

THE POLITICS AND STRATEGY OF ENVIRONMENTALISM

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We have wished, we ecofreaks, for a disaster or for a social change to come and bomb us into Stone Age, where we might live like Indians in our valley, with our localism, our appropriate technology, our gardens, our homemade religion -- guilt-free at last!

— Stewart Brand, Editor, Whole Earth Catalogue

Environmentalism is a broad, social and philosophical movement that has redefined human history on account of not only its enormous reach but also its future repercussions. Today, protection of environment has become the top-most 'priority' of every actor in the world, both the state and non-state, due to internal and external pressures that may not culminate in the 'common good.' The importance of the concept has enhanced since the identification of global warming and climate change as the biggest threats to humankind. India is one of the most vulnerable countries and hence has to find solutions to tackle the effects of environmental change as well as take steps to stop it to the greatest extent possible. This endeavour would indeed require the State to join hands with non-state actors to not only devise solutions but also implement them effectively. Among non-state actors, the Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (ENGOS) have a significant say as far as environmental governance is concerned. They play

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a prominent role in formulating a country's stand on environmental issues at the international level and also act as a bridge between the government and the public. Instead of acting as a bridge these organisations could also be at loggerheads with the government justifiably or unjustifiably, if the latter fails to take the former and the people into confidence both with good governance as well as astute public diplomacy efforts. Just as the nation states indulge in the politics of environment so do the ENGOs.

The paper discusses the impact of environmental groups on policy formulation and implementation at both the international as well as national levels. In this respect, it analyses the challenges of governance and accountability to environmental movements by highlighting specific examples of ENGOs. They have played both positive and negative roles, the former by raising awareness as well as assisting the establishment in data generation and dissemination and the latter by misinforming the public and the governments as well as indulging in corrupt practices for vested interests. A comparison between the West's treatment of the ENGOs and NGOs dealing with environmental matters and that of India would give an interesting background to the lack of strategic thinking among India's policy makers. In this context, issues such as economics, strategy and diplomacy take the centre-stage. The Corporate-ENGO confluence and lack of transparency on the part of the government of India are some of the factors that have provided an impetus to the increasing role of the ENGOs in environmental governance in the country. Their influence on the government could be both progressive and detrimental. These aspects would be closely studied in this paper encompassing both governance and strategy. The attempt has been to deal with every issue, mostly from the state's perspective although other perspectives are provided adequate focus simply because the state does occupy the core of international relations to this date. Also, the paper does not touch upon any specific policies of any specific government. The focus is more on a classical, liberal and democratic setup and the recommendations are also directed towards the State and in the process, also to the ENGOs.

THE INTERACTIONS AND COUNTER-INTERACTIONS IN A WORLD OF MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS

The Prospects for Environmentalism and Diffusion of Governance

Environmental politics is one of those rare domains in which policy-making have indeed witnessed wider participation from the civil society, especially the ENGOs. However, the ENGOs have also faced criticism from various quarters on two grounds – first, the ability of ENGOs in influencing the promotion of environmental sustainability might be overstated, though they provide for popular participation; second, the democratic nature of the ENGOs has been viewed by many with scepticism primarily because of the fact that with increasing institutionalisation of these ENGOs, the participatory tradition is giving way for a more elitist or hierarchical tradition. The activities of the ENGOs are multifaceted. First, they might take on the role of agents of policy-makers by carrying out the task of implementing the policy-makers' agenda in the society. This activity is also aided by the government through funds. Second, ENGOs could take the views of the citizens of the society to the policy-makers, thus representing either their supporter base or the general public. Third, the ENGOs also play an important role in terms of transforming the behaviour and attitudes of the citizens towards environment. In this regard, besides engaging themselves in creating publicity for their cause and galvanising communities or even joining hands with the existing communities in order to manage local environment, the ENGOs have also begun to promote non-governmental environmental governance by mobilising support for their visible objectives and indirectly influencing the government policy. Fourth, as the ENGOs take the citizens' views to the policy-makers, they also attempt to change the views of the policy-makers through various means such as lobbying, participation in formal environmental institutions, public campaigning and so on.

It is also highly important to analyse the strategies of the ENGOs to disseminate an 'ecological sensibility' among the masses. Some ENGOs produce educational material and indulge in civil disobedience or

campaigning primarily to attract media attention. Other ENGOs such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth (FoE), invest considerable amount of their resources in scientific research in order to directly present scientific evidence to the citizens as well as to the government. At the same time, as discussed earlier, ENGOs such as Greenpeace have gone to the extent of indulging in actions that “excite the eye”. Paul Wapner comments, “By offering spectacular images to the media, Greenpeace invites the public to bear witness; it enables people throughout the world to know about environmental dangers and tries to pique their sense of outrage.”¹ Both Greenpeace and FoE initially believed in using direct action, that is confrontational methods, usually within the law. Greenpeace shot to international fame in 1985 during the Rainbow Warrior incident in which its ship was blown up by the French government agents and one of its crew members was killed. The ship was used to protest against the French nuclear testing. Similarly, if the ENGOs protest against the moral wrongs of the government and not injustice, the ENGOs tend to lose their credibility.

