

**“THE ‘LAND QUESTION’ AND ITS RADICAL NATURE: BRINGING THE DEABTE ON LAND AND LAND RIGHTS MOVEMENTS BACK TO THE FOREFRONT”**

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**ABSTRACT**

The article provides a brief discussion on the various conceptualisations which have tried to make sense of the land rights movements. For instance Michael Levien argues that how Karl Polanyi’s concept of a ‘counter-movement’ and David Harvey’s concept of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ and even Partha Chatterjee’s concept of ‘political society’, fails to do complete justice to the specificity of land rights movement simply because they provide sweeping generalisations and try to club land rights movement with other poor people’s movements. Not realising that land being an issue of livelihood resource can throw up radical protest movements. A distinction has been made between struggles for land reforms and struggles for land acquisition. The article broadly tries to map the movement scenario: framing, organisation, networking and alliance making done by the movements. And to see that, to what extent these can help in maintaining the autonomy of the movement and thereby allowing it to remain both institutionalised and a radical movement at the same time.

**Keywords:** Land Rights Movement, Land Reforms, Land Acquisition, Institutionalisation.

*Property and its acquisition break social bonds and drain the life sap of the community. The unscrupulousness involved plays havoc world over and generates a force that can coax or coerce peoples to deeds of injustice and of wholesale horror.*

-Rabindra Nath Tagore, from *The Robbery of the Soil* (1992)

The struggle for land rights is based on the maxim of ‘*land to the tiller*’. The maxim finds its theoretical basis in John Locke’s ‘*labour theory of property*’ but the same theory can be used by the state to appropriate land. Under the guise of the Lockean rationale of “higher and best possible use of land”, the state has been expropriating land from what it considers as the low value users (peasants) and passes it to capitalist classes who can make better use of the land and

create profit, which it is presumed will finally lead to the betterment of all (the trickle down effect) and which in reality rarely happens. The article provides a brief discussion on the various conceptualisations which have tried to make sense of the land rights movements. For instance Michael Levien argues that how Karl Polanyi's concept of a 'counter-movement' and David Harvey's concept of 'accumulation by dispossession' and even Partha Chatterjee's concept of 'political society', fails to do complete justice to the specificity of land rights movement simply because they provide sweeping generalisations and try to club land rights movement with other poor people's movements. Not realising that land being an issue of livelihood resource can throw up radical protest movements. A distinction has been made between struggles for land reforms and struggles for land acquisition.

There has been a lot of empirical literature on land rights movements in India which basically focuses on regional/ or state level case studies. But not much of theorisation has been done on the issue of movement scenario that might be specific to the land rights issue. The article is divided into three broad sections. The first section basically talks about the complications around which the question of land is contextualised and how to make sense of the specificity of the land rights movement so that we can avoid the fallacy of clubbing many issues as similar to the radical issue of the 'land question'. The question of land as a livelihood resource is a somewhat radical issue and can create struggles which are radical in nature. This section also delves into the complex nature of land related laws and the divided powers of the centre and the state to legislate on land complicates the issue more. The second section brings in the movement scenario for land reforms. A distinction is made between the issue of land reform and the issue of land acquisition. The phase of struggles for land reforms was a radical one mainly because it was guided by the left oriented parties which, views the possibility of social change by means of a radical violent revolution thrown by the masses. The third section opens the discussion on the movements against land acquisition that are directed sometimes against the central government and sometimes against the state government. ***The article broadly tries to map the movement scenario: framing, organisation, networking and alliance making done by the movements. And to see that, to what extent these can help in maintaining the autonomy of the movement and thereby allowing it to remain both institutionalised and a radical movement at the same time and whether the argument that institutionalisation of movements amounts to the fading away of the movement holds validity in all cases or is dependent for its validity on the external and internal environment in which the movement finds itself.***

