

Chapter 1 - Putting Black on White

An eloquent new star began rising in the sagging firmament over the struggles of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) in the summer of 1999. The NBA had been fighting valiantly to save the Narmada river valley from submergence arising from the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam at Navagam in the state of Gujarat for a decade and a half but with less and less success at that time. Then, all on a sudden, the Booker Prize winning novelist Arundhati Roy renounced the pleasures of reading James Joyce and Vladimir Nabokov in the air-conditioned comfort of her Delhi home and decided to take on the searing dry heat of the central Indian summer and the antipathy of the Indian ruling classes. She worked her way on foot through the hilly fastnesses adjoining the river to meet the Bhil adivasi indigenous people who were to be ousted from their lands. On her return she chose to give literary pursuits a go by. Instead she poured through books on irrigation and dams and came abreast with the terms of reference of the attritive battle for survival that was being fought by the adivasis and began wielding her formidable pen in their defence.

This was hot news for the media. A mainstream celebrity, one able to write with passion and style, deciding to pitch in for Medha Patkar and her band of mostly adivasi passive resisters against the nexus of powerful interests building the dam, made good copy. On the whole media persons, like the punters at Ascot, love only winners. The NBA had begun going down hill from the mid nineteen nineties onwards in its efforts to inculcate some respect for Mother Nature in the minds of those who monopolised the running of the affairs of the Indian state and so by 1999 apart from some committed reporters and editors its actions were not getting the kind of attention that it used to. Arundhati Roy changed all that as she first wrote a long and detailed monograph making a factual and at the same time impassioned plea for stopping the dam and the kind of destructive modern development of which it was a manifestation, which was widely published and read (Roy, 1999). Then she led a few hundred people from cities both in India and abroad to undertake a "Rally for the Valley" during the monsoons in the Narmada valley in support of Medha Patkar and the NBA activists who had declared their intention to drown in the rising river waters in protest against the building of the dam. The press went gaga over a dramatic picturisation of the two Amazons, one wielding the pen and the other the moral strength of satyagraha - Gandhian passive resistance, rendezvousing amidst the swirling waters of the Narmada.

This shot in the arm provided then by Arundhati Roy to the NBA's flagging fortunes later proved to be like all such shots only a temporary relief. However, over the years she herself has emerged as a major champion of environmental and human rights on the national and international stage and won quite a few awards, the proceeds of which, to her eternal glory, she has then distributed among the chronically fund hungry environmental and human rights activists of this country. This meteoric transformation wrought by the media of a mainstream celebrity into an international star of the anarcho-environmentalist (as will be detailed later this term describes most succinctly the decentralised nature friendly outlook of the modern mass movements against centralised and destructive modern development) fringe had initially amused me but then a photograph in a local newspaper made me start thinking in new directions. The photograph showed Arundhati Roy coming out of the airport in Indore on her way to the Narmada valley in support of an action of the NBA and there was an old friend of mine, a senior activist of the NBA, along with her in the background. The caption read "Arundhati Roy, leader of the NBA, passing through Indore on her mission to save the Narmada".

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This friend of mine, many other activists and I had worked hard in the background along with Medha Patkar to build up the struggle against the dam from scratch for a decade and a half and yet in the eyes of the press she had no value and it was Arundhati Roy who was the leader. This picture and caption cut into my cynicism with regard to the power of the pen like a scythe and showed me the way out of an impasse that I had got into for sometime. The roots of the problem I was then facing went back to 1994 when my activist wife Subhadra Khaperde and I had to leave our mass organisational work deep in the rural Bhil homelands and come to the city of Indore for reasons that will unfold with the yarn that I have just begun to spin.

