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**THE WSF AND THE DEBATE ON
ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT
IN INDIA**

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Critical Action
Centre In Movement

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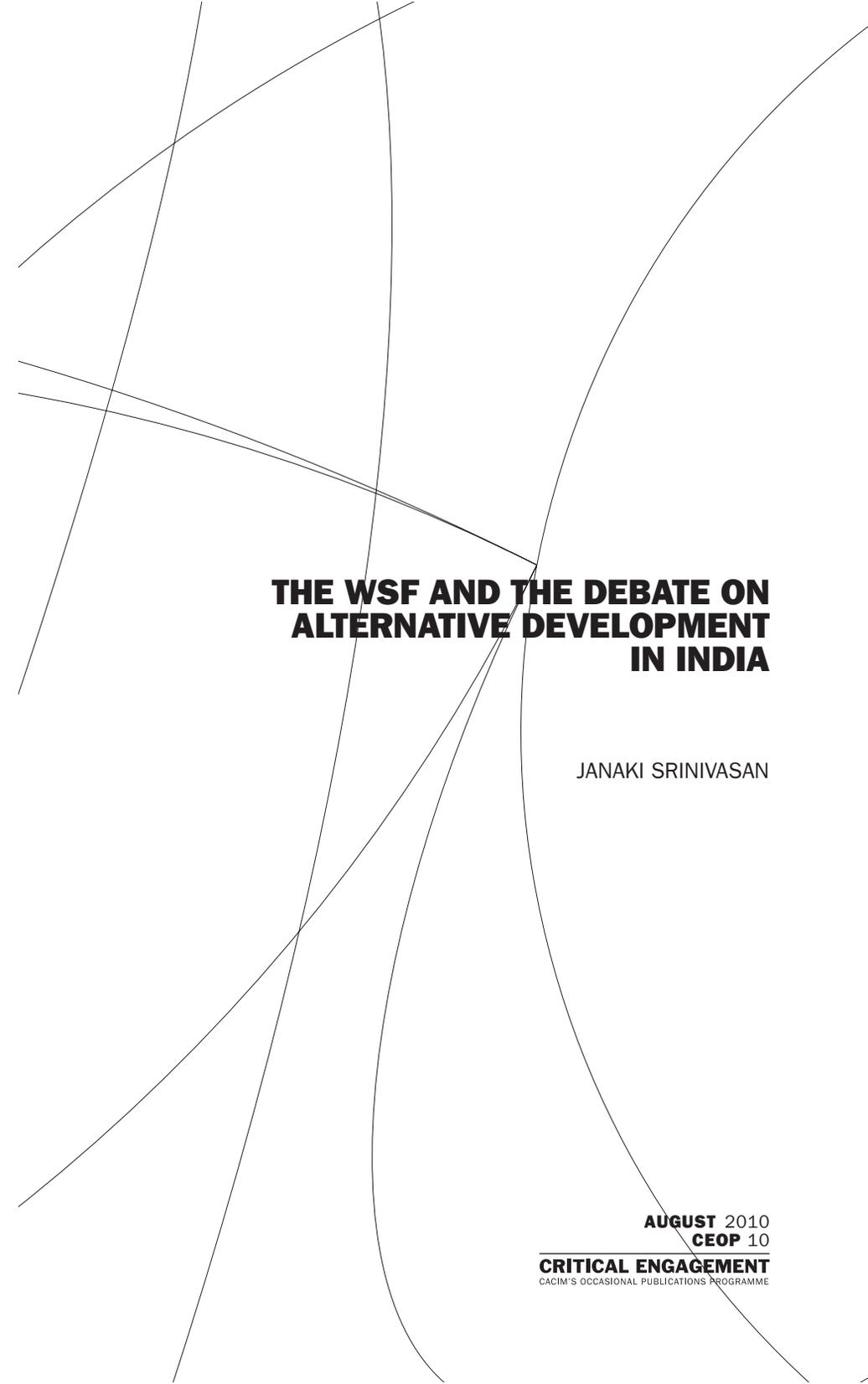
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About this monograph

In 1975 the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation brought out *What Now : Another Development*, a report widely held as bringing into focus the questioning of mainstream conceptions of development and calling for alternative principles, strategies, and content of development. Not only did its concerns carry the imprint of debates regarding the inequities of the international system, given the context of the Cold War and decolonisation, it also gave voice to the then emerging concerns over ecological consequences, the need for structural transformation within societies, and the propriety of universalistic definitions of development.

A quarter of a century later the first World Social Forum (WSF) meet was held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001, with the ringing slogan forever to be associated with it – ‘Another World is Possible’. This slogan was meant to counter the orthodoxy – entrenched the world over since the collapse of the socialist bloc – that ‘There is No Alternative’ (TINA) to neoliberal globalisation. The WSF was envisioned as a “permanent process of seeking and building alternatives”. Indeed, one of the precursors of the WSF was ‘The World Forum for Alternatives’, a meet organised by intellectuals in January 2000 parallel to the annual World Economic Forum in Davos. The WSF itself is a product of the wave of mass anti-globalisation movements which emerged globally after the mid 1990s as a reaction to the multiple ill-effects of neoliberal globalisation. The search for alternatives followed from the need for resistance, and as an attempt to further deepen resistance. Hence, the projects of resistance and alternatives are linked, and this constitutes “the critical utopia” of the WSF. In this sense, the WSF is all about alternatives.

This monograph seeks to engage with one specific regional dynamic of this ‘global’ search for alternatives : The debate over alternative development in India. The period of the WSF process in India is a useful lens to examine the main contours of this debate, and the role played by the WSF is in itself a question worth exploring. This paper first examines the debate over development as it panned out in the post second world war world and then locates the debate in the Indian context as well as the WSF within this debate. It goes on to examine the deliberations over the WSF India process and outlines the main contours of conceptions of alternative development as articulated by a selected set of movements. Based on this, the paper engages with the key theoretical frameworks through which these ideas are conventionally processed and interrogates the efficacy of these frameworks.

The background of the cover features several thin, black, curved and straight lines that intersect and overlap, creating a complex, abstract geometric pattern. The lines vary in length and orientation, some curving gently while others are more linear.

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THE WSF AND THE DEBATE ON ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

JANAKI SRINIVASAN¹

Oh God of Development, pray tell us, how to save our lives ?
Bhagwan Maaji²

In 1975 the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation brought out *What Now : Another Development*, a report widely held as bringing into focus the questioning of mainstream conceptions of development and calling for alternative principles, strategies, and content of development. Not only did its concerns carry the imprint of debates regarding the inequities of the international system, given the context of the Cold War and decolonisation, it also gave voice to the then emerging concerns over ecological consequences, the need for structural transformation within societies, and the propriety of universalistic definitions of development.