### **The Radical Issue of Land and Conceptual Clarification of the 'Land Rights Movements'**

The struggle for land rights is based on the maxim of '*land to the tiller*'; the maxim finds its theoretical basis in John Locke's '*labour theory of property*'. The expounder of western liberal

theory believed in theory of ‘natural rights’ and considered the ‘right to property’ as a natural rights. The logic working behind the argument is that, one’s body and limbs are one’s own property and whenever a person mixes his labour with the natural state of nature, he appropriates it as his own property, at least where there is ‘enough and as good left in common for others’. Land being a non-renewable resource, is available to us in a limited amount and together with that, the out of proportion, explosion of population and emergence of an industrialised and market oriented economy, due to which land has become a scarce resource such that, there no longer exist enough and as good (land) left in common for others (Macpherson, 1951). But the liberal theory of Locke still finds its support for private accumulation of land by arguing that privatised lands that were intensively cultivated possessed a higher productivity than lands held in common by a multitude of subsistence based households (Whitehead, 2012). It is under the guise of this Lockean rationale of ‘higher and best possible’ use of land that,

“The state expropriates land from what it considers low-value users (peasants) and redistributes it upward to classes more able to ‘improve it’. Such state assistance in expropriating land for commodification- accumulation by dispossession- is now one of the key features of the Indian states’ relationship with domestic and international capital” (Levien, 2011:463).

With the deepening of neo-liberalisation and market oriented economy, there has been a mushrooming of infrastructural initiatives given wholly to privately owned companies (both national and international) who have been working for their own vested interests and private profits. The decades of 1970’s and 1980’s have seen the emergence of social movements resisting ‘development-induced-displacement’ in India. Scholars like Ramachandra Guha, Amita Baviskar and Nandini Sundar and many others have extensively documented the struggle between the Indian State and the rural, tribals, and poor people who have been dispossessed from their lands for various infrastructural and development projects, like construction of roads, dams, forest enclosures, thereby juxtaposing the competing claims on natural resources of peasant subsistence and commercial exploitation (Levien, 2013:357).

Karl Polanyi in his seminal work *The Great Transformation: The Political Economic Origins of Our Time* (2001 [1994]) explicates that the unprecedented capitalist urge towards the creation of a self-regulated market coupled with the commodification of the ‘fictitious commodities’ ‘land, labour and money’ produces social strain in the economy. “Polanyi famously observed that 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century attempts to ‘disembed’ the market from social controls to create a ‘self-regulating market’ produced unprecedented social dislocations, resulting in widespread protective ‘counter-movements’ against the free market” (this is Michael Levien’s phrasing of Polanyi’s argument) (Levien, 2007:120) The concept of a ‘counter-movement’ or the ‘double-

movement' entails the 're-embedding' of the market within the social and political controls. Karl Polanyi's elastic concept of 'counter movement' weaves into itself most of the contemporary struggles against neo-liberalism but it fails to illuminate the fact that commodification of land is different from commodification of labour and money and thus is not able to highlight the specificity of dispossession politics (Levien, 2007).

David Harvey's concept of 'accumulation by dispossession' provides a theoretical construct to map the terrain of 'anti-dispossession movements'. The rural poor, farmers, urban slum dwellers, tribals are facing the brunt of the current developmental regime, as it tries to take away their land for purely privatized industrial, infrastructural and real-estate projects. The versatile concept of 'accumulation by dispossession' tries to make a sense of the broad terrain of movements and marks a shift from 'exploitation' and 'primitive accumulation' as the earlier frame of reference provided by the Marxist literature. The kind of political agency which the contemporary movements create is beyond the class character of society, "far from emerging from the traditional Marxist proletariat, it represents heterogeneous social and economic groups. They share not equivalent relationships to the means of production but variegated negative experiences with the manifold effects of market liberalisation" (Levien, 2013: 355).

The concept of 'political society' popularised by Partha Chatterjee also fails to make a sense of the specificity of the dispossession politics and again does the consequential function of clubbing the land rights struggle into the concept of 'political society'. In his book *Politics of The Governed*, Partha Chatterjee defines 'political society' as,

"The realm in which the subaltern groups that are excluded from civil society engage with the state not as citizens, but as governed populations. He argues that this engagement takes the form not of citizens demanding rights but of subjects negotiating ad-hoc, unstable and para-legal arrangements with the state agencies" (Levien, 2013:358).

