaria eradication programme in Lanjigarh area, an afforestation programme to make Lanjigarh greener, pineapple and bamboo cultivation programmes for the tribes, and some educational programmes for the locals like, good schooling in DAV-Vedanta international school, up-gradation of hospitals and water supply in Lanjigarh and most note worthy is its recent declaration to set up its first ever Science college at Lanjigarh for the education of the local people. But after the withdrawal of environmental clearance on 24th august 2010 and subsequent denial for expansion of the Lanjigarh plant by MOEF (later on vindicated by Odisha High court) VAL terminated services of nearly 2000 workers at Lanjigarh plant and the Communist Ghadar Party was organizing protests by uniting the terminated workers at Lanjigarh refinery.

On 11th July 2011 the MOEF finally withdrew its environmental clearance to VAL and the Lanjigarh resistance movement started to die. The consequent loss of purpose of the movement augured its faster decline. As Congress party hijacked the Lanjigarh

movement, the credibility of Lanjigarh movement as a peoples' resistance movement came to be at stake. The voluntary impetus of the movement was slowly lost as the movement organizations like, *Lok Shakti Abhyan*, *Green Kalahandi*, *Samajbadi Jan Parishad*, etc were loosing interests and were to face more repression from the state police, as their genuine resistance could be treated as purely political acts (supporting Congress party).

July 28, 2012: INGOs namely the Amnesty International, Foil Vedanta and Survival International organized a huge protest rally at Westminster London, UK where the Hollywood film *Avatar* actors joined the protest.

August 28, 2012: A massive protest was organized in London UK against VRP's operations at Lanjigarh by INGOs like the Survival International, Foil Vedanta and the Amnesty International in front of its head office.

In 2012 due to non-availability of bauxite to VAL its Lanjigarh refinery plant faced crisis and was closed for seven months. It reopened in 2013 but by December 2012, another 75 technical staff of VAL had already resigned. OMC of Govt. of Odisha tried to lease out VAL the bauxite mine at Kodingamali Hills in adjoining districts of Koraput and Rayagada.

April 18, 2013: The Supreme court of India by reviewing its own earlier judgment for grant of environment clearance to VAL keeping aside the Voices of Niyamgiri tribal Panchayats restored full power on the *Gram Sabhas/ Panchayats* to accept or reject the acquisition of forest land for developmental purposes (as per the Forest Rights Acts 2006, a sub-section of PESA 1996). Accordingly, it directed the state Govt. of Odisha along with the Ministry of tribal affairs, Govt. of India to convene the *Gram Sabhas* of

Niyamgiri area to vote on leasing out forest land to VAL. But all the 12 *Gram Sabhas* resolved the other way. This sealed the prospects of acquisition of forest land for mining by VAL at Niyamgiri. Thus FRA 2006 is found to be the most important institution to ensure the protection of interests of tribal communities in India.

On October 16, 2015 (*Business Standard*, 16.10.2015) VAL again lays off 300 of its workers at Lanjigarh plant. Because after the final denial by MOEF as well as the Supreme Court to grant a lease to VAL for mining the Niyamgiri hills to extract Bauxite, the VAL dismissed these employees from Lanjigarh plant who were recruited in anticipation of expansion of the plant capacity.

Feb 25, 2016: The Odisha state government persisted to gain access to the bauxite mine in the 18 *Niyamgiri* hills through a petition in the Supreme court. On 6 May 2016, the Supreme Court rejected this petition by the Odisha Mining Corporation seeking the reconvening of 12 *Gram Sabhas* in the *niyamgiri* hills to reconsider the mining proposal. The Govt. of Odisha has questioned the resolutions of the 12 *Gram Sabhas* of the Dongaria Kondh, Kutia Kondh, Maji Kondhs and other tribal communities on the basis of technical errors committed during the passage of the resolutions rejecting mining. It claims that tribal communities may have exceeded their powers by declaring an entire plateau, situated far away from the abode of Niyam-Raja as their sacred landscape. But in vain.

Disappearing Tribal Culture and identity; Objective (a)

The developmentalists often assumed that peoples' resistance movements occurred purely because of economic reasons, where as the reasons are much more complex, embracing economic, social and particularly cultural issues. The project planners had often wrong assumptions. Because violation of economic rights of the affected people might have proved to be a strong motivator for resistance, but a great deal of the moral content of the resistant movement is in fact derived explicitly from cultural issues pertaining to the rights of existence as cultural entities, of identity, of spiritual links to land and environment and of loyalty to mythological as well as historical ancestors. It would be sheer reductionism to attribute resistance solely to economics or for that matter to purely cultural concerns.