A quarter of a century later the first World Social Forum (WSF) meet was held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001, with the ringing slogan forever to be associated with it – ‘Another World is Possible’. This slogan was meant to counter the orthodoxy – entrenched the world over since the collapse of the socialist bloc – that ‘There is No Alternative’ (TINA) to neoliberal globalisation. The WSF was envisioned as a “permanent process of seeking and building alternatives”.³ Indeed, one of the precursors of the WSF was ‘The World Forum for Alternatives’, a meet organised by intellectuals in January 2000 parallel to the annual World Economic Forum in Davos. The WSF itself is a product of the wave of mass anti-globalisation movements which emerged globally after the mid 1990s as a reaction to the multiple ill-effects of neoliberal globalisation. The search for alternatives followed from the need for resistance, and as an attempt to further

deepen resistance. Hence, the projects of resistance and alternatives are linked, and this constitutes “the critical utopia”⁴ of the WSF.

The havoc of globalisation is being wrought in the name of ‘development’, the ‘God’ from which people seem to need saving.⁵ Have the meanings of development changed in the past thirty years? What have been the continuities and differences in mainstream conceptions of development, as implemented and justified by its advocates and practitioners? If the questions of *What Now* are posed today, what answers would they yield? The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation has indeed launched a project called *What Next* with precisely such intentions⁶ and interestingly the WSF has been an important factor in this project.

This paper, however, has a narrower focus. It seeks to engage with one specific regional dynamic of this ‘global’ search for alternatives, ie the debate over alternative development in India. The period of the WSF process in India is a useful lens to examine the main contours of this debate, and the role played by the WSF is in itself a question worth exploring. This paper first examines the debate over development as it panned out in the post second world war world and then locates the debate in the Indian context as well as the WSF within this debate. It goes on to examine the deliberations over the WSF India process and outlines the main contours of conceptions of alternative development as articulated by a selected set of movements. Based on this, the paper engages with the key theoretical frameworks through which these ideas are conventionally processed and interrogates the efficacy of these frameworks.

I. DEVELOPMENT : MAINSTREAM AND ALTERNATIVE

When one comes across a pamphlet or a press release of a contemporary social movement in India, or reads a report of the activities undertaken by it, it is highly likely that one will find denunciations of ‘destructive development policies’ pursued by the government and calls for an ‘alternative model of development’. The promise of development is a promise of a better life, of human wellbeing, and as such something immensely desirable. The adjectives of ‘alternative’ or ‘destructive’ employed so often require, however, an enquiry into the model of development which informs policies. We can

define a model of development as a framework of understanding of what constitutes improvement in the human condition, what are the key indicators to measure this improvement, and what are the policies and programmes to be followed (also by whom and in what manner) in order to achieve this improvement.

In the post-second world war world, the 'development era' is supposed to have begun with Truman's promise of a "bold new programme ... for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas",⁷ and as a consequence of which the world got divided into developed, developing, and under-developed countries. The nation-state is the unit of such development and the basis for this division is the Gross Domestic Product and the rate at which productivity increases, ie economic growth. As Truman went on to say, "(g)reater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge". While the beginnings of the idea of development lie in the emergence of modernity and not in the mid-20th century – and indeed this is why development has easily been translated as modernisation – Truman's definition captures the core principles of what we can call the dominant or mainstream conception of development. Economic growth is the primary indicator, achieved through processes of industrialisation and modernisation of agriculture requiring the spread of technological innovations and further evidenced by urbanisation, increased use of energy and resources, and change in social patterns and psychological attributes of individuals.

Even as this core conception was shared, there were regional and temporal variations regarding the role of the state, freedom of the market, nature of ownership of means of production, and the extent of redistributive policies to be pursued. Post-independence India, for instance, pursued national self-reliance through the 'mixed economy' model and espoused a certain concern for redistribution. Keynesianism accorded importance to welfare and state intervention as compared to neo-classical economics which adhered more to the 'trickle down theory'. The 'actually existing socialism' of Soviet Union conceived of development planning for heavy industrialisation which in turn differed from the Chinese path, and so on.

The term alternative is an oppositional category and has to be seen in relation to what is understood as mainstream. Thus, till

the 1970s, the debate was between capitalism and socialism; and in the third world context between mainstream modernisation theories and the dissenting dependency school which remained sceptical over the possibilities of development under conditions of capitalist world economic system. The 1970s saw the emergence of other important concerns which had implications for the way mainstream and alternatives were conceptualised and contrasted. The concern of equity remained valid both between nation-states and within them. The experience of development showed that not only had benefits of development not 'trickled down', it had further entrenched inequalities not only of class but of race, caste, gender, and ethnicity. The experiences of people displaced by big developmental projects like multipurpose dams or mining undertakings raised questions about the uneven and unfair costs and benefits distribution of such projects. The questioning has ranged from implementation and the differential impact of development to the very meaning and philosophical basis of what constitutes development and the modernity it is embedded in.

The priority accorded to growth as an indicator was questioned by the 'basic needs' and later the human development approaches, which put human wellbeing and happiness at the centre of developmental concerns, defined development as the enlargement of people's choices and capabilities, and evolved other indicators for measuring improvement, the most important one being the Human Development Index. The realisation that there are ecological limits to growth and that the relentless exploitation of resources is neither practicable nor desirable eventually led to the idea of sustainable development as well as to a whole range of ecological approaches. At the same time, the idea that development must be endogenous and hence essentially diverse was articulated, questioning both the universalism and linearity of development as confined to a single definition, applicable to every society, and achievable by pursuing the same policies. This also questioned the assumed superiority of western knowledge and the 'backwardness' of non-western knowledges, cultures, and ways of life. All these concerns raised issues of democracy and participation and questioned the top-down expertise-driven framework of development. The major political impetus for such critiques was provided by the rise of what are called 'new social movements' of feminism, ecology, cultural identity, and anti-militarism.

Critical approaches to modernity – particularly critical theory, ecology and post-materialism, Foucauldian analyses of power / knowledge, postmodernism, and orientalism / postcolonialism – have all helped redefine and reconstitute the understanding of development and led to calls for alternative conceptions which address these concerns.⁸ It has also led to calls for ‘alternatives **to** development’ or what is known as post-development.

Shifts and Continuities

We can note two trends since the time these concerns were raised and gained prominence. On the one hand, many of the concerns got incorporated into the development policies of countries and entered the policy recommendations of international agencies. The United Nations took up and institutionalised the idea of human development through its Human Development Reports and subsequently discussions have ensued over the Right to Development. Ecological concerns have now become common, especially with the idea of sustainability gaining ground with the Brundtland Commission report, the various Earth Summits, and most recently, the negotiations on climate change. Likewise concepts of participatory development, people-centred or grassroots development, or decentralised development have become all pervasive. Indeed, one is very likely to find different agencies – whether nation-states, international institutions, think-tanks or forums like the G8 or World Economic Forum, or social movements – using a standard set of terms to address issues of development, even if the model of development they subscribe to or the ideological orientation of their approach is widely divergent. Words like sustainability, human development, human rights, or decentralisation figure in all documents and policy objectives. This raises an important point of debate – does incorporation of such concerns into mainstream agendas result in genuine transformation or does it merely signify co-option and absorption of critique ?