Michael Levien provides a critique of this by explicating that even within the land rights movements there are variants available and that there are both '*bargainers*' and '*barricaders*'. 'Bargainers' are those who are ready to negotiate with the state for higher compensation and better rehabilitation packages from the state in return of losing their land but not through 'extra-legal' negotiations as Partha Chatterjee believes, but through courts and political pressure and sometimes by taking to protest movements. 'Barricaders' are those who are not ready to part away with their land, "by refusing to treat their land as commodity and asserting their right to determine their use, they are significantly impeding the ability of Indian states to transfer their land to capitalists" (Levien, 2013:358).

Michael Leveen has done an extensive field work and theorisation on the contemporary movements, resisting 'development-induced-displacement' and he talks of 'regimes of dispossession'. The Nehruvian 'high modernist' era of dispossession, acquired legitimacy as it was based on the idea of common good of the nation but in the current scenario of neo-liberal dispossession it is becoming more and more difficult for the Indian state to justify its legitimacy as it is explicitly acting as a mere land broker for real estate-driven private capital. Thus the two different periods 'The Nehruvian Period' and the 'Neo-Liberal Regime' exemplify two different phases of 'regimes of dispossession' (Leveen, 2013:361).

Both these regimes of dispossession have generated counter movements for land rights. What we need to analyse is that, how a movement can maintain its autonomy from the state and continue with its objective of bringing about the change in the society, whether it's in terms of socio-economic-cultural-or-political change. ***When the movement is required to bring a change in the mindset of the law makers and the executive machinery of the state regarding some issue, which needs structural changes, there is need of a long driven struggle, what one may call a 'war of position' in Gramscian terminology. In the contemporary scenario where the state has a coercive apparatus to disperse off a movement, it becomes necessary for a movement to maintain its organisational survival, autonomy and radicalness in order to achieve its goal and objectives in the long run.***

In the contemporary times with the emergence of people's movement, one can observe that movements and movement organisation which have taken up to struggle for the people's cause and aim at structural and systemic change in the society have adopted Gandhian methodology of struggle (Ekta Parishad and National Alliance of Peoples Movement). The movements that have emerged in the wake of the increasing spate of land acquisitions under the SEZ Act and under the land acquisition laws has again reopened the debate on the question of the land in India. The various movements like Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), the anti-SEZ resistance in Andhra Pradesh against the Polepally SEZ (PSEZ) and Kakinada SEZ (KSEZ), and then anti-SEZ resistance in Maharashtra against the Reliance industries proposed Maha Mumbai SEZ (MMSEZ), Nandigram, Singur, POSCO, the major focus of all these movements have been organising (the core organisation), networking (alliance-building), and framing of the grievances.

The question of the land acquisition is a crucial issue as it implies a 'sudden, exogenous and irreversible threat to people's livelihood, homes and ways of life.' Thus the argument is that, land acquisition involves an 'irreversible transfer of land' leading to a 'one-time struggle over the distribution of assets' and therefore can create explosive struggle between the state and the affected people (Leveen, 2013:362). Land rights movements in India have taken to organisation, framing of the grievances and the movement ideology, networking and alliance building. In the

case of land rights movements, framing of the grievances is done in terms of ‘development-induced-displacement’ and sometimes in terms of the larger ‘agrarian crisis and farmers suicides’. This kind of framing of the grievances done in the broader sense rather than framing the issue simply as getting back the acquired land helps in movement networking and alliance making with other organisations and movements who have State and its regime of development as the common enemy, that is to be targeted.