In the present context of discussion, cultural factors refer to: (1) Attachment to the place, and (2) Cultural identity. (1) Place of attachment refers to the bonding of the people to the place which provides for the very ontological grounding of a culture. Attachment to the place involves positively experienced bonds that often occurs without the awareness of the people. These bonds are developed out of the behavioral, affective and cognitive ties between the individuals and their groups residing in the same socio-physical environment. The process of getting attached to a place thus involves the behavioral, cognitive and emotional embedded-ness of individuals in forging the link between their socio-cultural and physical environments. Thus an attachment to a place virtually refers to a repository of embedded life

experiences that are not separable from the feelings associated with the place. Further such attachments may transcend the unique experiences of individuals and involve a constellation of social relations and corresponding culture of the entire community (Oliver-Smith, 2001, p 61-69). Hence one of the strong cultural factors behind the resistance of the tribal people is alienation from the sense of attachment to their land.

(2) Native place signifies relationships between individuals as well as between individuals and their groups. Both as a repository of life experiences and type of human relations, place of attachment plays an important role in the formation, maintenance and preservation of groups' cultural identity. The feelings, memories, ideas, values and meaning associated with everyday life in a particular setting come to constitute an important dimension of a groups' identity (*ibid*). Hence owing to displacement from the native place the very identity of the tribal people is at stake. In this context becomes relevant is the notion of *BHITTA MATEE* found among the locals which connotes their generations of dependence on the land and their attachment to the land. This attachment provides the basis for tribal culture of particular variety typical to a tribe because it is the reflection of tribal emotions in the form of their dance, music, cosmology, belief system and hence tribal culture and subsequently tribal identity. Hence cultural factors such as the intimate connections between the physical environment and religion, cosmology and worldview, enacted through rituals and celebratory cultural events as narrated in folklore, play significant roles in building relationships of a group/ community with its traditional land. In effect the ties between people and their land base provide the ontological ground of a

cultural identity. Thus a sense of belonging to a place plays an important role in the groups' collective identity formation (as its history becomes contextualized). So is the case of these tribal groups of Lanjigarh whose religious life, cosmology and world view stands endangered owing to their displacement from their physical environment.

The inhabiting tribes in the project area are *Kondhs (Dongaria (preponderant), Kutia, Maji and Langia)*. It is needless to iterate that these tribes are the natives of the forest and mountains. Hence the identity of any tribal communities is associated with the forests, hills and mountains. The tribal identity is expressed through their distinct social organization and cultural forms (dress patterns, language, rituals, festivals, songs/ dances, and their spiritual life). Physical relocation of tribal population is a complex issue and have significant adverse implications for their identity, culture, and customary livelihood. Tribal culture, way of life, folklore, religious practices are inextricably linked with their relationship with nature. Tribal communities have their distinct identity which is different from the mainstream society. Displacement often leads to a sudden onslaught of dominant values threatening the very basis of their cultural identity. Because culture which is rooted in a particular place, cannot be easily 'reconstructed' in another place. Resettlement after displacement not only relocates groups/ communities in space, it also remakes them. Often the community is reconfigured in certain ways and the local culture is pressed for a change, as it gets linked to regional and national market systems. Visualization of this itself engenders resentment and subsequent collective resistance among the affected people.

So is the case of indigenous people of Niyamgiri mountains.

In Lanjigarh area, the tribal culture has been associated with the Niyamgiri hill range. The *Dongaria and Maji Kondhs*, inhabitants of the area believe that, Niyamgiri is their place of origin and worship. *Niyam Raja* (king) is the deity of these tribes. *Niyam Raja* means the “Lord of the Dharma”, (implying the Lord ensuring justice by providing livelihood opportunities to all) and the “Lord of Rule” / the “Lord of Law” (implying the Lord maintaining the pristine ecosystem of Niyamgiri mountain range by regulating it through the laws of ecosystem. So it retains the thick green cover and maintains the rich diversity of flora, fauna by maintaining the hydrological cycle and weather in the area.) In the name of Niyam Raja the *Adivasis* maintained a taboo on cutting of trees. For them Niyamgiri is not just a range of mountains, it is a sacred landscape and has been worshipped as *Niyam Penu* (God) for generations by them (hence it has been protected so far). They considered themselves as *Jharnias* meaning protectors of mountain streams and hence will not allow rivers Nagavali, Bansadhara and tributaries to dry-up because of mining in Niyamgiri. But tribal religious life was endangered and transformed. Experiencing the invaders around them tearing their earth apart with earth movers, blasting of mountainous rocks and cutting down trees of the forest to earn money, negates tribes’ sense of sacredness of nature which lies at the heart of traditional tribal religion. Thus the very act of opening up the belly of the earth for mining and construction activities undermine the traditional reverence to *Dharni Penu* (Earth God). The traditional beliefs, values, norms, and religious practices have come under fire and community festivals like the

ones for first fruit/ harvest of the various crops, Meria festival of sacrifice, etc that traditionally use to bring the villagers together are dying. The tribal religio-cultural life has undergone huge changes which tantamount to their ‘detrribalization’. For example, a woman who had just been removed from Kinari village to make way for Vedanta’s refinery told “*Amoro devata ke bi nashta kole*”- they even destroyed our deities”- referring to the *Dharni vali* (Earth God stones) that form the centre of a Kondh village, which has been crushed into rubbles along with the houses. Padel and Das (2008: p 585-88) call this ‘cultural genocide’.