This has led many, prominently Arturo Escobar, Wolfgang Sachs, and Ashis Nandy, to call for a rejection of development. The advocates of post-development do not see any radical potential in the concept of development and hence in the continued use of the term development; rather they see it as a discourse that has produced the third world as an ‘underdeveloped’ category. The idea of post-development calls for moving beyond the idea of development as

it is intrinsically bound with teleological and western conceptions of progress. We will return to the difference between alternative development and post-development at the end of this section.

The second trend is one where neoliberalism has gained in ascendancy. As a conscious reversal of Keynesianism in the west, neoliberalism called for the withdrawal of the state, centrality of the market involving privatisation, including disinvestment as well as incentives to the private sector, deregulation and removal of restrictions on capital for trade and investment, lower income tax, removal of subsidies, fiscal discipline including cut in social sector spending, and labour flexibility. This not only accorded a high priority to economic growth as the only indicator of development, but also sought to free growth from the restrictions of distribution, social sector spending, and employment generation. Moreover, the assumption was that growth can be fuelled only by private capital – both domestic and multinational. All this involved a reorientation of the role of the state from an active regulator and player in the economy to that of a facilitator of market mechanisms. Neoliberal advocates sought these policy changes on a transnational scale; particularly for the third world, this meant opening of the economy to foreign capital, removing restrictions on trade, and adherence to multilateral agreements. Such were the conditionalities imposed by international institutions, particularly international financial institutions, in return for aid.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, neoliberalism spread to more and more parts of the world, aided by the crisis in and eventual collapse of the communist bloc. It was at this time that the term ‘globalisation’ came into popular use. Globalisation refers to the free movement of capital, goods, services, ideas, and people⁹ across national boundaries, leading to a high level of primarily economic but also social and political interdependence, which is moreover assessed positively. As a model of development, globalisation is closely associated with neoliberalism; in fact, globalisation is neoliberalism replicated at the international level.¹⁰ The international institution and agreements one most associates with globalisation, namely the World Trade Organisation, emerged out of the neoliberal turn, and influential institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank shifted to the neoliberal paradigm. The kind of interdependence globalisation refers to is an outcome of “new systems of production, finance and consumption”¹¹ where the main

players are the transnational or multinational corporations, which has meant a weakening of the nation-state in its ability to maintain its economic sovereignty. While it has been argued that the process of increasing interdependence of national economies is as old as capitalism, the great acceleration of this process of interdependence arises from the dominance of neoliberalism and the advances in technology, particularly in information technology which has led to the 'compression of time and space'.

The discussion above highlights both the continuities and shifts in mainstream conceptions of development and the principal grounds on which they have been subject to critique. It shows that it is not easy to classify conceptions of development between alternative and mainstream. For instance, if one identifies the neoliberalism of the Washington Consensus as the mainstream, then ideas of welfare state do constitute an alternative. In fact, one can even speak of a 'mainstream alternative' especially in the context of the post-Washington Consensus era, as exemplified by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Therefore, this paper does not work with any one conception of alternative. It does not define an alternative and then look for people who articulate it. Rather, it treats what is constructed by people in the debate as constituting an alternative, and seeks to investigate it.

At the same time, the investigation of this paper is also conducted with the awareness of the debate on development as it has panned out historically, specifically in the past half century. It is useful to remember that one of the shared ideas of different ideological regimes of the 20th century, which has only got reinforced in the 21st century, is the priority accorded to growth and productivity wherein the goal is a never-ending spiral of production and consumption. In the midst of the current global recession, the main debate has been on how to sustain growth, spur demand, and foster consumption, thus reinforcing growth as the main concern of development. Even as ecological or cultural concerns are expressed by policy-making forums and international agreements, the problem is articulated as being about how to reconcile these concerns with growth. This sets up the framework within which the debate and negotiations are conducted, for instance over the rights of indigenous peoples or acceptable emission norms. This is important because the idea of alternative is as much a matter of new cognitive possibilities as of new policies, politics, or

institutions; indeed the former is deeply implicated in the latter.

Ideas of Development, and Alternatives

Jan Nederveen Pieterse divides conceptions of development into three categories – mainstream development, alternative development, and post-development.¹² He also notes the shifting boundary line between mainstream and alternative, and the way in which mainstream absorbs critique. But does absorption mean that the criticism has been positively addressed or has it been domesticated? Moreover, does absorption make the critique invalid or incapable of mobilising people around those demands? Pieterse also points out that the various kinds of alternatives advocated by the perspectives which come under ‘alternative development’ do not cohere with each other. While he concedes that each of these perspectives raises valid points of critique which need to be addressed, they cannot together constitute a paradigm. Thus, for instance, people-centred development, respect for indigenous knowledge systems, and self-reliance need not necessarily cohere with each other. As he puts it, “all good things do not go together”.¹³ Both these concerns – of the possibilities of various kinds of alternatives coming together, and the positive value, if any, of conceptions that have found their way into mainstream development vocabulary – become important when we examine the WSF process in India. According to him, both alternative development and post-development share critiques of mainstream models, but post-development rejects the possibility of redeeming ‘development’, and its advocates define themselves as opposed to development.

A propos of Pieterse’s classification, a number of questions have emerged in the course of this research’s investigation of the understanding and politics of social movements. Does alternative development always mean reconciliation with development and is post-development always a call for a different frame of thinking? Where indeed is the boundary line between alternative and post development, and is it a useful line to retain? While we do need to be careful about the ways in which our ideas can get implicated in the same frames of thinking we are opposing, this paper considers a purist search for one alternative model which conclusively addresses all the critiques an unproductive quest.

For the present it is sufficient to note that in a forum like the

WSF all kinds of voices do find a space. It includes the movements and intellectuals who wish to retain the concept of development and reform it, and those who consider alternative development as alternative ways of conceiving improvement, as well as those who consider that such a task requires the abandonment of the concept altogether.

This discussion also makes it possible for us to distinguish between alternatives in general and alternative development in particular. Ideas of alternative development can be seen as a subset of what Escobar calls “another way of looking at reality”,¹⁴ as the other world(s) would have other new ways of conceiving improvement and hence new conceptions of development. Thus, while there are shared principles between alternatives in general and alternative conceptions of development, there will be specific ways in which these principles get worked out when it comes to development. Despite this almost umbilical link, it is useful to retain the distinction.

II. WORLD SOCIAL FORUM : A BRIEF BACKGROUND

The WSF emerged out of the anti-globalisation movements that had begun to gain strength in the latter half of the 1990s, mainly in the US, Europe, and Latin America. In the former two places, the main manifestation was mass protests wherever meetings of the WTO, World Bank, IMF, G8, and the WEF took place, eg Washington, Prague, Quebec City, Nice, Genoa, Davos, and Melbourne. The 1999 Seattle mass gathering against the WTO, which brought the meeting to a standstill, is often taken as a marker as well as catalyst of this series of protests.¹⁵ These protests involved intense networking among different groups – environmentalists, anarchists, trade unionists, socialists – from different countries. In the Latin American continent, first in the South to experience neoliberal policies, a diverse set of mass social movements emerged and succeeded in making it the greatest site of resistance. This resistance eventually extended to the realm of the state, as left-wing governments won power in many countries.