Government-NGO Partnership

If one delves more deeply into the role of the ENGOs as independent agents undertaking various steps to influence the government policy, one could clearly see that the ENGOs contribute not only their views but also the citizens’ views to the policy process. Representation is an important factor that forces governments to take the ENGOs with sufficient seriousness. Apart from representation, the ENGOs are also approached by the government for their expertise as they could provide the latter with relevant information which the governments would otherwise never come to know. As already mentioned earlier, the gap between the ENGOs and the scientific community is slowly reducing as the ENGOs themselves are devoting considerable amount of their resources to social science and natural science research in environmental issues. For example, The Energy and Resources Institute

1. Derek R. Bell, “Sustainability through Democratisation? Assessing the rule of environmental NGOs in a liberal democracy,” *NGOs, sustainability and democracy* (Newcastle: Political Studies Association, University of Newcastle), p. 12, see at <http://www.psa.ac.uk/journals/pdf/5/2003/Derek%20Bell.pdf>, accessed on December 12, 2011.

(TERI) have been focussing on research activities related to climate change, efficient utilisation of energy, sustainable development and large-scale adoption of renewable energy technologies. It has also played a pivotal role in formulating the developing world perspective in the international climate debate apart from providing vital inputs for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) process. The institute's areas of focus in climate change research are "impacts and vulnerability assessment, adaptation strategies, exploring Green House Gas (GHG) mitigation options and issues therein, climate change policies and climate modelling activities."² Internationally, it is involved in several collaborative projects with institutions in other parts of Asia, the Asia Pacific, Europe and America. In fact, it is already on the path of making efforts to help Africa build capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The majority of reports and documents of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) and the Planning Commission are replete with data generated by TERI, whether it is the sector-wise inventory of GHG emissions or even policy recommendations in terms of options and potential for GHG emissions mitigation. The Interim Report of the Expert Group on Low Carbon Strategies for Inclusive Growth of the Planning Commission is one of them.³ Another example of an ENGO in India that works closely with the MoEF is Development Alternatives (DA). It was chosen as the ENVIS (Environmental Information System) node # 4 by the MoEF. It is linked to the global environmental information system called INFOTERRA/UNEP. ENVIS # 4 has been "assigned the task of collecting, organizing and dissemination of information, globally on Environmentally Sound and Appropriate Technologies (ESAT)." Its primary objective is to create databases and update them.⁴ It not only releases timely information to the public free of cost but also assists the government in generating data which could be used both in the domestic as well as international

2. Earth Science and Climate Change, see for more information, at http://www.teriin.org/index.php?option=com_division&task=view_div&id=26, accessed on December 15, 2011.

3. "Interim Report of the Expert Group on Low Carbon Strategies for Inclusive Growth," *Planning Commission, Government of India* (May, 2011), see at http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/genrep/Inter_Exp.pdf, accessed on June 20, 2011.

4. "The ENVIS CENTRE at Development Alternatives," Development Alternatives Information Network, see at <http://www.dainet.org/envis.htm>, accessed on January 8, 2012.

setups such as for the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) documents that are submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The entity has always worked towards rural habitat policies and promotion of green jobs in a great manner. These organisations, therefore, have been influencing the energy policies of the country, particularly in terms of diversification of the energy mix and enhancing the share of alternative sources of energy.

Impact of the Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations at the International Environmental Negotiations

The role of the ENGOs has expanded to the arena of international environmental institutions. Earlier, NGOs were given limited access to international negotiations on environment and they were seldom acknowledged in the multilateral environmental treaties. The criteria for inclusion of the NGOs was very rigid as the ENGOs were expected to be qualified in a particular field such as protection of ozone layer or fields related to hazardous wastes. The emergence of a revitalised global civil society is largely being attributed to the robust NGO activity. Therefore, there is an existing view that the General Assembly of the UN must be revamped in order to include the corporations and people and their associations besides the governments. The States have had an upper hand in State-ENGGO relations despite the fact that the NGOs have also been successful in enhancing their visibility and power through their specialised and useful resources. States have eclipsed the role of the ENGOs at all the negotiations by being highly 'realistic' in their approach in comparison to the highly 'idealistic' approach of the latter. Since the State is the highest decision-making authority in the world, its position on all issues related to environment has prevailed over that of the ENGOs. In the UNFCCC process the prominent NGO constituencies include: BINGO (Business and Industry NGOs), ENGO (Environmental NGOs), TUNGO (Trade Union NGOs), IPO (Indigenous People's Organisations), LGMA (Local Government and Municipal Authorities), RINGO (Research-oriented and Independent Organisations), YUNGO