### **Land Reform, State and Resistance**

There is a difference between struggle for land reforms and struggle against land acquisition, even though both deal with the issue of land centrally and hence there is need to mark out the clear cord of difference, since they can kick-off movements of different dynamics specific to them. The peasant’s movements in India have been primarily struggling for land reforms and have moved from a phase of ‘radicalisation’ to ‘institutionalisation’. The movement of the trajectory of peasant’s movements has been from radical action to institutionalised struggle. A ‘radical peasant movement’ can be understood as having a radical ideology for rapid structural change and such movements can take up the strategy of ‘non-institutionalised’ politics so as to pressurise the state. Whereas an ‘institutionalised peasant’s movements’, can be understood as one where institutionalised mass mobilisation is initiated by bodies which have got institutionalised to some extent, and demands for a gradual change in the selected institutional arrangement of society. But with the current spate of land acquisition cases the issue of ‘land reform’ has again occupied the central stage and just like activist have been arguing and struggling for ‘right to information’ and ‘right to food’ which ultimately led to the passing of the ‘right to information act, 2005’ and ‘right to food act, 2013’, there has been an emergence of rights based demands on land for the purpose of which, it becomes necessary to again bring the demand of ‘land reforms’ to the centre stage.

The Indian National Congress (INC) party which itself is a progeny of the Indian National Movement (or one can even say that the boundaries between the movement and the party are blurred over here at least this was the case before India had attained freedom) did take up the issue of land reform with a lot of fervour and enthusiasm and abolished the Zamindari system and took other steps towards stipulating a ceiling on land holdings and redistribution of the government land which was acquired by the state. But the logic of development and resistance from the upper class landed elites disrupted the process of land reforms. It was the communist movement organised by the left oriented parties which took up the task of struggling for land reforms in a radical way leading to land grab movements and violent struggles. Thus what we observe is that for a long span of time even after independence the movements have been related to political parties.

The question of land reforms and that of land acquisition both bring in centrally the issue of land as a source of livelihood. The land reforms laws in India can be categorised into four categories for the matter of convenience: Zamindari abolition, implementation of land ceiling laws, security of land tenure, and redistribution of surplus land to the landless. The struggle for achieving these land reforms has a history spanning to colonial times and has been a history of violent peasant uprisings and forceful occupation of land. Theodore Bergmann, in his comparison of four states (West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka) concludes that the, “pre-requisite of success of agrarian reforms is not the availability or abundance of land for distribution; it is rather the political will to implement it” (Lieten, 1990:2265).

Immediately after independence, the Zamindari system was abolished with the passing of the First Amendment Act 1951. And the task of land reforms was taken up with a great fervour by the Indian state and it figured prominently in the five year plans. This initial momentum for land reforms was the result of the legitimacy which the issue had acquired during the Indian National Movement itself. But immediately after the passing of the Act the State faced resistance from the landed elites and the implementation of the land reforms has not happened with the same fervour with which the act was passed. The history of land reforms in the states shows that, “far from being liberal gifts from enlightened governments these have been historical processes necessitated by protracted peasant struggle (Krishnan, 1989:10). Radhakrishnan’s argument is similar to that of T. K. Oommen’s argument that, “no major legislation designed to protect and promote the interests of the oppressed and exploited groups can be ordinarily expected in the absence of persistent demands and protracted struggle” (Krishnan, 1989:10). Thus there is a necessary cause and effect relationship between land reforms and peasants struggle. *Social change requires not only institutionalisation by way of social legislation but also requires continuous movements for the purpose of the implementation of laws and this makes permanent mass membership organisations (which takes up the cause of social change) necessary for the survival of the movement.*