More immediately, in January 2000, a group of 50 intellectuals from around the world organised a meet parallel to the World Economic Forum, called ‘The World Forum for Alternatives’, as an ‘anti-Davos in

Davos'. Drawing inspiration from this, eight Brazilian organisations (trade unions, NGOs, social movements) and groups in Europe such as ATTAC¹⁶ conceived the idea of the WSF as a space where all these diverse resistance movements and groups from the North and the South could meet, share their experiences, and discuss how to sustain their movements and where in particular intellectual analyses and grassroots activists could share their insights. In January 2001, the first WSF meet was held in Porto Alegre.¹⁷ It was consciously named in opposition to the WEF and held around the same time, emphasising the 'social' instead of the 'economic'. Since its inception it has emerged as a "key rallying point for activists who refuse to assimilate in the global corporatist agenda"¹⁸ and earned itself epithets such as 'carnival of the oppressed'.

The common strand uniting all these movements and groups was opposition to neoliberal globalisation on the grounds that it had widened income disparities, caused environmental damage, and resulted in loss of employment and social security in both the North and the South. These groups were primarily anti-neoliberal, not necessarily anti-capitalist; they were against the increasing power of corporate multinationals and their ability to dictate the terms of state policy. The cutbacks on social security, privatisation of basic resources like water, takeover of small enterprises and particularly farms by multinational companies, and relocation of production to areas of cheap labour had resulted in the fall of living standards for the majority. In this sense globalisation had meant non or reverse development. Other grounds of critique include the culture of consumerism, rise of racism and attacks on immigrants (particularly from Muslim countries), women, and sexual minorities, as neoliberalism was accompanied by the conservative turn in many western countries.

There are also many contradictions between these groups; for example, trade unionists protesting the loss of jobs in the North called for a ban on outsourcing to the third world. While many Southern countries and groups in the North opposed multilateral trade agreements (because they were heavily skewed in favour of the developed world) and the structural adjustment conditionalities (because they made the South vulnerable to flight of capital and invited a debt trap), many Northern human rights groups campaigned for linking trade to human rights issues like child labour and environmental regulations in the third world. There are traditional

differences between the environmentalists and the socialists because the former oppose the growth-centrism which had led to the pursuit of policies of higher consumption and resulted in the depletion of natural resources. In the post 9/11 world, many of these movements, called 'global justice movements', also got involved with anti-war movements campaigning against Afghanistan and particularly Iraq. For anti-globalisation activists this 'war against terror' signalled a new phase of the neoliberal project, it was imposition of neoliberalism by force.

The way in which the WSF sought to bring together this diversity of movements carries the imprint of post Marxist radical politics of the west and Latin America. The charter of the WSF declares it to be an "open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to the domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among humankind and between it and the Earth".¹⁹

The 'open space' concept of the WSF emphasises the plurality of struggles and horizontal inter-linkages and alliances between them, rather than according priority to any one cause over others in a leadership-oriented, vanguardist, and hierarchical organisational and decision-making format. Hence, the WSF is organisationally structured not to arrive at one final outcome or issue a united call for action, but rather to assist movements to themselves decide on various courses of action. In this sense, it is very different from previous forms of "anti-systemic politics", like socialist parties or nationalist movements of the third world.²⁰ It is seen as an instance of a 'new politics' which aims not to capture state power but to challenge the principle of power as such.

The WSF set itself the twin tasks of resistance to globalisation and articulating alternatives to it, in order to envisage what Santos calls "a counter-hegemonic globalisation". According to Santos, there are two levels to this counter-hegemonic task of critical utopia – the 'negativity' of the task is in defining what is being critiqued and "affirming the possibility" of an alternative world; the 'positivity' of the task lies in defining what is being sought as an alternative.²¹ In

our engagement with the WSF India process, we need to evaluate the performance of the WSF in both these dimensions.

III. INDIA AND DEVELOPMENTAL DEBATES

India's post-independence development model was indeed one of modernisation, aiming for a transformation from a 'traditional', 'backward', 'agrarian' society to a 'modern', 'industrial', 'progressive' one. The Nehruvian obsession with gigantism was driven by a plan of such transformation and was to be symbolic of India having 'caught up' with the west and 'arrived' on the world scene. Indeed the legitimacy of the newly formed Indian state derived from this promise of development, despite muted dissent from Gandhians and Lohi-aites. An important dissenter in the early decades was the Communist Party of India, which later split into two parties; but it did not question the logic of modernisation, only its capitalist character.

Questioning of this development model emerged in the early 1970s, paralleling similar developments elsewhere in the world. The main actors who raised these issues were termed social movements – also variously called micro-movements / grassroots movements / movement groups (D L Sheth), or non-party political formations (Rajni Kothari), or new social movements (Gail Omvedt), and now increasingly the term 'civil society' is being used as well.²² These groups were comprised of environmental groups, including movements raising the issue of displacement and ecology-dependent livelihoods like those of forest peoples and adivasis, and of women's movements, dalit movements, farmers' fronts, new movements of labour, civil liberties groups, sub-national movements, and indigenous peoples' groups. The 1990s witnessed the addition of new concerns of anti-militarism, nuclear disarmament and peace, religious fundamentalism and Islamophobia, alternative sexualities, and urban poverty.

Movements have been classified in a variety of ways depending on issues, participants, ideological positions, the strategy adopted, and so on.²³ For our purpose, there are two points of note : One, their emergence represents what is called the 'crisis of representational politics', as these vital issues do not find a space in the political process and institutions or are excluded; hence these movements share a critique of the electoral political process. Two, they also

emerge in opposition to traditional Marxist approaches to their specific concerns. They resist both the subsumption of their issues within the class framework as well as the orthodox understanding of these issues.

These different movements interrogate the mainstream development paradigm but what is significant is that they do so on diverse grounds. If the farmer's movement saw an urban bias in development priorities, the women's movement took issue with non-recognition of women as economic actors or of women's unpaid work. Movements against displacement raised the issue of unequal distribution of costs and benefits, and adivasis and forests peoples brought in the issue of marginalisation of indigenous knowledge systems and negation of their relationship with nature and resources. These examples can be multiplied, but the important point to remember is that there are multiple critiques of development and a specificity to each one of them. These specificities cannot be collapsed into a single whole. Moreover, not only did development entrench the inequities of the prevailing oppressive structures of caste, gender, ethnicity, or region, it also produced its own marginals. Landowners of Singur or the medium level farmers and beneficiaries of the Green Revolution in Punjab, reeling under the current agrarian crisis, cannot be subsumed under a prior existing marginal category. Also important to remember is that for many of these movements, development is not the only source of their marginalisation and hence it is not the only target of critique; they are simultaneously tackling caste or patriarchy and such structures of oppression.