(Youth NGOs), Faith (Faith-based NGOs) and Gender (Gender-based NGOs).⁵

The role of the ENGOs at the international environmental negotiations took shape at the first Climate Change summit, commonly referred to as the Rio Summit in 1992. They deserve to be acknowledged for their efforts to bring to the attention of the world community, the impending disaster that was awaiting them and to compel the world leaders to devise concrete measures in this regard. In her article, "Rio Diary: A Fortnight at the Earth Summit," Fiona Godlee reports, "Their (campaigners from Greenpeace and three other NGOs) 10 point plan to save the summit from failure included the things they felt had been left off the agenda: legally binding targets and time-tables for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, a reduction in consumption by the North, global economic reform to improve the terms of trade for the South, more financial commitment from the North and an end to the World Bank's control of the Global Environment Fund, a ban on the export of hazardous waste, recognition of the rights of indigenous people, and an end to nuclear weapons and nuclear power."⁶ At the end of the Earth Summit, the parties came up with a treaty that was legally non-binding that set no mandatory limits and contained no enforcement mechanisms, quite contrary to the pleas of the ENGOs.

In order to gauge the degree of influence of the ENGOs on international environmental organisations, Elisabeth Corell and Michele M. Betsill outlined seven parametres in one of their essays. They are: "(1) being present at the negotiations; (2) providing written information supporting a particular position (such as newsletters, research reports or papers, or information leaflets) to relevant government ministries or to the negotiation

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5. See for more information, "ICC and the Business and Industry Coordination process at UNFCCC," at <http://www.iccwbo.org/policy/environment/unfccc/cop15/id33610/index.html>, accessed on January 14, 2011.

6. Fiona Godlee, "Rio Diary: A Fortnight At The Earth Summit," *British Medical Journal* (Britain: July 11, 1992), v. 305, n. 6845, p. 103, see at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29716265>, accessed on January 4, 2012.

sessions; (3) providing verbal information supporting a particular position (through statements, information meetings or seminars during negotiation sessions); (4) providing specific advice to government delegations through direct interaction; (5) opportunity to define the environmental issue under negotiation; (6) opportunity to shape the negotiating agenda; and (7) ability to ensure that certain text supporting a particular position is incorporated in the Convention.”⁷

The role of the ENGOs in the signing of the Kyoto Protocol has been investigated by many analysts. The influence of the ENGOs in this case was highly contingent on the intangible nature of the issue, the delineation of highly technical solutions, the politically and scientifically driven history of the issue, the framing of the issue based on economics and so on. The political opportunity for the ENGOs at the Kyoto Summit was highly restrictive. Interestingly, the summit was dominated by the ENGOs from the North (developed world) despite the presence of a significant number of ENGOs from the South (developing and under developed world). The four major objectives of the ENGOs during the Kyoto Protocol negotiations were: “the Protocol should (1) require industrialised countries to reduce their GHG emissions 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2005; (2) include strong review and compliance mechanisms; (3) not allow industrialised parties to meet their commitments through emissions trading; and (4) not allow parties to get credit for emissions absorbed by sinks.” None of these recommendations were included in the Protocol. The commitments made by industrialised nations were least stringent, especially since state delegations doubted the feasibility of a 20 per cent reduction target. There was no scope whatsoever for any compliance or review mechanisms. Article 17 and Article 3 of the Kyoto Protocol quashed the last two objectives of the ENGOs by permitting the States to do emissions trading and to get credit for emissions absorbed by sinks respectively. From this example, it is evident that though the ENGOs

7. Elisabeth Corell and Michele M. Betsill, “A Comparative Look at NGO Influence in International Environmental Negotiations: Desertification and Climate Change,” *Global Environmental Politics* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology: November 2001), v. 1, n. 4, p. 90, see at <http://www.colostate.edu/dept/PoliSci/fac/mb/Comparative%20Look.pdf>, accessed on December 15, 2011.

undertook numerous activities throughout the Summit under the umbrella of the Climate Action Network, they could hardly make any impact on the final outcome. It is said that, though the ENGOs did not have direct access to the plenary or closed-door sessions, their representatives were in constant touch with selected delegates who sought their opinion on various issues, thus giving them the opportunity to participate in the debates indirectly. In terms of resources, they had superior technical knowledge compared to the other participants including government delegates. Another privilege that the ENGOs enjoyed during the negotiations was the backing of the public. The biggest achievement of the ENGOs was their success in shaping the debate over emissions trading by coining the term “hot air” (referring to the ability of a country whose emissions are already below its legally binding limit to trade the difference). The insertion of sinks into the Kyoto Protocol was also debated extensively due to apprehensions raised by the ENGOs.⁸

Another example of the role of the ENGOs and the civil society at the international environmental organisations is the Klimaforum or People’s Climate Summit held at both Copenhagen and Cancun in 2009 and 2010 respectively. At both the summits, nearly 50,000 members of the civil society called for ‘System Change, and not Climate Change.’ At Klimaforum 09 held on the sidelines of the Copenhagen Summit, nearly 202 debates, 70 exhibitions, 43 films, 16 concerts and 11 plays from all over the world were organised. Klimaforum 10 was again a grassroots initiative from Mexico during the UNFCCC conference in Cancun, which gave a fruitful platform for the people, grassroots movements and the NGOs to voice their opinion over climate change issues and add to the seriousness of the discussion at the official forum. Both the summits came up with ‘A People’s Declaration from Klimaforum 09’ and ‘A People’s Declaration from Klimaforum 10’ that were submitted to the Conference of Parties. However, the states deemed their demands too far-fetched at that stage and therefore, disregarded most of them. Some of them included “phasing out fossil fuel, reparations and compensation for climate debt and crimes, an immediate global ban on deforestation of primary forests, opposition to purely market-oriented