We hadn't a penny when we came to Indore except for a dole given to us by a well wisher. I had no work and I was also seriously ill from repeated bouts of malaria. Luckily a veteran Gandhian, Mahendrabhai, gave us a place to stay free of cost in an ashram, of which he was the coordinator. This ashram is a retreat from where Gandhians carried out rural development and awareness work and is situated in village Machla near Indore. But this ashram had for sometime fallen into disuse, as there was no one left to run its programmes and so Mahendrabhai welcomed our decision to stay there. Some of my classmates from school contributed sums of a thousand rupees each and my mother and younger brothers too chipped in with some aid. Subhadra and I sold the magazines and literature produced by the mass organisations of the Bhils to people in Indore. Somehow we got by with a little help from our friends for a few months till I could recover from my illness. On one occasion while I was cycling with Subhadra seated behind me on the carrier on our way to sell some literature suddenly a police jeep stopped in front of us. A police officer stepped out against whom we had once taken action when he was posted in our area of work for having extorted money from a Bhil adivasi. He shook hands with me and asked me what I was doing in Indore. He said that he had always respected us for the work we were doing even though personally this had caused him harm. He laughed and said that the system was so crooked that despite all we could do crooked people like him were going to shine anyway! When I asked him to buy a few copies of the literature we had with us he laughed again and said that from the look of me it looked like I would have to sell a lot of literature to continue the good work and gave us a thousand rupees and took all the stuff we had with us. As I cycled back to Machla I could not help tears welling up in my eyes.

This was not going to do I had thought at that time. Some reliable source of income had to be sought out. As the saying in Hindi goes "Bhookhe bhajan na hoye Nandalala" - psalms can't be sung on an empty stomach! It was not just a question of defraying our living expenses but also meeting the heavy costs of fighting the innumerable court cases that I had pending against me from my activism against the Indian state on various issues. Finances had to be sought for the expenses of future activism too. The costs of fighting cases, lobbying, advocacy and travel had become so huge that the contributions of the poor adivasis with whom we worked could not meet even a small part of them. This is when the idea, that I had earlier discarded as pointless, of taking up research projects and writing in journals and magazines took on a new appeal. This would help me to establish my credentials as a competent researcher and help me earn money I reasoned in desperation. If 'publish or perish' was the going buzzword for academics it became so for me too. So amidst derisive shouts from fellow activists that I had 'withdrawn from struggle' and become a pen pusher, I set aside my earlier abhorrence for research and writing and put my head down to do deskwork.

Even if the anarcho-environmentalist movements for alternatives to destructive modern development have remained on the fringe in terms of popular appeal they have certainly made an impact on the mainstream discourses of development and governance. This has been manifested in academic and popular writings and the formulation of many new policies and enactments that are an improvement over what existed before. Everyone is talking about saving the environment these days even if most of them are not prepared to do anything radical on the ground in this direction. There is a lot of well funded research and debate going on and it is by participating in these that I found a way to make money to finance my actual mass organisational work among the adivasis on the ground, which no funding agency is prepared to touch with a bargepole! The two premier fora in India in this respect are the magazine 'Down To Earth' (DTE) and the journal 'Economic and Political Weekly' (EPW). I began my writing forays by contributing to these periodicals in the early 1990s and was pleasantly surprised to find my pieces accepted for publication. DTE even commissioned me to do some studies on forest and water resource management. However, as my viewpoint was an overly radical, activist one, very soon DTE distanced itself from me and declined to carry my pieces anymore, especially when I began writing critically of the Madhya Pradesh Government whose Chief Minister had been declared to be a Green politician by DTE.

I have had a longer and still continuing association with EPW, which is situated considerably more to the left of the intellectual spectrum than DTE. But the EPW too has gradually mutated to an intellectual position, which considers the process of globalisation to be a positive one on the whole with market 'reform' being a better recipe for social and economic justice than a radical overhaul of resource guzzling and wasting centralised modern industrial development. Things came to a head when in 1998 I was asked by the editors of EPW to review a book brought out by some researchers and activists on the process of formulation of an alternative draft Forest Bill to the one that had been brought out by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 1993. The mass adivasi organisations in Madhya Pradesh had boycotted this so called 'people's process' of formulating a draft bill because it did not reject the centrality of the role of the forest department to the management of forests and their colonial demarcation as reserved and protected forests. All it proposed was the insertion of the policy of Joint Forest Management (JFM) into the bill without changing the basic framework of forest management itself. So in my review I had given examples of how JFM had generally proved to be a failure because the basic anti-people framework of the Indian Forest Act prevented any genuine transfer of control over forests to the people and criticised the authors for having presented what were their own views as being that of the forest-dwellers (Rahul, 1997a). The authors' rejoinder basically supporting JFM was published in the EPW. I duly sent in a counter rejoinder but to my surprise the EPW did not carry it. When I asked the editors about this they hemmed, hawed, and changed the subject. So what could have flowered into a lively debate on forest management was nipped in the bud because I found that in research and publication too there is power play involved that can influence even the likes of the editors of EPW against an obscure activist like myself.