This has implications for the debate on alternative development. Any search for alternatives requires dealing with these multiple critiques of development. Hence there are multiple concerns which alternative conceptions should address, concerns which moreover do not easily cohere with each other and can often have very fraught relationships as well – for instance, women and dalit movements, dalit and farmers movements, or environment and dalit movements. Secondly, this brings in the question of dialogue and alliances between these groups and movements, and consequently the issue of the grounds on which alliances could be forged and the principles on which negotiations conducted. This research doesn't seek to identify any one blueprint of alternative model of development which can adequately address all these critiques; indeed such a

search is not fruitful. Rather it works with the idea that the politics of development straddles different groups and their specific perspectives, and hence alliances and divergences between them are a vital aspect of our enquiry.

Globalisation's Impact in India

Even as such critiques of development entered academic and political discussions, the Indian state affected a shift in its development model through the New Economic Policy of 1991, in response to another kind of critique of state-led national self-reliance. The latter critique was made both by Indian industry and international aid agencies which pushed for Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) or what first came to be called 'economic reforms', and later 'globalisation', in India.

Globalisation came as a big challenge to movements. According to D L Sheth, Indian movements took time to recover from the ideological onslaught of globalisation, which was riding on the TINA factor. Moreover, there was much splintering of groups. Many groups had become 'NGO-ised' and bureaucratic in their functioning while those continuing the struggle were fragmented and isolated. It was in the latter half of the 1990s that, as the adverse effects of the new regime became apparent, these movements and groups became revitalised and new movements emerged as well.²⁴ For movements, not only did globalisation reverse the gains made in the previous decades – such as the acceptance of an alternate set of indicators in the form of human development and environmental regulations, expansion of the meaning of human rights to include rights of livelihood, and the increasing currency of the idea of decentralisation – it also reasserted the old model of development in a sharper form.

This is another important factor implicated in alliance building. Globalisation brought in many changes and embodied a shift in development policy, as well understood by social movements. But it is important not to forget that there are also shared grounds between modernisation and neoliberal globalisation. The key indicators of economic growth, industrialisation, and a technocratic mind-set inform them both; so does the idea of development as unilinear, culturally neutral, and universalistic. Thus, for movements, older critiques of development cannot be forgotten or accorded lower priority in order to

combat globalisation.

This becomes particularly important given the fact that the reality of globalisation has forced left parties and movements to rethink the role either of them can play in the anti-globalisation struggle. Even for the official left, globalisation represents a new and distinct phase of world capitalism and imperialism, requiring new strategies of opposition. For all of them, globalisation was accompanied by the rise of right wing Hindu fundamentalism, which horrifically manifested itself in the Gujarat genocide of 2002, and this demanded of them a rethink on counter-strategies and alliances.

The WSF process is simultaneously one of resistance to globalisation and of the globalisation of resistance movements. This paper argues that globalisation provided both the necessity as well as the possibility for networking and alliances between various groups, within countries and between them. In India as well, the experience of globalisation allowed for such negotiations and alliances and thereby led to the reconfiguration of the radical space in Indian polity. It is precisely because of this that an analysis of the WSF process deserves our attention.

IV. THE WSF INDIA PROCESS

The Focus of this Paper

The WSF erupted on my horizon in late 2003.²⁵ Discussions regarding the Mumbai event took place around the same time that I began thinking about my doctoral research. The WSF appeared immensely significant because almost everyone – academic or movement or left front – who was important for my research seemed to be associated with either the WSF or the Mumbai Resistance (MR). My university (JNU) also witnessed a huge debate between WSF and MR. However, despite all my interest, I could not attend the WSF event and when the India Social Forum (ISF) was held in December 2006, I saw it as an opportunity to experience what I had missed in 2004. By this time, I was also more aware of the debates surrounding the WSF in India. The WSF cropped up in many ways in the meetings, rallies, and campaigns of movements I had attended since 2004. In the ISF, I experienced the same bewilderment over the size, scale, and plethora of events

which many had reported about Mumbai, but I was also struck by the fact that a lot of people described the ISF as disappointing compared to the Mumbai event. For them, Mumbai had enabled opportunities of meeting with people other than their own circle and real discussions had taken place. Also, the controversy over land acquisition in Singur and the proposed bill on Special Economic Zones (SEZs) dominated the ISF and portended of future developments. And surely enough, the events in Nandigram and its aftermath in early 2007 solidified doubts over the future of the WSF in India, at least with its existing composition.²⁶ It is significant that interest in the WSF has since dissipated and despite the discussions over a proposed South Asia Social Forum to be held in Nepal, a future event in India seems unlikely. It is instructive to note that of the many WSF events planned for 2010, only one of them is in South Asia, and it is in Bangladesh.²⁷

While approaching the main concern of this research, the question this paper had to address was on the appropriate way to read the WSF India process. Should the WSF in India be read as a process from 2003 to 2006, ie encompassing the period of the three WSF events in India (or rather from 2002 when the first discussions began to 2007 when Nandigram happened) ? Or should one read it as a longer process and pick on the one aspect of the WSF in which it can be seen both as an indicator as well as a contributor, namely, the formation of alliances among forces of social transformation in contemporary India ?

In the ISF, I attended a meeting organised by the Karnataka Sex Workers Union (KSWU), where the entire debate was over the recognition of sex work as work, without the prejudices of morality. On the surface this extremely exciting discussion did not require the banner of anti-globalisation. However, the next day I walked into a meeting of the New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI), where the discussion was dominated by the impact of neoliberal globalisation on labour and how the older definition of work was inadequate in the changed context. In the course of the meeting, I discovered that the KSWU is affiliated to NTUI. To me such linkages and alliances are the most important aspect of contemporary struggles, because they allow for struggles against the dominant paradigm without sequentially arranging priorities. As discussed earlier, any enquiry into alternative conceptions of development has to engage with this multiplicity of critiques against the mainstream. This doesn't mean that the success

of alliances or their strategies cannot be interrogated, and indeed such evaluation is a constant requirement.

Thus, in this paper, I consider the emergence of alliances, networks, and joint struggles as the most significant outcome of anti-globalisation movement in India and look at the WSF as a process which was a marker of as well as a contributor to this trend. Indeed the WSF understands itself as a process enabling and encouraging inter-linkages between groups and movements. Hence, I engage here with a set of organisations that have come into being from the 1990s onwards. These organisations are in the nature of broad networks of organisations and movements over issues that are important in the debate over development, and they have participated actively in either the WSF or the MR. These are : National Forum of Forest Peoples and Forest Workers (NFFPFW); Mines, Minerals and People (mm&P); New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI); Indian Co-ordination Committee of Farmers Movements (ICCFM); National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), and Yuva Bharat ('Young India'). While the last cannot be called an alliance of different organisations, it had alliances with groups which were both in the MR and the WSF, and is thus significant.