8. Ibid., p. 97.

and technology-centred solutions, equitable tax on carbon emissions” etc.⁹ Personalities such as Vandana Shiva, founder of Navdanya, Nnimmo Bassey, chair of Friends of the Earth International, and author Naomi Klein were the chief architects of these initiatives. There is discrimination between the different non-state actors as well. At Copenhagen, it is alleged that the business-related nuclear and coal groups as well as the RINGOs (to some extent) dominated the discourse while the ENGOs and other independent organizations were absent from the scene as they were completely sidelined.¹⁰ At the end of the day, business interests involved in the global carbon market matter more than anything else associated with the environmental concerns.

PASSING THE BUCK AND STOPPING IT

Governance and Accountability of the Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations

The governance and accountability of the ENGOs came into the spotlight in the 1990s. This development was a direct consequence of their role in the creation of a global civic society that tries to influence the practices and policies of international institutions. It was also due to the supposed “roll back of the state” that has divided not only the implementation of policies but also the accountability. The ENGOs can only lead a successful campaign if they remain accountable as their primary task is to ensure accountability and transparency in other social and political sectors. Some critics say that the growing engagement between the ENGOs and major corporations has eroded the legitimacy of the ENGOs. Another section believes that this engagement would usher in more professionalism, good governance and accountability into the ENGOs. IT revolution in the form of electronic communication and shrinking of distances between the donors

9. System change – not climate change: A People’s Declaration from Klimaforum09, December 2009, see for more information, at http://old.klimaforum09.org/IMG/pdf/A_People_s_Declaration_from_Klimaforum09_-_ultimate_version.pdf, accessed on December 14, 2011.

10. “Copenhagen climate change conference: John Vidal goes behind the scenes,” *the guardian* (December 8, 2009), see at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/video/2009/dec/08/copenhagen-climate-change>, accessed on January 7, 2012.

and the ENGOs have also been exerting considerable amount of pressure on the ENGOs to be more accountable. It is also important to note that with increasing environmental consciousness and social pressures, the corporate sector has woken up to the realities of Corporate Responsibility for Environment Protection (CREP), which borrows principles from Corporate Social Responsibility. This in turn drives them into participating more actively in the environmental activities of the ENGOs especially in the form of private funds that largely remain unaccounted for. Besides, some of them have opened their own environment offices to enhance their image as an environmentally responsible entity. As a case in point, the JSW-Times of India Earth Care Awards for excellence in climate change mitigation and adaptation is being seen by some with high amount of scepticism due to the amount of pollution created by the JSW companies. Even corporations are now in the public diplomacy mode as this helps them sell their products. Accountability within the ENGOs has come under the scanner for yet another reason – recruitment of managers and bureaucrats – whose view may not be compatible with the traditionalist view of environmentalism. Environmentalism tends to overtake profit and sovereignty while managers and bureaucrats are products of these constructs respectively. In 2003, Washington Post sent shockwaves by publishing high-profile accounting scandals in one of the biggest ENGOs in the world- The Nature Conservancy. Its finances, management and even scientific practices were found to be fraudulent.¹¹ This was a major setback for the environmental movement.

Greenpeace was accused of manipulating details and making inaccurate claims in the case of the Brent Spar's drilling rig disposal. The Greenpeace activists occupied the platform to prevent sinking of Brent Spar at the North Feni Ridge on the basis of the allegation that it contained 5,550 tonnes of crude oil; later on these claims were rejected by an investigation commissioned by Shell UK and Greenpeace was forced to apologise.¹² The whole episode

11. David B. Ottaway and Joe Stephens, "Inside the Nature Conservancy - Washington Post Expose," *Washington Post* (May 4, 2003), see at <http://lists.envirolink.org/pipermail/ar-news/2003-May/000054.html>, accessed on January 4, 2012.

12. See for more information, "Brent Spar Greenpeace Vs Shell," http://wn.com/Brent_Spar_Greenpeace_vs_Shell, accessed on January 7, 2012.