The EPW continued to publish other contributions of mine till yet another such incident occurred in 1999. Two Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers who were the guiding force behind the famous 'Education Guarantee Scheme' (EGS) that is being implemented in Madhya Pradesh published a paper in EPW extolling the virtues of the EGS and claiming that it had brought about a revolutionary and paradigmatic change for the

better in both quantitative and qualitative terms in the government primary education sector in Madhya Pradesh and especially for the adivasis (Gopalkrishnan & Sharma, 1998). I sent in a short rejoinder saying that while it had definitely increased the access to schools among the poor adivasis the quality of the education offered was very poor and could not in any way ensure that the adivasi children receiving it could in any way compete on the basis of this with the much more privileged sections (Rahul, 1999a). Not surprisingly the IAS officers sent in a rejoinder (Sharma & Gopalkrishnan, 1999) and got a noted economist who had apparently reviewed the working of the EGS also to send in a rejoinder (Vyasulu, 1999) both criticising what I had said. I too then did a more elaborate survey and sent in a counter rejoinder and once again to my consternation the EPW did not publish it. Despite several reminders there was no response from the editors of EPW. Interestingly field experience has shown that overall both JFM and the EGS have belied the initial rhetoric that was dished out in their favour. Precisely because of the kind of entrenched power structures and colonial bureaucratic mindsets that I had pointed out would come in the way of their succeeding on the vast scale in which they have been mechanically implemented these schemes have failed to do anything other than put some institutions in place where there were none before. Without enough financial support and true people's participation these institutions have at present degenerated into being a cheap means for the government to claim that it is investing in the social sector while actually ensuring the cooption of the more vocal among the rural poor.

This problem of power play in research refused to stop bugging me. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) commissioned me in 2000 to do a research study on the overbearing influence of sahkars or moneylenders in the adivasi regions of Western Madhya Pradesh and the way in which the adivasi mass organisations had fought against them. The output paper roundly put the blame for the power of the sahkars over the adivasis on the commissions and omissions of the politicians and the bureaucracy including dereliction of the responsibility of regulating the functioning of the cooperative credit societies by NABARD itself and proved to be a little too hot for the latter. Initially they sent in a rejoinder saying that I had not fulfilled the requirements of the contract, so my paper would not be accepted and I would not be paid. I wrote back to them saying that I had done exactly as was written in the terms of reference and if they did not accept my paper I would publish it elsewhere mentioning that NABARD had chickened out of publishing it. This seemed to work and eventually a compromise was reached that I would tone down some of my observations and the paper would be published as a limited circulation working paper rather than as a widely circulated occasional paper as had been the original agreement and I would be paid my agreed consultancy fee (Banerjee, 2003). I agreed because being short of funds as I perennially am, I needed the consultancy fee money desperately at the time! I later sent in an edited shorter version of this monograph for publication in the Indian Social Science Review. Despite both of the two anonymous referees saying that the paper was excellent and recommending its publication the editors refused to do so citing that its length was beyond the norms prescribed.

I was thoroughly flummoxed by this problem of failing to get my anarcho-environmentalist views aired in journals and magazines when out of the blue I got an email from a publisher of books. After reading one of my articles in EPW he suggested that I write a book instead of just articles and if it was good enough then he would think of publishing it. This set me thinking and I recalled the fanfare with which Arundhati Roy had burst on the environmental scene. She took all the old facts and analyses that the NBA had

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gathered regarding the harmful effects of big dams, laced them with verve and panache and as mentioned earlier rolled out an eminently readable slim volume. So successful was she with this that she was invited to go on lecture tours all over the country and abroad and single-handedly she managed to revive interest for a while in the issues raised by the NBA. In the process she became the leader of the NBA in the eyes of the world at large! The trick, it became clear to me was to write entertainingly about the work that we were doing because in this age of marketing, packaging has become the most important thing. In the present culture of titillating soap operas sponsored by advertisement campaigns on television, the medium, more so than when Marshall McLuhan presciently predicted all of forty years ago, has become the only message! (MacLuhan & Fiore, 1967) A story well told twangs the innermost chords of people much better than a thousand weighty treatises can ever do.