Strained Kinship & Clan system: Lasting tensions have emerged within and between tribal families according to their varying stand taken on accepting the compensation and employment from the company. One of the biggest splits was between the six villages in Lanjigarh block; those who accepted compensation for their land (who were moved into Vedanta’s housing colony) and those who refused the compensation (were left outside the refinery walls). The first group has lost the spatial community of a *Kondh* village once for all. Further, there has emerged a sense of distrust and tension within the tribal households as family members became suspicious of the other member of the family who received the lump sum amount as compensation. There were cases reported in this area when the family member who received the lump sum appropriated it, did not share it with others or gave only peanuts to other family members. Those displaced and put in settlement colonies away from their original place of habitation even find it difficult to maintain regular social interaction/ matrimonial relations with their community. Thus the social fabric of the tribal stands disintegrated.

Having lost the unity of the community the indigenous people have experienced the penetration of money and alien culture to their social relations. Lastly when the *Adivasis* lost their land, and traditional homes, it is loss of livelihood too. They become dependent upon the non tribal others and get connected to the larger market economy in place of their own forest based subsistence economy. This dependency on external market puts the tribal people socially in a disadvantage position where they are engaged as menial workers of various kinds. That apart the tribal people who earlier by and large had lived in an egalitarian social structure now get connected to the larger caste Hindu society as low caste people and even as untouchables. Thus it is a clear case of social displacement too.

Role of the Civil Society in shaping the course of the movement; Objective (b)

According to Fuentes and Frank (1989: p 79-91), NSMs (New Social Movements) are people's struggle against systemic exploitation and oppression and for survival/ identity in a complex dependent society. These movements are instruments for democratic self-empowerment of people, organized independently of the state, its institutions and political parties and are a reflection of people's search for alternatives. In a nutshell, NSMs take place in the civil society/ cultural sphere for which they claim autonomy vis-à-vis the state. To Cohen (1985: p 700), civil society is seen 'in action terms as the domain of struggles, involving public spaces and political processes. It comprises the social realm in which the creation of norms,

identities, and social relations of domination and resistance are located.'

(1) Role of Intellectuals:

Social and environmental activists, freelancing writers/ journalists, anthropologists, sociologists, research scholars, film makers, human rights groups, not only visited the affected areas, but also prepared reports on the issues of contemporary resistance and the extent of state repression on the local people. There was massive reporting by freelancers in the press. The Council for Social Development (CSD), a Delhi-based organization, started a mission headed by Muchkund Dube (Ex. Foreign Secretary of India) in January 1999. Its aim was to study the situation of Lanjigarh protest, i.e., to dig out the ground realities and to formulate a Rehabilitation policy package. The team did an extensive survey of those areas, met persons from both the sides, those who support the VAL project and those who did not. Also they gathered information from various Govt. officials employed at the affected area and in the state secretariat, NGO activists and members. The report brought the reality of the bitter relationship between the victims and the state authority including the company officials. The mission found out that the movement initiators who were largely *Sarvodaya*¹ workers

¹ *Sarvodaya* a Sanskrit word coined by M K Gandhi (1908) implied 'Upliftment of all' through nonviolence and self help. The later Gandhians like, Vinoba Bhave, Jaya Prakash Narayan, etc carried on *Sarvodaya* as a movement involving their followers/ workers encouraging popular self-organisation during the 1950s and 1960s, including *Bhoodan* (land donation) and *Gramdan* (village land donation) movements. Many groups descended from this

were harassed by the state police. There were also evidences on the excessive use of coercive methods by the officials for the withdrawal of tribal people. The report brought out the state's step against the four local NGOs namely *Aragamee, Ankuran, Laxman Nayak Society, Weaker Section Integrated Development Agency (WIDA)* with the allegation for supporting this genuine movement of the tribal people. There was an upsurge in the number of reports/ studies by various national level participatory forums that have been involved in this grassroots movement through empirical studies/ surveys. Following are some of these:

Judicial Commissions, Tribunals or Similar Independent Reports on Violence Against Adivasis, Violating the Laws of Odisha [Examples only]

1999 Former Foreign Secretary Muchkund Dubey's independent commission from CSD examining claims of violence against Adivasis (11-18, Jan. 1999),

2005 Lawyers Field Mission, India's Peoples Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), and

Independent civil society body,

2006 Chief Justice Bhargava's Tribunal, Published October 2006,

2006 Chief Justice of India Yogesh K. Sabharwal for the Supreme Court on Vedanta bauxite, violating the law and illegalities against Adivasis (pending).

2010 Report of the four member committee (MOEF, GOI) for investigation into the proposal submitted by the Odisha Mining Corporation for Bauxite mining in

movement continue to function locally in India even today.