Most of the NGOs start gaining prominence due to two reasons – lack of governance or that of transparency on the part of the establishment.

tarnished the image of not only Greenpeace but also the entire environmental movement to a great extent. In addition, Greenpeace has very often been accused of being an elitist, hierarchical and undemocratic organisation that hardly gives any organisation rights to local groups and individual supporters. In fact, a former Greenpeace activist, Paul Watson complained that “Greenpeace has turned begging into a major corporate adventure.”¹³ Also, the ENGOs are clearly seeking the leadership of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) sector to generate IT innovations. Greenpeace believes that the catalysis of an energy revolution, which would help developing countries to activate a swift transition from heavy dependence on non-renewable sources of energy to renewable sources, is possible only with the assistance of the ICT sector, primarily because of their potential to provide large scale solutions required to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Ironically, the ICT sector’s carbon footprint is not commendable as it is responsible for approximately 10 per cent of global carbon emissions. One of the Greenpeace studies claims that India is on the way to becoming the second largest carbon emitter after China by 2020, chiefly owing to the expected 12-16 per cent annual growth rate in the ICT sector in the coming years.¹⁴ This has raised several questions with regard to the methods adopted by the ENGOs in terms of devising solutions. Thus, while environmentalists bank on the ICT sector in devising strategies and technologies to create low carbon economies, they have also been forced to look into the growing challenges emanating from this sector.

THE ART OF ENGAGEMENT

It is very clear that most of the NGOs start gaining prominence due to two reasons – lack of governance or that of transparency on the part of the

13. Neil Carter, *The Politics of Environment (Second Edition)* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 151.

14. “Enabling IT innovations,” Cool IT, see <http://www.greenpeace.org/india/en/What-We-Do/Stop-Climate-Change/Green-Electronics/>, accessed on January 5, 2012.

establishment. In a highly bureaucratic country like India, every process is highly time-consuming; this is one of the reasons why the government very often falls short of showcasing its commitment to the public. This gives the NGOs to fill the void and show the loopholes in the government's policies besides recommending other options that may or may not be accepted by the government. A lot of NGOs including ENGOs have come under the scanner due to ambiguity or anonymity associated with the sources of their funds. It cannot be denied that some of them are run on vested interests. When it comes to funding, one needs to throw light on the possibility of rise of conflict of interests. According to a report by Steven Lawrence, in the US between 2000 and 2008, "The number of grants for combating climate change doubled and the dollar commitment from foundations surveyed increased from less than \$100 million to more than \$900 million...about one in six U S foundation climate change grants focussed on policy initiatives, with the total giving in 2008 to policy efforts in the range of \$112.2 million...Oil and gas industries have contributed \$834 million over the past 10 years."¹⁵ The Department of Defence itself has been backing research associated with climate security, energy security and national security. Even then, reports suggest that funding on the climate security issue is very limited and needs to increase in future.¹⁶ The ENGOs in India are said to be receiving funds from huge multi-national corporations and transnational corporations; very often these foreign entities could even manage to influence the country's decision-making process indirectly through the ENGOs. This could be treated as a breach on the country's sovereignty and such sort of manoeuvrings may not even be in India's national interest. The government has also been funding projects being run by think tanks and the NGOs. This clearly puts the limelight on the economics of existence which drives these ENGOs towards business proposals from entities other than the government agencies. Due to conflict of interests, the studies conducted by the NGOs could be biased and they may not be in a position to tell the government

15. Planet Heritage Foundation, Inc., "Climate Change and National Security: A field map and analysis of funding opportunities," July 1, 2010, pp. 9-10, see at <http://www.sherryconsulting.com/Final%20Climate%20Report.pdf>, accessed on January 17, 2012.

16. Ibid., p. 7.

which policy is in the nation's interest and which is not. The government on its part has been trying to regulate funding by enacting legislations such as the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), 1976 by which any NGO or organisation in India who "want to receive contribution from foreign source must get permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs."¹⁷ On the State's part, regulation of the ENGOs or funding them in order to prevent them from releasing publications against the government may not be considered good strategies in a liberal democracy in the long run. While the other side of the debate would be that, that these efforts have actually proven to be defunct as the foreign funding, as already discussed, is large.

The word "commitment" is harped on by individuals and organisations in every sector. It is one thing to 'show' commitment and work towards it; it is a completely different thing to 'showcase' commitment (even while working towards it) and build confidence amongst the larger society. It is a well-established fact that environmental commitment is on top of the agenda of a majority of stakeholders in the contemporary society. Corporate organisations seem to be ahead of the government agencies in their initiatives to prevent environmental degradation. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Programme (CREP) has ensured that the same companies, which were shown in a negative light due to their profit oriented practices, indulge in social service that could transform their image. The situation is rather desperate for they understand the adverse impact potential of being seen in a negative light on the environment front when the common man and policy makers alike are concerned of looming global warming. Ironically, every department in and affiliated to the government has also been doing its bit to advance environment protection, but without a stated policy like the CREP. The only difference between the two is that the former has successfully trumpeted their achievements as an image-building exercise so that their business does not suffer while the latter are yet to publicise their work in the public domain in a comprehensive manner, due to a perceived lack of need. The Central government has launched the

17. See for more information at <http://www.ashanet.org/munich/fcra.html>, accessed on January 17, 2012.

National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC); in the similar vein even most of the state governments have embarked on this path by launching State Climate Change Action Plans (CAP). Since the launch, the government has not created one forum or website that could showcase the NAPCC's progress. Instead, different agencies and ministries have been highlighting different events or developments on their respective websites; this makes it all the more difficult for the public to keep track of a landmark Action Plan in the history of India. The State Action Plans have been taken seriously by few states only. Besides, the state governments' public relations exercises have been restricted to just releasing the official version of the document. In fact, the information displayed on the states' official websites does not cater to the needs of governance. Gujarat is again an exception in this case with fairly well-documented websites, but the coordination between different agencies is still lacking. At a juncture when media attraction is relatively easier to obtain, the Indian establishment should be exploiting these readily available resources to garner support for their initiatives and create goodwill.