About this time my mother once wanted to know what it was I was writing that helped me to earn money and make a living as I claimed. I happened to have with me a copy of a discussion article that I had once written on the problems of the Russian Revolution in EPW (Rahul, 1992a) that had been well received by people in the know and gave it to her to read as a sample of my writing. She went through it and said she could not make head or tail of it and commented that whoever it was that was paying me money for writing like this must be bonkers! When pop has become the toast of the season, serious and abstruse academic stuff can hardly stand a chance. I felt some hesitation initially about migrating from the rarefied environs of academic writing to popular story telling but as always at such critical moments my love for rock music came to my rescue. I remembered a particularly favourite number of mine by the rock singer Eric Clapton (Clapton, 1970), which goes –

I'm standing at the crossroads
Trying to read the signs
To tell me which way I should
Go to find the answer
And all the time I know
Plant your love and let it grow

My enduring love, ever since I landed up amongst them in 1985, has always been the life and culture of the quintessentially anarcho-environmentalist Bhil adivasis. One important facet of their culture is a rich repertoire of myths and stories, which are recited and sung with much fanfare in nightlong celebrations. There is for example the creation myth sung in the villages near the Narmada which details how God was suddenly beset with the idea of creating the universe and he looked towards Relu Kabadi the woodsman to go into the jungle and fetch him wood. Thus starts the whole story of how slowly all the animals and plants are created and finally the rivers Narmada and Tapi. These rivers eventually meet up with the ocean Dudu Hamad in marriage and during their journey are created the various villages, hills and valleys. The main story is interspersed with many smaller stories and sung through the night. This epic song while being highly entertaining at the same time imbues the listeners with a sense of the vastness of nature and the strength of natural processes and inculcates a respect for these in direct contrast to the hubris of modern human beings who have over the past three centuries since the industrial revolution tried to subordinate nature to their own ends and given rise to the serious environmental problems that face them today. Thus the Bhils have achieved an admirable mix of Veer - bravery, Shringar - love and Hasya - comedy in their story telling making their tales very enjoyable

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while at the same time succeeding in giving them an unobtrusive fable like didactic character. The Bhil Gayans or bards are in fact not only great storytellers but also first class teachers of a pristine morality.

As they do not have a high opinion of our "civilised" ways, the Bhil gayans are disdainful of literacy and traditionally these myths and stories have been conveyed from generation to generation by oral recitation. Today, however, this lack of a culture of writing not only jeopardises the continuance of their oral folklore as the newer generation loses its interest in them but also puts the Bhils at a disadvantage in negotiating the intricacies of the modern economic and political systems. Thus, as one Bhil elder told me, just a few days after I landed up in the Bhil homeland for the first time, they had become civilisational discards in modern India because of their inability to put black on white - pen to paper. Recalling that conversation fifteen years later I felt that we activists of the environmental movements too were figuratively in the same boat because of our failure in conveying our simple message of the need for humility and continence in our dealings with nature to the world at large. There are so many billions suffering from the ravages of environmental profligacy, nay reprobacy, the future is so starkly scary and yet our arguments do not move the people and rulers to action. We too, unfortunately, have not been able to effectively put black on white. Actually in this modern consumerist age hypnotised by the magic of colour television even black has become passe and it is necessary to dress a message in the united colours of Benetton to attract attention!

I had first to find out what kind of a kaleidoscope would be colourful enough to break the jinx and push the history of our anarcho-environmentalist struggles in defence of Mother Nature and her children, the adivasis, into the limelight in the way Arundhati Roy had done with the NBA. It had to have some new colours and patterns in it. With a combination of luck and hard work I had been able to achieve financial stability in a short while from my writing after coming to Indore and so from 1996 onwards Subhadra and I had hit the dusty village trails once again. We had had to decide then on what kind of work to do and where to do it. Subhadra had said that she had had enough of organising the Bhil men and had pointed out that the egalitarianism of the Bhils, which I was so fond of harping about, did not extend to their women. There is a clear gender division of labour with the women having to do the domestic work and also take on the responsibilities of child bearing and rearing in addition to agricultural work. Socially too the women have an inferior status with little say in community affairs and are considered as commodities to be sold off for a bride-price at the time of marriage. Married women have to submit to polygamy and witch-hunting and also have to veil their faces in front of elder male relatives on their husband's side. Women have no right of inheritance or to property. As with poor rural women elsewhere in India (Shiva, 1988), the major burden of the modernising thrust introduced by the British and continued by the independent Indian state that has adversely affected the Bhils' traditional lifestyles has had to be borne by the women. This bias against women and the lack of education and proper reproductive health services had resulted in the birth rate remaining uncontrolled further adding to the miseries of the women in particular and the Bhils as a whole through a population explosion (Subhadra & Rahul, 1997).