Niyamgiri ,August 16, 2010, By Drs N C Saxena, S Parasuraman, Promod Kant and Amita Baviskar

2010 Do not Mine Us Out of Existence, bauxite mine and refinery devastate lives in India, by Amnesty International. UK.

2012 Vedanta's perspective Uncovered, Policies cannot mask practices in Odisha, Amnesty International.UK

(2) Role of Activists (voluntary) organizations:

The painstaking efforts of activists in these movements (social, legal, environmental and human rights) to highlight the various ground level issues of the tribal and similar marginalized communities are remarkable. These micro-movement groups were adopting the effective and innovative methods of organizing *Padayatra* to raise consciousness among people to mobilize them. The activists from the various movement organizations in these trouble torn areas were organizing *Padayatras* (protest walk or peace walk), *Dharana* (peaceful sit on), to unite the tribal groups by sharing a common perspective and concern for specific issues. They organized their protest walks and moved through affected villages, invoked *adivasis* and mobilized their opinion, in favor. As the *adivasis* were facing problems like alienation from their land, home and livelihood and harassment by the Govt. officials and mercenaries of the company it became easy to muster their support.

Apart from NGOs, there emerged several grassroots level activist / movements organizations may be at the behest/ inspiration of NGOs to mobilize the affected population. Noteworthy among the movement organizations in the said disturbed area of Lanjigarh were: *Niyamgiri*

Surakhya Samiti (NSS) Lanjigarh (the main social movement organization, SMO), *Niyamgiri Bachao Samiti* (NBS), *Chasi Mulia Adivasis Sangha of Rayagada/ Koraput*, *Loka Shakti Abhiyan* (LSA) of Lanjigarh, *Geen Kalahandi*, *Niyamgiri Surakhya Abhiyan* (NSA), *Samajbadi Jana Parishad* (SJP), *Kalahandi Sachetan Nagarika Manch*, etc at Lanjigarh. These activist (voluntary) organizations are although independent organizations/ forums but in order to meet their common goal, to fight out the giant mining company, they often coordinated their own activities in this area and at times worked in a consortium manner. This was possible because of their unity of purpose.

Activists working with the people of Lanjigarh like, Bhagban Majhi were booked under National Security Act (NSA). Non-bailable warrants had been issued for some of the activists like the Prafulla Samantara President of *Lokashakti Abhiyan Odisha*, Achyut Das President of the NGO *Aragamee* and other activists. Also at Bargarh, Samata Bhawan, the office of the *Samajbadi Jana Parishad* was not spared by the police. In Lanjigarh, the arrested movement leaders were Nayan Dash and Lingaraj Azad, state president of *Samajbadi Jana Parishad*. The activists of the Lanjigarh movement who took lead were Daising Majhi, Bhim Majhi, tribal women leader Maladi Majhi, communist leader Gananath Patra, Rajendra Sarangi, Bhagbat Prasad Rath, Dhableswar Nayak, Santosh Mallik, Rajendra Bharati, Satyabadi Nayak, B. Thakur, Srikantha, Snehansu and Siddharth Naik. All of them were not *adivasis* but were locals who stood united and consistently sought the ouster of the VAL from Kalahandi.

Social activists like Prafulla Samantra, the president of the

Odisha unit of the *Loka Shakti Abhiyan*, said that ‘political parties are trying to gain political mileage through this issue instead of fighting for the cause of the tribal people’. The activists of these tribal movements are branded as anti-development, anti-social, anti-national, anti-modern, unscientific, extremists, and idealistic. The activists include many movement intellectuals who offered ideological and intellectual support to these movements. That apart they have indulged in extensive networking with leftist/ Socialist and *Sarvodaya* intellectuals, green activists along with the civil liberties and human rights activists from outside the state. Because of this intensive networking such activists/ intellectuals from outside the state often came to Odisha to take part in the popular protests rallies, conventions/ seminars, media briefings and paved the way to the Supreme Court, national media and forums. Further these national activists/ intellectuals also provided for the linkages to the international organizations (e.g. Amnesty International and the like) and international media, publications and forums that would give a sympathetic hearing and coverage to the movements. Even there are evidences to suggest that in the areas of Lanjigarh the interior tribal dominated areas the Christian missionaries too were directly extending support to this movement. Not surprising that on 5th Feb 2010 the Church of England declared to withdraw its 2.5 million pounds worth investment from the VAL’s mining project certainly at the instigation of Christian Missionaries working in this remote tribal belt on the ground that VAL is indulging in violation of human rights, endangering indigenous tribes, wild life and environment (BBC News, South Asia Feb 5, 2010). Further the state administration has stumbled upon

evidences of Naxalite involvement in these movements. As if these were not enough for the disadvantage of the state the politics of the movement has revealed of late a different shade that refers to the involvement of an older and subtler political forum that aimed at carving out a separate state of *Koshal* out of Odisha's western districts involving Kalahandi.