Between them, these organisations focus on issues relevant to the debate on alternative development – forest rights, new labour, farmers' issues and the future of agriculture, displacement, and the nature of industrialisation.²⁸ The paper also focuses on two events which took place in the post-ISF period. The first is the meeting on anti-displacement struggles in Ranchi in March 2007 which was organised by groups who were associated with MR and then went on to form the People's Democratic Front of India (PDFI). The Ranchi meeting resulted in the formation of Vistapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan (VVJVA). The other event I examined was Sangharsh or Action 2007, also held in March-April 2007, whose participants were drawn from the WSF. Indeed the consultation meeting for Action 2007 was held right after ISF 2006.²⁹

Alternatively, I could have chosen to study movements and their perspectives by classifying them on the basis of the identity they foreground, as indeed much of the study on social movements is conducted. For instance, I could have looked at the perspective of the dalit movement or women's movement or adivasi organisations.

But that would have led to problems of classification (does one call the NFFPFW an adivasi movement ?) and also raises the contentious question of whether there can be a monolithic women's or dalit movement in the country. In any case, it would have resulted in a different selection of movements. Focusing on the aspect of alliances, by contrast, allowed me to explore, or at least record, how these issues of caste, identity, or patriarchy figure within the struggles over development.

Early Debates

The WSF India process was part of the moves to internationalise the Forum which began in 2001 itself. India emerged as a preferred location to host the first WSF event outside Brazil, given “the importance of your country in this struggle politically and demographically”, as Chico Whitaker put it.³⁰ The first meeting in this regard was held in Bangalore in December 2001 when Chico Whitaker and Sergio Haddad³¹ met with about 15 Indian members from different organisations including the Majdoor Kisan Shakti Sanghatan, Centre for Indian Trade Unions, and Ekta Parishad.³²

The role of the WSF in allowing articulations of and discussions over “genuinely alternative perspectives”³³ does figure in most discussions in the run up to the India events. In fact, in the statement issued by the WSF India Organising Committee (OC) on WSF 2004, organisations were advised “to go beyond academic discussions on the impact of globalisation by offering strategies of resistance and concrete alternatives to the various forms of capitalist globalisation and other forms of oppression”.³⁴ It is interesting that the one place in the WSF India Policy Statement where development is mentioned, a broad definition is adopted by opposing “the neoliberal agenda of the world and the national elite which is keeping profits as the main criteria of development”.³⁵ It also “encourages participant organisations and movements ... to introduce onto the global agenda the change-inducing practices ... that they are experimenting [with] in building a new world”.³⁶

According to the Asia Social Forum Programme Note, the ASF “is conceived as a process capable of generating a movement of ideas and of building a development approach based on the vision and strategies devoted to realising all human rights for individuals,

communities and people”.³⁷ The Invitation to the ASF issued by the WSF India OC notes that “(p)eople’s movements across the world are working to identify and demonstrate that the path to sustainable development and social and economic justice [lies] in alternative models for people-centred and self-reliant progress”.³⁸ Likewise the WSF India Policy Statement spells out the principles on which alternatives will be based :

[T]he alternatives proposed at the WSF ... will respect universal human rights, and those of all citizens – men and women – of all nations and will rest on democratic international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality, and sovereignty of peoples.³⁹

In the Invitation to the ASF, mention is also made of the special role the South can play in the process of seeking alternatives; here hope is expressed that “perhaps models and lifestyles from the South based on principles of sharing and equity, can provide alternative to those based on affluence and greed”.⁴⁰

Of particular importance is the theme note accompanying one of the six broad themes identified by the WSF India Programme Committee for the ASF – that of ‘Alternatives and People’s Movements’ – prepared by Prabir Purkayastha. This note says that “it is important to bring out that not only are there alternatives, these alternatives are being pursued today at various levels”. Moreover, “the alternatives are not only in terms of objectives, they are also regarding the trajectory of development”. According to the note, there is a need to question the consumerist utopia of neoliberalism and the artificial needs created by it, as well as the “over-arching centralisation of the production process”.⁴¹ It is interesting that between the draft circulated among the Committee members and the final version as it appeared in the Programme Note, a discussion on technology was omitted. This paragraph seeks to discuss whether the undesirable characteristics of the system of production are a result of technology in itself or are a consequence of the production process being under the control of a few.

This omission was possibly in the interest of conciseness, but the fact that such ideas were being articulated and debated upon is significant, especially when seen alongside another theme note, on ‘Ecology, Culture and Knowledge’.⁴² Here mention is made of the

adverse impacts of development on the “sophisticated systems of knowledge” about resources and ecosystems evolved by people in the Asian region. In this note what has been dropped from the draft version is a mention of entrenched processes of exploitation “within the community and family” which, alongside “national and global economic development”, are said to have contributed to exclusions of rural communities.⁴³

For the mainstream left, who have been the principal organisers of the WSF in India, the main problem with social movements is that they tend to glorify a pre-modern Indian past and have a Gandhian disdain for modern science and technology. Inclusion of a discussion on technology, including the invitation to a debate on its ‘intrinsic’ nature, is thus indicative of an attempt to shed some of the misgivings regarding bringing this into the ambit of the debate. Likewise, another critique of movements is that they do not acknowledge the inequities within the family and the community even as they target the state and its technologies of control. The second note again tried to bring these issues into the agenda. These omissions, especially from the former note, become important when viewed in the context of the post-Nandigram scenario and will be examined in a later section.

The significance of all these statements and exchanges is that they are a result of negotiations between diverse groups and reflect accommodation as well as debate. The statements are examples of a very measured use of language as well as a careful choice of themes and concepts that are broadly acceptable to diverse sections. The content of these statements seeks to accommodate as well as eject contentious perspectives.

They are also important in the context of the self-perception of the Indian organisers regarding movement networking in India. Doubts have been articulated since the early period of the WSF India process about the Indian movements’ capacity to evolve common mechanisms towards building a joint front. For instance, in the early discussions, when a WSF event in India was first mooted in 2002, Jai Sen wondered “whether such a possibility ... will help unite or will divide ... a slowly emerging movement in the country ... towards bridging disparate concerns and building a broader, non-partisan civil platform”. He also expressed concern over the possibility that “internal contradictions of the country could flounder the WSF process itself

worldwide, given [the] experience [of joint activity among movements in India]”.⁴⁴ Such sentiments were expressed by Dunu Roy as well. In his opinion, “India should not hold the WSF because Indian groups and movements lack (1) the ability to be analytical of macro and micro developments in order to spell out what are the real (as opposed to wishful) alternatives and (2) to be self-critical in order to learn from past mistakes and to debate those openly”.⁴⁵

That the WSF events were giving voice to a trend either at a rudimentary stage among Indian movements or not yet highlighted in public perception is also seen in V Krishna Ananth’s reporting that the remarkable aspect of ASF was that groups could ‘agree to disagree’ while being part of a common platform. This was in contrast to the 1980s, where debates among radical groups were characterised by “sectarian debates and quest for ideological purity”.⁴⁶ These archives of the WSF process underline that the key aspect of the WSF was its performance as a joint platform, and highlight the multi-level alliance building underway in the radical space of the Indian polity. They also highlight the sites of tension in this process, including some identified by the participants themselves.