Whenever there is a widespread struggle against oppression by a set of people, women participate shoulder to shoulder with the men to throw off the yoke of the oppressors. Nevertheless they do not get enough space to articulate problems specific to themselves, which arise from structures and customs restricting women within the oppressed sections themselves. This is a universal phenomenon that can be seen in social

movements (Singha Roy, 1995), national liberation movements (Zerai, 1994) and socialist revolutions (Mariam, 1994). It is not surprising therefore that this should have been the case with the various mass organisations in Central India. The women members of these organisations have been particularly militant and on some occasions even surpassed the men in their bravery in fighting the repressive organs of the state. Consequently, sometimes as a matter of strategy the women have been pushed to the front. Yet when these very same women have raised the matter of oppression within the home the men have been reluctant to reform themselves. Particularly troubled are the grassroots women leaders. Their men get jealous of them and object to their travelling around a lot and neglecting housework.

The presence of many articulate and militant middleclass women activists among the various mass organisations in Central India had meant that there had been a considerable amount of discussion on the deleterious effects of patriarchy, which can be defined as the social institution that ensures men's power over women (French, 1986). Nevertheless there had not been any concerted attempt at organising women to smash patriarchal structures within and without their homes. Often the need to press on with the general struggle and not let it flag due to internecine fights over women's issues has been the cause of this neglect (Vimochana, 1994). Subhadra herself is a dalit woman. The dalits are the previously untouchable outcasts of traditional Hindu society, who formed its menial foundation and are referred to in official parlance as the Scheduled Castes. This is because of the special affirmative provisions made for them in a separate schedule of the Indian Constitution (Ambedkar, 1948). Similarly the adivasis are referred to as Scheduled Tribes because there are affirmative provisions for them too in a separate schedule. Gandhi referred to the dalits as Harijans or the children of God in his effort to reform Hindu society from within. However, beginning with Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, popularly called Babasaheb, who had first begun the struggle to get affirmative provisions made for them during British rule and later in the independent Indian Constitution, this term was rejected as trying to hide the cruel nature of the discrimination that was practised against these castes by the upper caste Hindus. Ambedkar described Hindu society as a multi-storeyed building with the dalits doomed to rot in the basement with neither any staircase up which to climb nor any door through which to escape (Ambdekar, 1993). The Scheduled Castes have now begun referring to themselves more appropriately as dalits or the trodden under in their ongoing saga of liberation from upper caste Hindu oppression. As such Subhadra had had to face and fight various forms of patriarchy right from childhood onwards. So she had suggested that we start afresh in a new area where there weren't the usual pressures of an ongoing struggle, which invariably led to the sidelining of women's issues.

We were starting our work at a time when most of the earlier environmental mass movements in the western Madhya Pradesh region and over the rest of the state excepting the Adivasi Mukti Sangathan in Sendhwa had gone past their prime due to some heavy state repression and also because of the inability to address issues of a general nature that affected a wider cross-section of the masses. Thus it was necessary to evolve a new mode of organisation in a new area that would be able to garner greater mass support than hitherto. At the same time this new work had to be done in proximity to the mass organisations already working nearby so as to benefit from their positive achievements. Previously all our work had been concentrated in the Western Nimar region and the lower Narmada Valley so Eastern Nimar was chosen as our new area of work. Over a period of four years up to 2000 the Bhil adivasi women's organisation that we helped in setting up, Kansari Nu Vadavno, did path breaking work before Subhadra decided to stop breaking her head working in the

field against the unyielding wall of the Indian state and instead she took a sabbatical to catch up on her lost education for a while.

An interesting and puzzling thing about the Bhils' myths and stories is the central and powerful roles played by women in them which is in direct contrast to the reality of their patriarchal oppression in present day Bhil society. Possibly at some time in the distant past Bhil women did have a lot more power than they have now. Whatever may be the reason, to add a new gender sensitive twist to the old tale of struggles against the exploitation of nature and adivasis, I have followed this commendable tradition in weaving the present story too. In what follows the story of Subhadra's personal struggles as a poor dalit woman against the combined weight of economic, social and patriarchal oppression and that of the Bhil women she has inspired has pride of place among the many other narratives which push the stories of the various mass movements of which she has been a part sometimes to the forefront and sometimes to the background, embellished with lavish autobiographical touches of my own. Since for militant women activists like Subhadra, personal as well as public struggles are both political ones this story follows the Bhili tradition in the other respect of having an undercurrent of morality in it. So it is not just a story of the garden variety it is a fable also. Since this story is also a factual history of the rebellions and mass movements that have taken place and are still under way in the Central Indian region, the narrative is studded with a few glorious gems from this history.