As a well-reasoned strategy, the government departments in the Western countries have used and continue to use their associations with think tanks to hold consultations on pertinent issues related to environment as well as release them for the public to take note of. This custom is absent in India as the association between our handful of think tanks and the establishment is limited to small-scale consultations that are rarely highlighted. These are indications of lack of will to initiate diplomatic missions on the part of the Indian authorities handling environmental matters. The youth in India is largely ignorant of strategic issues that are pertinent to national security of which environmental security is an integral part. There is a dire need to involve them through the aegis of these think tanks so that these future leaders have a serious appreciation of the issues related to the country's security when they rise to be the policy makers of tomorrow.¹⁸ For example, the West defence think tanks (consisting of military personnel mostly) first

18. Manoj Kumar and Dhanasree Jayaram, "Diplomacy and Military: Talk the Walk," *Defence and Diplomacy* (Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi: October, 2011), vol 1, no 1, pp. 54-56.

recognized the need for putting more 'energy' into environmental security related research. This process can only start if the government accepts the role of defence think tanks and consults them for policy formulations. Centre for Air Power Studies is the only defence think tank in India that has a serving military officer working in this area. In India, the engagement between the MoEF and the various think tanks/NGOs is acknowledgeable. India's international stand on environmental issues is shaped greatly by these organisations. Even in the case of the MoEF, many claim that it is with Jairam Ramesh's induction that the role of the think tanks/NGOs got augmented.¹⁹ Therefore, there is no reason that the process cannot be emulated by all the other ministries that also deal with environmental issues. The MoEF itself has restricted its engagement with only a few ENGOs and the ones with which it engages may be influenced by foreign entities. This is the real danger to guard against by the policy makers of any developing country.

Strategy of Environment

It is adequately clear that by the 21st century, the entire focus of attention has shifted to climate change and its security implications in the West. In the US, there are many NGOs that conduct research in this area; some of them include the American Security Project (whose projects include Environmental Security's Climate Change and Military Project), Bipartisan Policy Centre also known as the National Commission on Energy Policy (with three main areas of study: workforce preparedness for future energy jobs, regional climate change impacts and adaptation planning, and climate policy impacts on energy-intensive manufacturing), the Brookings Institution (focussing on energy security, economics and environment), the Centre for Naval Analysis (CAN) Corporation (that runs a project on National Security and Climate Change), Centre for New American Security (CNAS, that has a project on Energy Security and Climate Change), Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (whose Energy and Climate Change programme

19. Interaction with Dr. Lavanya Rajamani, Professor, Centre for Policy Research (CPR), at CPR (New Delhi), on July 11, 2011.

also includes the Asian Regionalism Initiative, which explores the ways in which the Asia-Pacific can work together to address the challenges of energy insecurity, climate change, and humanitarian crises), Council on Foreign Relations (that released a report in 2007 – “Climate Change and National Security: An Agenda for Action”), and National Security Network, to name just a few. When it comes to the other Western countries, some of the prominent ones comprise Adelphi Research (that has undertaken more than 50 projects in the EU, the US and developing and transition countries on international environmental policy, European environmental policy and policy integration, climate change and institutional aspects of environment, conflict and cooperation), Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU, that was created by the German federal government), Chatham House (a London-based organisation that has one of its research areas as the Energy, Environment and Development Programme), E3G (otherwise known as Third Generation Environmentalism which is an independent, non-profit European organisation), The Institute for Environmental Security (IES) (whose programmes include Climate Change and International Security, Climate Change and the Military, Environmental Security for Poverty Alleviation, the FUEL project to integrate energy needs in humanitarian crisis situations, Greening European Society, Global Policy Coherence, the Hague Environmental Law Facility, the Inventory of Environment and Security Policies and Practices, and the Pathfinder Programme to restrict the import of illegally extracted resources from conflict zones), Royal United Services Institute (RUSI, that is engaged in cutting edge defence and security research), and so on.²⁰ Out of these, a majority are funded heavily by the government as well as private agencies alike. The involvement of policy-makers in these bodies is also well-known. For example, take the case of the CNAS, a research institution where Sharon Burke was the Vice President for National Security and she concentrated on national security implications of global natural resources challenges and climate change; in 2009, she was nominated by President Barack Obama to the post of Director of Operational Energy Plans and Programmes (OEPP) at the Department

20. n. 15, pp. 14-27.