V. CONCEIVING ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT : KEY ISSUES

The WSF did succeed in bringing together a whole lot of individuals, NGOs, movements, and left organisations on to the same platform. MR also registered impressive results in terms of bringing together diverse resistance groups, including groups that cannot be classified as Marxist-Leninist in their ideological orientation or even sympathies. Thus, for the purpose of this paper, notwithstanding the important differences between the WSF and MR, it is useful to see both as processes with similar aims of bringing together different resistance movements and discussing varying alternatives. At the same time, a crucial difference is MR’s criticism of the WSF over its insistence on ‘many alternatives’ and its identification of a single alternative – what it calls ‘a self-reliant economy’ – as the appropriate goal in the struggle against imperialism and capitalist globalisation.

Movements evolve conceptions of alternatives in the course of their struggle. Thus the enunciation of the kinds of alternatives they desire as well as the principles on which they must be based

takes place with reference to their aims, the specific moment of their struggle, as well as past experiences both of the movement and of its individual activists. In the movements having a variety of constituents working on different aspects and different regions, the process of consensus building within is as fraught as the process of associating with other fronts. Their ideas on alternatives thus have to be culled from the complex web of their multiple engagements. On the other hand, the specific content of the general principles they use has to be drawn from prolonged engagement. The present study is not equipped to get into such details. Hence it focuses on marking the broad contours of alternative conceptions proposed by movements and examines the theoretical frames in which the debate is usually cast. Based on this exercise, the assessment of this study is that there is a need to revisit these theoretical frames and dwell deeper on the content of what is articulated as an alternative.

The following sub-sections will deal with some of the key issues as articulated by the selected movements (but also drawing from other sources) regarding their own evolution, the challenge of globalisation, evaluation of WSF / MR, and their assessment of the development debate in India with reference to alternative conceptions of development and how these conceptions are identified.

Globalisation and Forging of Alliances

The WSF events captured a moment when globalisation was identified as the mainstream model of development and consciously foregrounded in all the activities and proclamations of movements and groups. In the various WSF events attempts were made to highlight the specific impacts of globalisation on the particular section of people or issue under consideration. Globalisation was the running thread in most meetings, whether it was a meeting organised by National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) on the issue of land rights of tribal women, or a meeting organised by the All India Bank Employees Association discussing opposition to privatisation of banks, or an event organised by Children's Rights for WSF (CR4WSF),⁴⁷ or a discussion on urbanisation organised by the Urban Research Centre, or many others.

Globalisation also provided the impetus for movements and left wing mass organisations to forge joint fronts and networks among

themselves as well as across sectors. The decision to take part in the WSF or MR, whether as a participant or as part of the organising committee, itself came out of this impulse to coordinate across sectors and organisations. For most of the organisations in this study, the impetus for their formation also came from the new conditions of globalisation. The argument is not that these organisations came into being only because of these new conditions, but rather that the specific conditions of post-1991 India were an important 'push' factor aiding their formation. There was a common realisation among movements that isolated struggles need to come together for mutual support and joint action. Such linkages were sought both nationally and internationally.

According to Ashok Chowdhury, one of the founders of NFFPFW, the need for a body of forest peoples was felt as a consequence of the neglect of forest issues by mainstream progressive and environmental movements as well as due to the adverse consequences of various laws regarding forests, in particular the 1980 Forest Conservation Act. There have been vibrant forest peoples' movements against the state laws; however they were regionally isolated given the diversity of forests and lack of attention by the mainstream. At the same time, formal globalisation sharpened the necessity of forming such a front. The NFFPFW states that it was formed as a platform for forest movements in India in 1998 as a result of "the realisation of shortcomings inherent in the localising tendencies within such movements in their struggle to take on the advances of global capital".⁴⁸ The importance of dialogue and alliances with other struggles against oppression is underscored in the declaration that "a sustained movement on the forest issue cannot be built up in isolation ... it [the forum] should find its allies in all the movements for rights and ownership over natural resources".⁴⁹ Support is extended to and allies sought among dalit groups, tribal struggles, ethnic movements against the state, and trade unions.

The formation of the NAPM is in fact an early response to the economic reforms of 1991 and one of its three pillars is "opposition to globalisation and liberalisation based economy".⁵⁰ It claims that the 1991 economic reforms lent "greater urgency" to a coming together of likeminded groups to form a "common platform and formation which will go beyond networking on specific issues", even as it seeks to develop linkages with groups and individuals outside NAPM. For NAPM, this effort also requires integrating insights from

different ideologies in its stated attempt towards “a holistic, just blend. It combines the ideas of Gandhi, Marx, Lohia, Phule, Ambedkar, Periyar along with feminist and eco-socialist conceptualisations into the emerging paradigm of sensible and sensitive development, justice and peace”.⁵¹

The impetus behind the formation of the Indian Coordination Committee of Farmers Movements (ICCFM) in 2000, composed of organisations like Bharatiya Kisan Union in different states (the Mahendra Singh Tikait factions), the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS), Shetkari Sanghatana (Jawandhia faction), and Tamil Nadu Farmers Association among others, was the Doha Round of the WTO. According to its spokesperson Yudvir Singh, these organisations had been unofficially coordinating with each other since 1992 when the Dunkel Draft came up for discussion. To quote him :

Developments of that time, over WTO etc, needed not a regional but an international struggle. Before that GATT did not include agriculture, and there were quantitative restrictions (QR). When the issue of including agriculture and removing QR came up then people needed to think about a counter-strategy. According to us, these moves are a conspiracy of the developed countries to look for a market for their surpluses.

The threat of globalisation to the agrarian sector, including the challenge of corporate farming and introduction of Genetically Modified (GM) seeds, and the ensuing agrarian crisis prompted both the formation of the Committee as well as the Committee members becoming a part of Via Campesina, the international peasants organisation.

Likewise the mm&P, an alliance of individuals, institutions, and communities who are concerned with and affected by mining, came into being in the late 1990s. According to its Convenor R Sreedhar, mm&P is a “product of trying to get various groups working on all these different mining related issues to come together on a common platform”. One of the key considerations in dealing with the multi-faceted problems posed by mining is stated as the context of “current globalization and liberalization programs, dictated to us by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs, [in which] large new tracts of land are proposed to be acquired for mining with MNCs”.⁵²

The opening line in the statement of intent which became the basis for the formation of the NTUI, first as a loose platform of “non-partisan left democratic trade unions” in 2001, and then as a federation in 2006, is : “The present phase of globalisation has put tremendous pressure on the working class”. Not only has the response of workers’ struggles to global capitalist offensive against labour rights to be on various levels, “international, national and workplace”, it also requires “civil and political rights ... and so democracy has to be defended at all costs”. This understanding was expanded by the NTUI to its concept of ‘social alliance’ according to which “unions pursue a common interest and share values with other social movements that arise in the struggle for democracy, and against oppression, deprivation and exploitation”. Hence trade unions need not only to “unite all sections of the working class”, but also build “strategic alliances with other movements of women, dalits, tribal and migrants as well as movements for sustainable environment and human rights”.⁵³