A highly skewed and unequal pattern of land distribution reflects the socio-economic disparities and acts as a potential grievance which can be materialised upon, by organised interest groups, pressure groups, political parties, social movement organisations, some for their vested interests and others for bringing about socio-economic reforms. *The question of land rights has till date been an unresolved issue in India. The Indian National Congress party (INCP) and the left parties in India took upon the land rights issue centrally during the independence movement and even in the post-independence era, but their reasons for doing so were different.* For the communist movement the larger frame of reference, for waging the struggle for land rights was ‘exploitation’ of the land less by the land owners (Sridhar, 1985: 70). And for the INCP emerging out of the Indian National Independence movement for freedom the larger frame of

reference was removal of ‘poverty and socio-economic inequalities’. There is a basic difference in both the frames. For the communist movement and the left parties the state itself was the agency involved in exploiting the poor people as in a ‘capitalist mode of production’ system there exists a nexus between government – capitalists – bureaucrats and thus the responsibility of bringing about a structural social change which is pro-poor lies in the hands of the working and peasant classes itself. Whereas in the case of Indian National Movement for independence which led to the creation of INCP, the state is seen as a benevolent agency which will work for the welfare of the people and will take the initiative and hence the whole need for waging a movement subsides and the people are made to rely upon this benevolent agency to initiate the required social change.

Puchalapalli Sundarayya, one of the revolutionary leaders and the first General Secretary of the Communist Party of India and quite instrumental in the Telangana people’s armed struggle, wrote a pamphlet on *The Land Question* (1976), wherein he expounds a methodological strategy for waging the struggle for land rights, wherein he emphasises upon organised revolution and hence the primacy of the organisational structure and organisational survival:

“Only through years of patient work among the people, taking up their day to day economic and social problems, can the required consciousness be brought about and the organisation built. In the absence of this, they end up organising anarchic and adventurist actions, the result of which is that their forces get split and atomised” (Sridhar, 1985: 70).

To him the Naxalite Movement which centrally takes up the land rights issue, was “inadequate and naïve, as immediate armed struggle can neither materialise on a large scale nor realize anything. People take to armed struggle only in self-defence and when their democratic rights movements are suppressed by the government with violence” (Sridhar, 1985: 70). ***It would be worthwhile for our purpose to introspect more on the communist movement in India and their struggle for land reforms. What makes the issue interesting is the fact that the communist movement best exemplifies the ‘problematic’ of ‘institutionalisation phase and movement phase’. It defies the wisdom of much of western influenced theoretical formulations which tries to see things in terms of such dichotomies.*** The Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India- Marxist (CPI-M) and the communist movement represented by them is the best example of a mass-based membership organisation, having centralised party cadres, institutionalised organisational structure and ideology and still manages to remain a radical movement in terms of demands and praxis. The strength of the communist movement has lied in the ideological framing of the movement. Its uniqueness lies in “building a Gramscian ‘national-

popular' will by fusing together of national, class, caste, and regional (linguistic) concerns" rather than having a restricted concern for only economic demands" (Nissim, 2011: 386).

Thus it is amply clear that the only resources available with the poor people's movement (for instance in this case the peasants movement) is 'unity' and 'organisation' and 'radical protest movement' just as T. K. Oommen points out in this regard that in a society which is marked by extreme concentration of wealth and power, where the state, courts and media are not sympathetic towards a pro-poor social change, then in such a scenario even the passing of laws won't suffice for institutionalising of social change and hence what is also required is putting pressure from below through militant protest movements (Oommen, 1975).

In the contemporary period social movements organisation's like Ekta Parishad (EP) (People's Movement-cum-Gandhian organisation) have taken up the cause of land reforms very centrally. The failure of the formal institutional politics to address the people's issue and together with the inability of the left parties to take up poor people's issues (since they have also got enmeshed into the capitalist logic of development and the constraints of electoral politics), has created a space for the emergence of various people's movements, NGOs, movement organisations who have taken upon themselves the task of fighting for people's rights and bring in social change.