It is important to note that all these NGOs/think tanks/research institutes are not dedicated to environmental research.

of Defence.²¹ This is the kind of coordination that is required in India between the government and the research institutes/think tanks. Another example would be the Bipartisan Policy Centre which was established in 2007 by former senate majority Leaders Howard Baker, Tom Dasche, Bob Dole and George Mitchell.²² This is another form of coordination between the decision-making bodies and the research and development agencies,

wherein the current or former policy-makers themselves take the plunge into research activities to generate policy proposals for the establishment. Apart from these, the CNA Corporation is a federally funded research organization that operates the Centre for Naval Analyses and the Institute for Public Research.²³ This is a classic example of how the government itself takes complete control of a research entity in order to carry out bipartisan study on issues of national security. In India, the main challenge in terms of engaging with the NGOs and ENGOs is not the lack of resources but political will, rather “bureaucratic will”.

It is important to note that all these NGOs/think tanks/research institutes are not dedicated to environmental research. In a highly-interconnected world, in which every issue is connected to every other issue, it is totally ludicrous to have such organizations with single focus. Take the case of RAND Corporation that was established with the mission of connecting military planning with research and development decisions in the US. Its core research areas now include: Children and Families, Law and Business, Education and the Arts, National Security, Energy and Environment, Population and Aging, Health and Health Care, Public Safety, Infrastructure and Transportation, Science and Technology, International Affairs and Terrorism and Homeland Security.²⁴ In India, organizations

21. n. 15, p. 17.

22. n. 15, p. 15.

23. n. 15, p. 16.

240 For more information, see at http://www.rand.org/research_areas.html, accessed on January 17, 2012.

such as TERI and DA are wholly devoted to environment-related research. The defence think tanks deal mostly with the traditional national security threats. There are a few think tanks that have been carrying out multi-faceted research including environmental security such as Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Centre for Air Power Studies, Centre for Policy Research etc. However, neither the quantum of research nor the amount of human resources doing research on environment is adequate besides the fact that the government hardly pays heed to the work being done in these organisations. This is the reason why the fresh researchers are completely dependent on Western literature on this subject which makes their understanding of it highly skewed and biased. The need of the hour is to form the Indian perspective on the subject and formulate policies that would be in India's interest. The fact of the matter is that the environment cannot be segregated as it is clearly part of every nation state's strategy. The West has realised this and is using its organisations even to influence policy-making in other countries by accomplishing rigorous environmental diplomacy. In fact, since most of these organisations are non-profit and independent, it is easier for them to build a global network by which they could interact with their counterparts in developing countries where this culture is absent or negligible. These networks could easily come in handy at the negotiations too with the Track II diplomacy shaping Track I diplomacy. With their presence cutting across political boundaries, they could even become ambassadors of their respective countries, thus projecting a favourable image of their countries.

India is far from achieving the Western standards. India is yet to recognise how environment can be a part of its strategy at the regional and international levels. The West started by treating the NGOs as part of a "collective bargaining" formula; now they have progressed to a stage in which environmental issues are being exploited by them to influence decision-making all over the world. However, in India's case if the right decisions are made at the right time, the situation could change. India should follow the Western model which advocates the use of think tanks to carry out environment-related research as well as an extension of its foreign

policy. Just as there is a need for coordination among various agencies, there is also a need for having more think tanks with wider agendas and not restricted to one or two issues. The dividing line between the ENGOS and the NGOs has to be erased so that the research conducted in this area is much more comprehensive, strategic and could be used to enhance India's influence elsewhere in the world. The divide between the think tanks and the government also has to be bridged. India has to identify its target countries to establish its Track II diplomatic efforts in the field of environment. The various ministries dealing with the environment have to converge besides the think tanks which are a potent knowledge base.

Culture: Progressive or Regressive? A Challenge

The reason for diplomatic failures on the part of the government, in terms of engaging with the public, cannot be lack of resources or expertise alone as it does not require high-end technology. The answer is simple: culture. It is more important to realise that the need of the hour is not only to occupy the moral high-ground but to go one step ahead after the constructive results are achieved - to throw light on them. Culture has to be dynamic and progressive; disregard of diplomacy of any sort can only harm the cultural ethos of a country. In the similar vein, the government will end up harming themselves by neglecting environmental diplomacy. This is one subject that has the potential to immediately attract public attention as they are able to relate to the subject due to an information blitzkrieg on the subject already unleashed by the media – both, print and electronic.

The benefits of environmental diplomacy are numerous. It has to be kept in mind that diplomatic initiatives serve the interests of the government, the ENGOS as well as the general public. First, if the government takes interest in launching such initiatives, they will reflect the efficient functioning of the government which would supplement its public diplomacy strategy besides enhancing credibility and integrity. Second, the emergent image of the government as a cohesive unit is expected to give confidence to the people about the nation's progress. The all-important "connect" between the organs of the government and the people could help the former firmly

hold the reins of power. Third, it would motivate the people to take up responsibility to work on environmental issues. Environment is such an all-encompassing subject that the coordination between the different government agencies as well as between them and the ENGOs is crucial. Similarly, implementation of the government policies at the grassroots level would be facilitated by healthier public participation. It is a time-tested

fact that any policy of the government, when implemented, can reap benefits in a sustained manner only if the public is kept attuned of these policies as well as involved in a full-fledged manner; this would ensure that the “fruits” of the policy could be “consumed” in future too irrespective of the various uncertainties associated with the establishment.²⁵ This would also guarantee that instead of creating friction between the government and the ENGOs, bridges would be built that would be used by the public for communication.