(3) (a) Role of Local NGOs:

The Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) as a phenomenon emerged in India in late 1970's and early 1980's. The NGOs were receiving funds from inside and outside the country to do state approved developmental work in the rural areas. Some of the NGO's entered into the South-western areas of Odisha in 1980's. The main six NGOs were *Aragamee*, *Laxman Nayak Society*, *Ankuran* and *Weaker Section Integrated Development Agency (WIDA)*, *Vasundhara* and *Sanhati*. These had been working among these indigenous people of Kalahandi for more than two decades by organizing various literacy programmes, imparting training in watershed management, implementing Govt's pro-poor policies, fomenting awareness among them regarding their legal and constitutional rights, augmenting introduction of new technologies in agricultural practices, and forming grassroots people's organizations. That apart these NGOs fuelled the movement by secretly funding and giving legal assistance to the SMOs. In spite of heavy repressive measures from the government those NGOs continued to support the movement. Many NGOs like *Aragamee*, *Ankuran*, etc were derecognized, their funding from the state Govt. was discontinued. The Central Govt. and other aid agencies

were informed adversely to stop funding these NGOs. Their offices were raided by police, employees were arrested, FIR and criminal cases were filed against many NGO workers. These litigations drained their time, scanty resources and motivations. Even these NGO workers faced physical harassment and threats. On a meeting of NGOs to discuss the project related issues convened by the Southern Revenue Divisional Commission of Odisha on the 1st week of July 1999, *Aragamee* did not participate. *Ankuran* made a statement in the meeting that "we will help the Govt. in installing the project if it withdraws its decision of deregistering our organization". Later *Ankuran* denied the statement through a rejoinder. The other noteworthy local NGOs which worked for the tribal people and support the resistance movement were: *Friends of Tribal Society (FTS)*, *Deshapremi Jana Samukhya (DJS)*, *Kalahandi Sachetan Nagarik Mancha*, and *Jala, Jungle O Zamin Surakhshya Manch*.

(3) (b) Role of International NGO's

Apart from local NGO's there were also some International NGO's involved with the movements against this mining based project. Some of these INGO's were ACTION AID, CARE INDIA, HIVOS, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, FOIL VEDANTA and SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL. The Action Aid with the help of *Sanhati* helped some tribal leaders to go to Delhi to give press statements protesting against the project. After sponsoring their visit to Delhi, the NGO's issued a different suitable press statement regarding funding the visit as it was to address the issues regarding the proposal to confer full power to *Gram Sabha* (Village Council) on land acquisition issues and not dealt with the

movement issues. The Amnesty International (2010) had pointed out the issue of Human rights violations and serious environmental concerns (referring to soil degradation by red mud, air and water pollutions caused) in case of Lanjigarh VAL project. INGOs like Foil Vedanta and Survival International had been organizing a series of Anti-Vedanta protests in London particularly in front of the corporate head office of Vedanta just before the AGM of Vedanta share holders. To embarrass the VAL management the Foil Vedanta activists had made series of demonstrations over the years as the Blue (*Naavi*) tribe of *Avatar* (James Cameron's English Film) facing extinction, thrown mud at the doors of corporate office, spread red ink/color as blood on the doorsteps of Vedanta corporate office, and even demanded derecognition of the Vedanta shares in the London Stock Exchange. For seven years, Survival International along with Foil Vedanta organized these demonstrations at the AGM of share holders of the VRP in London, UK. These organizations also launched an international campaign, encouraging major shareholders of VRP to disinvest in the company until it withdraws from Niyamgiri. Witnessing the company's atrocious treatment of the indigenous people and its involvement in the blatant violation of human rights, some international investors like the Norwegian Government Pension Fund, Martin Currie, the Church of England and Marlborough Ethical Fund sold out their stocks in the company as mark of disassociation with VRP. In December 2008 Survival International, put forward a complaint to the UK National Contact Point under the Specific Instance Procedure of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Following

the global reach of these INGOs on March 10, 2011 – the prestigious *London Review of International Law*, (Volume 1, Issue 1, 2013, 63–98) carried an article indicating the conflict between the Dongria Kondhs and VRP in the context of violation of international law.

Thus the roles of NGOs in these resistance movements could be summarized as follows: (i) Dissemination of relevant information, (ii) Awareness building among the affected people, (iii) Forming grassroots level activist organizations, (iv) Strategy building for mobilization, playing through media in a controlled and clever manner, (v) Funding the movement both directly and indirectly, and (vi) Extending expertise for negotiation with powerful and knowledgeable adversaries like state and company officials. We would strongly agree with the view that NGOs' guidance and involvement in these movements have certainly not allowed these to fall into the folds of Maoists' armed struggle that has spread its tentacles in these tribal dominated districts of Kalahandi and Koraput in Odisha. Hence this movement remained within the limits of civil society. But these INGOs in fact globalised this resistance movement by stapling it with protest groups from many African (Zambia, South Africa, Namibia) and South Asian (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka) countries.