*The people's movements like EP share the space of non-institutional politics. They try to influence the system from outside and adopt the strategy of struggle-and-dialogue (politics of contention-and-engagement). And when they work as insiders they work not as a part of the established state structure but as a representative of people's movements. **The difference between the left parties strategy and the strategy of these, new people's movement is that, the people's movement like EP are trying to revive the 'radical in Gandhian ideology', their demands are radical and they are also institutionalised (in terms of organisation, framing, networking) but their praxis is not of violent revolution as adopted by the left parties.** And even left oriented parties, in the contemporary period have moved on to institutionalised ways of bringing in change rather than radical revolutionary ways.*

### **Land Acquisition, State and Resistance**

The spate of resistance movements against land acquisition has almost become a global phenomenon leading to global movement networking and alliance formation. ***In the current scenario 'development-by-displacement-or-dispossession' has become the larger frame of reference and leads to what we call 'frame extension' in the movement literature.*** But before delving into the movement politics it would be pertinent, to grasp the seriousness of the dispossession issue and what it entails and signifies for the affected people, one may call it as 'framing of the grievance', to quote Michael Cernea:

“Expropriation of land removes the main foundation upon which people’s productive systems, commercial activities and livelihoods are constructed. This is the principal form of ‘decapitalisation’ and pauperisation for most rural and many urban displaces, who lose this way both natural and manmade capital” (Cernea, 2007: 3707).

Such a dispossession almost always affects the people at the most basic subsistence level or as what Scott says it destroys the peasants ‘moral economy’. Scott argues that:

“Some varieties of change, other things being equal, are more explosive than others- more likely to provoke open, collective defiance. In this category I might place those massive and sudden changes that decisively destroy nearly all the routines of daily life and, at the same time, threaten the livelihood of much of the population” (Levien, 2013: 362).

Michael Levien also hinges upon the plight of the people who face displacement or dispossession. Differentiating between ‘exploitation of labour’ (which according to Marxist’s generates revolutionary class struggle) and ‘dispossession of land’, he argues that the former can be understood as expropriation of surpluses within limits but the latter implies a sudden, exogenous and irreversible threat to people’s livelihood, homes, and ways of life. While the capitalist exploitation of the labour (primitive accumulation and commodification of labour) class leaves the scope for ongoing struggle, “But dispossession politics involves an irreversible transfer of land leading to a one-time struggle over the distribution of assets and thus can create explosive struggle between the state and the affected people” (Levien, 2013: 362).

The question of ‘land’ and the struggles related to it has been a complicated issue in India. The farmer’s movement, environmental movements, naxalite movement, tribal people’s movement, struggles by urban slum dwellers, peasants movements for land reforms, movement’s against land acquisition all have taken up the issue of land rights centrally. But clubbing all these movements under a single label of ‘land rights movement’, just for the purpose of theorisation and theoretical clarification would be a very much self-defeating task. The land issue gets more complicated in India because of the conflicting role between the centre and the state and since there is no uniform law which governs the various ways through which land can be taken away from people.

The responsibility of governing and legislating on land issues is a state subject and state’s jurisdiction extends to, “rights in or over land, land tenures, the collection of rents; transfer and alienation of agricultural land; land improvement and agricultural loans; colonization; land revenue, the maintenance of land records; and taxes on lands and buildings” (Sud, 2014: 46). The

union or the central list provides no prerogatives to the Centre to legislate on the subject of land but the concurrent list divides the power of 'acquisition and requisitioning of property' between the Centre and the states, but even here the Centre can only lay the broad framework of guidelines and it is up to the state to frame and enact laws. The States keep asserting their autonomy from the Centre and this also sounds as more legitimate since the states are closer to the ground reality.

Scholars documenting on environmental movements have argued that "social protest over land rights surrounding SEZ's have come to represent the challenge of balancing India's emerging-economy status with concerns of inclusive and sustainable development" (Khoday & Natrajan, 2012: 435). Vandana Shiva, a leading social activist points out that "the future of Indian people and Indian democracy rests on the land question" (Khoday & Natrajan, 2012: 435). The trajectory of 'land rights movement' which initially was the forte of peasant's struggle in India but in contemporary times since mid 1980's the land rights struggle has brought in different classes and sections of people and has spread to even urban areas because of the unprecedented land acquisition taking place. The noted historian Sumit Sarkar calls SEZ's as the "biggest land grab movement in the history of modern India" (Sharma, 2007).