The impact of the ENGOs on environmental policy formulation is minimal, especially in a developing country like India.

THE MEETING POINT OF DIFFERENT STRANDS OF THOUGHT

It is very clear that the role of environmentalism has been immense since time immemorial. The traditionalists would argue that their role has largely been restricted to creating awareness (both positive and negative) among the masses and putting pressure on the government from time to time; and that the systemic change that the ENGOs have been demanding for years has not been realised despite the impending environmental catastrophe. Thus, on the one hand, environmentalism has indeed played a significant role in propelling critical environmental issues such as global warming and climate change. On the other, the impact of the ENGOs on environmental policy formulation is minimal, especially in a developing country like India. Others would emphasise on the point that the government has been actively involving the ENGOs in policy implementation due to reasons ranging from lack of resources and expertise to a conscious effort to increase public

25. n. 18, pp. 56-58.

participation in nation-building. The other reason why the government would like to join hands with them is to ward off criticism and protect the vote-bank. An inefficient government may be susceptible to the looming influence of the ENGOs.

The evolution of environmentalism and the emergence of various environmental organisations have led to multi-layered governance. This has been possible despite the stronghold of the state because of the indivisible nature of environment and the pervasive plus destructive nature of environmental problems. One cannot deny the fact that the ENGOs have turned into political actors, either attempting to represent the citizens who are marginalised by the state system or influencing policy formulation in public interest. The strategies used by the ENGOs have been dynamic. From distribution of pamphlets and production of literature before the advent of information revolution, to the use of technologies by the current generation environmentalists, environmentalism has come a long way.

The question of who represents who has been partially resolved by the states by opening the doors of governance to actors, that is ENGOs, who have the resources to manage local communities as well as local environment. However, a few sacred doors are yet to be opened that could mainstream environmentalism in national policy formulation that has not taken off in many countries and is progressing at a very slow pace in others. The monopoly of the states over climate change policy is stringent to such an extent that not a single international agreement has been successful since the beginning of the negotiations. The possibility of governance (environmental governance) without a government is thus next to impossible. There are instances where the governments have clearly diffused some of its responsibilities to the NGOs, empowering them to a certain extent. On the other hand, some of the NGOs have been integrated with the formal system that essentially erases the line dividing the state and the larger civil society as well as negates the independent character of these NGOs. At the end of the day, one could also suggest that some of the NGOs that begin by representing the citizens end up representing the states in order to be heard.

Diffusion of governance is best exemplified by the so-called partnerships between governments and the NGOs. Very often national governments and international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the Global Environment Facility direct money to local environmental projects via NGOs. Policy-makers could take the assistance of the NGOs in effectively implementing environmental policies if they feel that the NGOs are more equipped and experienced in dealing with the local communities. International donors sometimes prefer NGOs to governmental organisations as the latter might not have adequate infrastructure and resources to implement the projects besides the fact that in a country like India, the will to entertain such projects is also low-key. However, policy-makers have also been accused of using the ENGOS to sell their policies to local communities which they would not be able to do themselves or through governmental organisations as the NGOs are believed to have closer ties with the local communities. The ENGOS have also been charged with accusations of being agents of capitalism as they thrive on the principles of liberalism based on free market economy. This accusation cannot be legitimised against an ENGO; it is more appropriate in the case of a developmental NGO. However, a few ENGOS such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) would be more in the line of fire as they work in tandem with the governments and the IFIs, while certain others such as the FoE have openly declared their resistance to a neoliberal economic world order.

In global environmental governance, the need for the States to acknowledge and empower the ENGOS is expected to gain salience in the years to come. With the free flow of information and close scrutiny of government policies at every stage, the ENGOS would be in a better position to challenge the States' authority. For this, the legitimacy of the ENGOS itself has to remain intact. One can conclude that the urgency for increased collaboration between the scientists, policy-makers, ENGOS and the civil society could pave the way for a number of positive outcomes – mitigation of the effects of environmental change both at the global and the domestic levels.

Finally, the economics and strategy of environment is equally as important as any other issue. The NGOs in India are short on resources and thinking. The government has also contributed to the parochialism that pervades research institutes (both governmental and nongovernmental) in the country by not giving them enough voice that is heard in the corridors of power, resources and space to function independently. In the West, the efforts of these organisations are completely backed by the government. There need not be any distinction between the NGOs and ENGOs. The Indian NGOs and think tanks should now look forward to using environment as a strategy in regions such as South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America. International relations are all about give-and-take in the twenty-first century; the world is no longer uni-polar. Therefore, unless India takes proactive steps to engage at different levels with the countries in the above-mentioned regions it can never be a great power.