Role of Mass Media in the State of Odisha:

In the present days of global connectivity through internet, no resistance movement is fought in isolation. It's receiving well brand imaging and media coverage in every part of the country. It cannot be

alienated from the world of media, through which these micro-movements seek to expand their domain of influence. The news of repression and intimidation of the *Adivasis*, social-legal activists and the protest of the marginalized people against the mining projects all over Odisha became the focus of both the national and international media attention. The coverage of the movement was wide in the electronics media but the electronics media is not free from politics as the TV channels (O TV, E TV Oriya, DD Oriya, Kanaka TV, Nakshatra TV, etc) by and large followed their own party lines as it becomes a question of credibility of a state Govt. (BJP and BJD coalition then). The local print media (news papers in vernacular/Oriya) had a great role to play in these movements. As these movements were highly politicized the print media also followed their broad party lines. The only leading Oriya daily that had been giving almost unbiased coverage of the movements was 'The Samaj' (Oriya daily published by the Servants of People Society). 'The Sambad' (Oriya daily from Eastern Media) toed the line of Congress party, while *The Prajatantra* and *The Dharitri* other leading Oriya dailies had been tacitly toeing with the lines of BJD and BJP the then ruling parties in the state.

Oriya print media had become active again 2010 in matters of displacement based resistance movements in the state, particularly in Aug-Sept 2010 when the MOEF denied environmental clearance to Odisha's biggest ever FDI based export oriented steel plant POSCO in Jajapur district, to the Vedanta university project at Puri (there by closing it) and to VAL's mining at Niyamgiri. After the withdrawal of second phase environmental clearance to VAL on 24th August 2010 by the Congress led Union

Govt., (two days later) on 26th August 2010 Rahul Gandhi the then Congress General secretary made a huge rally at Lanjigarh and did tribal appeasement by taking credit for stalling the VAL project at Lanjigarh. *The Sambad*, the Oriya daily came out with a strong editorial on 28th Aug.2010 supporting the Congress led union Govt.'s decision for withdrawal of environmental clearance. *The Samaj*, the other major Oriya daily took a dig at the MOEF for making a 'hat trick' against Odisha's developmental projects (on 22nd August 2010). But the *Dharitri* the other major Oriya daily went a step ahead to expose the double standard of MOEF which having denied three major clearances to Odisha state ruled by a non-Congress Govt., goes ahead to clear the environmentally sensitive Polavaram's Indira Sagar dam project in the adjoining state of Andhra Pradesh which has a Congress Govt. In fact the Polavaram dam project of Andhra Pradesh on rivers *Saveri* and *Sillor* that flow from the Malkangiri districts of Odisha was likely to displace large number of *Adivasis* in the densely forested areas of Malkangiri in Odisha. Govt. of Odisha's formal protest against this project had been brushed aside and clearance had been extended by the MOEF. Hence the question raised in media was, if for *Adivasis* displacement at Lanjigarh the VAL project was denied clearance, how the Polavaram project (in Andhra Pradesh) was cleared which is also to displace large number of *Adivasis* in the adjoining Malkangiri district of Odisha. The BJD activists were having a *Dharana* in front of the Odisha Raj Bhavan during September 10-12, 2010, against this move of the union Govt. Again on 12th Sept 2010 BJD had a huge rally at Malkangiri against the Polavaram dam project. The *Dharitiri*, the *Prajatantra* and the *Samaj* were giving extensive coverage to anti-

Polavaram protests in Odisha during the 2nd week of September 2010 as a fall out of the non-clearance to three of Odisha's big projects by the Congress led union Govt.

This battle was also fought in the internet where the movement organizations and their sympathizing intellectuals run websites giving news about the movement and portraying their views on regular basis. Environmental Protection Group (EPG) Odisha has such a website that carries numerous articles with legal, economic and environmental implications of the project.

niyamgiri.net,
MinesandCommunities.org,
Kashipur.info,
kashipursolidarity.tripod.com,
orissametals.com, resist.org.uk/,
survivalinternational.org, etc are some of the other important internet based websites that transmit information/news about the project and the movements. Even web materials prepared in French and German are posted for Canadian audience and Deutsch bankers of Vedanta to restrain Alcan India and VAL respectively. Of course many of their write-ups were in fact emotional, highly subjective, some times distorted and vehemently one sided. The quality and volume of propaganda material released through internet and print media particularly for Lanjigarh movement has been vicious. As a result international environmental activists have made bee line to Lanjigarh to save its tropical forest and primitive tribes (as blue colored *Naavi* Tribes of *Avatar* film of Hollywood).

Why this tribal resistant movement be treated as New Social Movements

This movement meets most of the theoretically identified features of NSMs, such as:

(1) The rise of NSMs in recent decades is to be attributed to the rise of various strong interest groups (e.g. displaced tribal groups, in this context) and also to the near total absence of macro-movements, i.e., working class movement, peasant movement, trade union movements and the like. NSMs in India have often erupted due to the multiple modernities and identities, which are essentially centered around local issues (e.g., scrapping the project and protecting the tribal cultural identity). NSMs are also conceived as non-party political forums, based on grassroots popular initiatives, and single issue based anti-state movements (Oommen, 2001: p 1-16). These are also distinct as they operate almost wholly outside the traditional political party system.