Several scholars in their study of resistance against SEZ's have emphasised on one or the other aspect that have been charted out above and have noted that the "ability of local landowners to forge links with a broader array of forces in civil society was, in fact, a key element in almost every case of sustained activism" (Rob, Kennedy & Mukopadhaya, 2014:31). Karli Srinivasulu in his study on anti-SEZ protest in Andhra Pradesh remarks that "the role of NGOs has been crucial... Where there has been no mobilisation, or where it has been ineffective, this is usually because NGOs were either absent from the scene or entered too late" (Rob, Kennedy & Mukopadhaya, 2014:31). Loraine Kennedy in her study on anti-SEZ protest in Haryana shows that how Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Samiti (KMSS) (or farmer and worker struggle council) benefited from its link with the prominent campaigner Vandana Shiva. She explains that contact with an internationally recognised activist and with well-organised and funded NGOs energised the KMSS and informed its choice of tactics adding more such cases. One may cite the case of Nandigram struggle, an expanded network of NGOs and movement groups was also a crucial asset to the activists who successfully opposed the SEZ at Nandigram in West Bengal (Rob, Kennedy & Mukopadhaya, 2014:32).

The development vs. displacement debate emerged in the popular context, with the emergence of anti-SEZ movements in general and specifically with the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA). The NBA emerged in the 1980s against the Sardar Sarovar Project. Though the NBA movement has not been completely successful, but has definitely created a blueprint for other similar

movements. The movement adopted 'innovative strategies of resistance that operated simultaneously at the grassroots, national and international level.' The movement organised itself, by organising an ad-hoc organisation, took to networking, alliance building, ideological framing, and local activism together with eliciting the support of international community and human rights organisation and other organisations given to environmental protection. Balakrishnan Rajagopal, a leading scholar on development and social movements observes regarding NBA, 'as one of the signature public contestations of the twentieth century that redefined the terms of development, democracy and accountability.' The two crucial lessons that have come up from the NBA are: 'one, the central need for transnational alliances to be rooted in local movements with the active participation of local communities, and two, the profound demand for a major restructuring of contemporary democratic institutions- from the local to the global' (Narula, 2008).

### **CONCLUSION**

In this article, through a history of land rights struggles in India, we have show that land rights being a radical issue can throw up radical movements. What we have observed, will serve for our purpose of further research on land rights movement in India. *What came out of this introspection is that movements can take up to organising, framing their grievances, networking, alliance building, in order to gather a mass support. It is this process which is emphasised as the autonomy aspect of the movement which allows it to sometimes emerge in its 'visibility phase' or the struggle phase and at other times they go into their 'latency phase' where they work as 'hidden networks'.* What conditions should be specified as necessary and sufficient for the achievement of movement goals is a difficult question to be answered because its dynamics is complex, by seeing successful movements like that of Nandigram and Singur in West Bengal and the NBA and other land rights struggle, one can earmark certain aspects which help the movements to achieve its goals and most of the times it is the popular movements which thrive upon 'populism', which are able to have an impact on the government.

Certain important aspects which are necessary and which can be termed as '*the external environment of the movement*' are: (1) national and regional media coverage; pressure from the global community; (2) political opportunity structure, like electoral gains and party support; (3) movement networking and support from other NGO's and allied movement organisations. Apart from these there are certain other important aspects which are basic for the movement's survival and which can be termed as '*the internal environment of the movement*', which is the making of an immediate ad-hoc organisation which might in the process of the movement emerge as a social movement organisation, because the battle with state might turn out to be a long drawn one and it is the organisational structure which guarantees the continuity and survival of the

movement. Tied with the organisational aspect there is also the requirement of the *'framing of the movement'* and that also in such a way that it can allow other similar movements and organisations to align with each other. *Sometimes the movements can be multilayered, spreading at multiple levels, its vectors can be enmeshed intricately, cross-cutting each other or mutually supporting each other, and both the internal dynamics and the external environment can get superimposed upon each other impacting its survival or failure.*

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