The other great set of indigenous people in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh apart from the Bhils are the Gonds. A section of the Gonds in fact became feudal kings in the middle ages and ruled over a vast area extending from around present day Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh to Nagpur in Maharashtra, which is called Gondwana. They retained their independence from Muslim rule till Akbar the Mughal emperor overcame them in 1564 with their famous widowed martial queen Rani Durgavati, who incidentally was a non-adivasi, preferring to kill herself rather than surrender (Richards et al, 1996). The Gonds, even more than the Bhils, put up a stiff resistance against the British and are to this day fighting valiantly against the destructive development policies of the Indian state. So they too have entered this narrative from time to time but since Subhadra and I have not worked much with them they have not figured as prominently as the Bhils have. There is a beautiful poem in Hindi by one of its best modern poets Bhavani Prasad Mishra, one stanza of which lyrically describes the ideal nature friendly life of the Gonds. This stanza roughly translates as follows -

Deep inside the Satpura hills in woods sleepy and unmindful,
Amidst their hens and pheasants all harmonious and peaceful,
In huts of mud and thatch live the Gonds dark and powerful.
When spring comes and the grass is swaying in song so lilting,
And mahua flowers mesmerising all with a scent so intoxicating,
Then dance the Gonds in gay abandon their drums a thumping.

Unfortunately this idyllic lifestyle not only of the Gonds but also of indigenous people all over the world has been torn asunder over the centuries in the greedy pursuit of pelf and power by non-adivasis. The present story is essentially about the attempts that are being made to exorcise the evil spirits of destructive modern development that have caused this tragedy. So its later parts also include a politico-philosophical reflection on the pros and cons of this struggle so as to be able to draw the moral of the story as in a fable.

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The Bhils have a fable that there was once a woman, Jeevla Kuvar, who had disobeyed her husband and spoken up against him. A panchayat meeting was called and there it was deemed that she had spoken wrongly and as punishment the elders ordered that her tongue be cut off and given to her husband to swallow. This was done but the tongue got stuck in the husband's throat where it has remained lodged ever since. This quaint tale allegorically describes how women are oppressed in Bhil society or any society for that matter. However, the fact that the tongue has not been swallowed completely has left open the possibility of its being recovered. Indeed not only women but dalits, adivasis and such other oppressed sections are all bound by a culture of silence and need to recover their lost tongues. The tale that is about to unfold is thus all about the joys and sorrows involved in the still unfinished Herculean task of recovering their lost tongues by a people stifled for centuries by a deafening culture of silence. But first like Ishmael in Herman Melville's classic allegorical novel *Moby Dick* (Melville, 1851) I too shall start by setting out my credentials as the storyteller. Whereas Ishmael survived to tell the story of how Mother Nature in the form of the white whale *Moby Dick* put paid to the rampant greed and vengeance of modern man personified by the cruel and sinister Captain Ahab, I have the much sadder tale to tell of the legions of modern day Ahabs, armed with much more powerful technologies, putting paid for the time being to our valiant attempts to nail the coffin of unjust and destructive modern development. Nevertheless the struggles go on as the deprived people in this country and all over the world fight the continual loss of their livelihoods and habitats to the insatiable greed of modern industrial development.

Tuneful though this composition seemed to me it failed to make the publishers and literary agents sing! I sent the manuscript again and again to various publishers and agents only to be told that it had no market value and so was not worth investing in. So I was back to square one faced with the perennial problem of failing to air my anarcho-environmentalist views. This is when I came across the concept while surfing the internet of publishing on the world wide web. Here there was no question of making a heavy upfront investment. All that was needed was to get the written matter uploaded on the internet and then send the link to people all over the place and get it meta-tagged so that it turned up in search engines. If the stuff was good enough then people would automatically read it and the word would spread around. From an anarcho-environmentalist perspective too publishing on the net is much better than standard publishing in print. And on the basis of feedback and new experiences it is much easier to revise the content continually. That is how this book is finally appearing as an e-book on the internet for free dissemination in tune with the anarcho-environmentalism that is its core value.

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