2. The newness about the new social movement is that these are opposed to the tyranny of the state Govt. (e.g., repressive measures of the Police administration in Odisha, in this context) without questioning the very existence and legitimacy of the state power. These also do not intend to directly takeover power by overthrowing the political regime. Neither did these questioned the Indian state as the Naxals/Maoists do.

3. The intermediary institutions (i.e. civil society institutions like, activist (voluntary) organizations, NGOs/ INGO, as well as media) play a significant role in fomenting this movement and also bring this movement into fruition. NSMs are mostly civil society based as the

network of civil society activist organizations involving mass media work in coalition (e. g network of NGOs and movement organization, in this context) for attaining the specific objectives.

4. These are essentially anti-systemic (e.g. against development induced displacement, in this context) and not anti-regime movements. The social movements emergent of conflicts over sharing natural resources like land/ forest, water etc, concerns for ecology/ environment, human rights, cultural identity, etc can be seen as the causes of eruption of such new social movements (as all these are true in case of this movement).

5. In the developing countries, NSMs work even toward attaining distributive justice in sharing economic resources and services (e. g, adequate compensations and R&R measures for those displaced, in this context) as these essentially revolve around values.

6. Ideologically, the encouraging features of these NSMs are mostly their being less orthodox and less doctrinaire by nature (e.g. no ideological overtone in this resistance movement at Lanjigarh). In addition to this, NSMs characteristically have no obsession to capture state power but they do aim at bringing about change in state apparatus and various social institutions.

7. NSMs have never been substitutes, as class struggle in India within the factory and over the land and its productions are still important today. Instead of replacing classical movements, the NSMs have supplemented them, as the latter have emerged in newer areas where the former have not emerged (e.g. Naxalite/ Maoist movement in contemporary Odisha which is a class-based/ classical kind of movement, is being tacitly supplemented by this micro-movement

with the help of *Chasi Mulia Adivasis Sangha*)

8. NSMs remain effective by retaining their identity, engaging parties in dialogue, yet remaining outside their control. Again, the NSMs in India, unlike those in the west have no mass participation, rather have thinner and local support bases only (e.g., Lanjigarh movement is locality based without involving the larger population of the Kalahandi district and the state.)

9. Multiple actors like, intellectuals, activists, students (middle class) and also the affected population itself play lead roles in these movements (e.g., movement intellectuals and activists, in this context). And those who direct these movements are mostly middle class based intellectuals. The actors from the middle class try to bring about changes through different means such as scholastic writings, mobilizing people in a methodical/ strategic manner, using media in their favor and the like (e.g. extensive reporting on this micro-movement in newspapers, magazines and journals).

10. May be, because of their middle class preponderance, the NSMs function in a non-hierarchical manner. Some also argue that while middle class plays the facilitating role, and the lower class (e.g., affected population consisting of mostly tribal people, some *dalits* and few general, in this context) at the grassroots level participates in large numbers in NSMs (D'monte, 1989; p 19).

The other features of NSMs spelled out by Frank and Fuentes (1987: p 1503-1510) that are found to be in match with the tribal resistant movements of Odisha under study, are as follows:

11. These movements have little or no membership ties (i.e. party

membership), and have a spontaneous interest base. In spite of their variety what is in common to all NSMs is that these are mobilized on the basis of morality, justice and a social power for a particular purpose.

12. These movements have their own life cycles that of course are shorter in duration (e.g. not more than a decade in this case).

13. NSMs mostly develop specific objectives for themselves and do not live beyond their specific objectives. 14. NSMs generally evolve in grassroots politics and grassroots collective actions. Often these initiate micro-movements of smaller groups targeting localized issues with limited institutional base. These movements take the help of existing intermediary institutions (NGOs) and in the course of time produce organized democratic associations. But various associations, i.e., voluntary associations and non party political forums and ideological groups also set the stage for such movements (e.g. convergence of efforts of movement organizations, NGOs and political organizations, in this context).

15. NGOs are seen as one of those new legitimate actors within civil society that promote people's participation, through motivation, people's mobilization and people's empowerment. NGOs mobilize people for movements and give rise to formation of various pressure groups and other intermediary institutions like popular grassroots (village level) organizations to sustain the movement for longer period (e.g., formation of grassroots level movement organizations).

16. The success and impact of NSM lie in its efforts in disseminating information through intense campaigns and in cultivating networks of contact maintained and through leaflet writings, informal gatherings, organizing

discussion forums, etc (Crook et al,1994: p 154). These movements are articulated through catchy slogans, icons, and appeals. These networks use ICT for effective and rapid communication, diffusion of movement related information. This network based communications through ICT yields snowballing effects and far reaching outcomes. (The most notable outcome of this resistant movement was, the Comprehensive R&R Policy formulated by the Govt. of Odisha dated May 20, 2006 as it had no such policy prior to this, except a draft version of July 2005).

17. Usually these NGOs share a set of common beliefs pertaining to their cause/ concerns. Pointing out the fact that NGOs do play a decisive role in initiating movements, Edwards and Hulme (1992: p 24) argue that the unified efforts of grassroots organizations can coalesce into movements. When the movements get consolidated and institutionalized, these results in formation of various new organizations/ institutions. Thus NSMs can be seen as a network of groups and organizations that are unified by shared conceptions, beliefs, ideals and specific goals by deliberate attempts on the part of the groups and organizations to ally themselves with one another through joint actions, coalitions, umbrella groups, etc. and so forth. At times NSMs consists of networks of collective actors (activist organizations/ NGOs) that may, under certain circumstances, even be able to forge themselves into large scale organizations like the *Niyamgiri Surakhya Samiti (NSS)* which the Social Movement Organization (SMO) in this context.

Indigenous People under Neoliberalism contextualized, Objective (c)

Analysis of this resistant movement engenders new traits of discourse on development in developing countries that could be possible because of the relentless struggle by the PAPs guided by the civil society organizations. Following are some of the traits: *(i) Right to develop and right to development:* The post colonial nation states have acquired a moral right to develop and have worked assiduously to expound the influence of both the state and the market through major investments in infrastructure addressing national priorities. It is assumed that the citizens of the nation would assert their right to development through these institutions of mass society and private property. Hence there is a convergence of the moral right of the state and that of the citizens. However, this convergence is not a logical necessity. Because the citizens may also articulate alternative model of development based on their rights to development and stress for small scale undertakings that have lower pollution levels, that address local priorities and that respects the local cultural autonomy. Citizens also perceive the necessity of seeking more (than what is existing) rights to participate in decision making that affects their lives and community under this model. This duality of rights resulted in micro-movements of this kind in contemporary societies.

(ii) Financial and technical versus social sustainability: A mere deployment of a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) and other project feasibility technique are certainly not enough for sustainability of the project. The matrices of CBA dealing with economic parameters have already proven to be

harbinger of dooms day as these fail to answer the ethical question as to how to measure in economic terms the misery and sufferings of displaced people. Hence to ensure sustainability, CBA must include the new parameters/indicators, like loss of social networks/kinship networks, emotional and psychological costs and the cultural costs of displacement involving the project. Besides, the negotiation for R&R between the conflicting parties need to be done like that of the industrial collective bargaining on equal footings. Hence a social cost benefit analysis that is inclusive of the subjective as well as the objective costs is alone to be considered appropriate. That apart a comprehensive and viable R&R Policy has now taken a somewhat different twist to be known as stake holders approach wherein the affected population is being treated as one of the stakeholders. Therefore, an inclusive development needs to recognize the local peoples' rights over the local natural resource bases and their participation in the projects' R&R measures.

Of late the movement has died out at Lanjigarh after the final judgment of the Supreme court of India. This boosted the moral of the CSOs as the court battle was fuelled by them. As this was a movement by the DID people their degree of mobilizations show strong correlation with the extent of politicization of the movement by non-ruling political parties in connivance with civil society organizations (activists organizations and NGOs). These worked as intermediary organizations between the political parties and the DID people. Their mediating role gives a grass roots touch/grassroots connectivity to the movement. Further their role as torch bearers make the movement more intense and more effective. The

emergence of civil society in India is concomitant to its neo-liberalism embraced in the early 1990s. Of course neo-liberalism is all about the structural reforms of economies which essentially targets the financial and labour markets to open-up. This change in the institutional structures of the economy reduces the role of the government and creates space for the private sector. This further gets reflected in the social sector and created space for the non-profit/voluntary sector to rise. It opened door for operations of INGOs/ activist organizations from abroad. Thus as the former socialist state tried to be more efficient and ensure effective delivery under neoliberal economy after structural adjustment, the scope of its activities shrunk. The shrinking role of Govt. created space for the increasing role for CSOs. Neo-liberalism enabled India to globalize its economy (through slow and steady liberalization process) open the door for FDIs. Through this opening up of the Indian economy came the VAL as a mining FDI subsidiary of VRP the Britain based MNC. Thus the neo-liberalism in India opened the doors for MNC/ FDI as well as for INGOs/ oversea activist organizations. This created space for the CSOs from within as well as from outside. But being inherently antagonistic both the CSOs and international Capital are often working for cross purposes. So the mushrooming CSOs are often treated by the state as vested interests (as they often represent local interests which would be displaced by the entry of FDI) not as conscientious altruists. Internecine between the state and the *Adivasis* thrived the CSOs. Nevertheless a vibrant civil society in the post liberalized India is pushing the state to corner and is acquiring more space for itself which otherwise means the civil society is claiming to share power with the state. But the question of legitimacy

of the CSOs to share power with state sans popular mandate is intriguing.

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