The reality of globalisation and the need for collaboration and joint action was also the reason offered by the movements and organisations for joining a platform like the WSF. For the NAPM, it was the “principle of forging a global unity of anti-globalisation forces” which made it join the WSF process, since “there is no aspect of life and no section of a country’s population that can go unaffected by the upheaval caused by the capital and market-based paradigm and the corporatised polity”.⁵⁴ Despite the doubts expressed among groups in India about the WSF, the latter “has created a hope for the widest possible human alliance for a just, pluralist, secular, peaceful alternative world and humanity”, and “there is no doubt ... that such international unity and solidarity ... is the minimum basic necessary to be able to stand up and question the world level violent attack of the capitalists-communal-criminal nexus”.⁵⁵

The NTUI was initially apprehensive about the WSF process but decided to join after observing the ASF because, as its secretary Gautam Mody says, “everybody within the democratic left with whom we wanted to interact with for the most part was there. ... We also saw with our own eyes the possibilities of a social alliance”. He adds : “We took a view in 2002 that our platform was quintessentially a platform for TU unity and we must not be divisive when other sections of left democratic fronts have come to a position of unity.”

One of the main factors that attracted organisations to the WSF was the concept of 'open space' which allowed movements to see the WSF as a non-hierarchical platform where they could interact without losing their identities.⁵⁶ The idea of open space resonated with the kind of loose platform or forum many of these organisations themselves were. Mody observes :

The whole notion of the open space challenged our imagination. We saw the whole process of working class unity as something that had to emerge in a transparent and democratic environment. To us the open space and what we were seeking to do were not very separate from each other.

According to Rakesh Rafique of Yuva Bharat (and now also part of an organisation called The Third Freedom Movement), which participated in MR, "both the WSF and MR were trying to bring together people of different ideological persuasions". Rafique asserts that his organisation did not have a stake in the debate over violence and non-violence, considered to be the key issue dividing the WSF and MR. His organisation decided to participate in MR because they did not think the WSF had the depth to think about alternatives. Otherwise they shared the common understanding that all revolutionary forces in India must come together to fight against imperialism. Further, Rafique emphasises the dynamism of the context as his organisation was side-by-side in Action 2007 with organisations like NAPM and NFFPFW who were active in the WSF instead of MR. At the same time, though Yuva Bharat did not join PDFI, which emerged out of MR, they did join VVJVA and the Orissa segment of Yuva Bharat has been active in the latter. Rafique does not see a contradiction in being part of both fronts. In fact, according to Rafique, the decision to be in the WSF or MR was a "tactical decision".

Perhaps if we had not found the correct forces, we may even have gone to the WSF ... and found many friends there. But we felt that the WSF can be exposed and we found likeminded people who could expose it, [so] we have played our historical role. This will always be remembered in history as WSF versus MR.

On the other hand, the reason the ICCFM offers for being in MR, despite the fact that its international partner Via Campesina was active in the WSF, was simply one of opposition to the WSF. The reason

for this was that it was supported by the same MNCs responsible for the crisis in agriculture. Thus ICCFM considered the funding of the WSF a key factor influencing their decision.

While the reality of globalisation provided a ground for unity, it is important to remember that this unity was on the common ground of resistance, and due to a commitment towards forging common fronts, but did not signify a definite agenda on what the content of the common front would be like. As the holding of MR shows, resistance itself was not always a satisfactory ground for unity and there are many issues including that of violence, funding, and the role of NGOs, as well as vital ideological as well as historical differences, among movements. Thus while globalisation proved a catalyst for forging networks and alliances, a single understanding of globalisation was not prioritised, nor was globalisation seen independent of specific concerns, experiences, and structures of oppression, which moreover were not attributed to globalisation alone.

All this reflects on the question of development. It shows a commitment to search for alternatives as well as to dialogue and negotiation to this end among movements. Various declarations released in the course of the WSF events as well as documents like Action 2007 are products of such dialogue. Their content has to be evaluated as polemic, symbolic, directed towards the state, containing definite plans of action, or outlining the principles on which alternatives should be based, depending on the document in question. This applies equally to MR, despite its declaration of a “self-reliant economy moving towards a genuine socialist order”⁵⁷ as the only alternative. The content of both ‘self-reliance’ and ‘socialism’ is subject to debate and to multiple interpretations among MR constituents, as we will examine subsequently.

Moving Beyond Reductive Frameworks

Among other things movements have to battle the reductive frameworks in which questions are often posed to them. For instance, they are asked whether they are for or against development. One of the tasks for them, then, is to render more complex this simplistic and combative formulation and extricate the debate from this dichotomous framework. For example, Sreedhar says that for mm&P “the debate is not between for or against mining, but the need for a long term

perspective on resources”. The issue of mining involves many issues for which different strategies and positions are required. The organisation divides mining-related concerns into four areas – where there is no mining, where mining is going on, where mines are getting closed, and areas where small local level mining, stone crushing, and quarrying enterprises take place. These invite positions which range from total opposition to Greenfield mining, implementation of labour laws, environmental and safety standards, and provision of social security, health, and education for labour, including rehabilitation of labour when mines close. If we take the case of mining as an illustrative example, this diversity of issues involved is revealing. It requires understanding and action at very different levels and on very different concerns. It requires engaging with the state, formulation and implementation of laws, mobilisation and campaigns, networks and alliances with different groups, national and international.

Rakesh Rafique also reflects on the issues that are swept away when a ‘for or against’ format of questioning is adopted. He describes the questions that are constantly asked of them since Action 2007 brought to the fore the debate over development models : “Are you against industrialisation ? Are you opposed to science and technology ? So we say we are not”. This leads to another round of questioning about what is the alternative offered. Rafique points out that within this format the answers required of them are instantaneous answers : “But if we think peacefully, before every answer the question is what kind of industry ? Why ? Where ? For whom ? When we ask this, the answers emerge”. He points to the absurdity of a scenario where “opposition to industry in cultivable land which has three harvests [per year] makes [one] anti-development”. The casting of the debate as pro or anti development replicates a tradition versus modernity dichotomy and, as this paper will argue, such dichotomies do not capture the nuances of the debate.

Self-Reliance

A principle evoking a common resonance is self-reliance. But self-reliance for whom ? At the national level or at the local level ? Are the two exclusive of each other ? The understanding of mm&P according to Sreedhar, is that there are questions to be asked at the national level regarding “technology, methods, and rationalisation of mining activities”. There is a need for agro-climatic mapping of resources as

“we have no idea how much of resources we have, where, what are their uses”. He articulates a shared understanding :

There is a need to reduce the dependence of the economy as a whole on mining, which at a broader level means reduce dependence on non-renewable resources. But not only must we have a mapping of resources, we also need a mapping of needs and this can only be at the local level’.

He defines the basics of self-reliance as this : “Basic amenities should be produced at the local level but creative pursuits undertaken at the broader level”. Sreedhar also points out that many of these ideas are not new. In fact a whole range of alternatives were proposed in the 1970s, particularly regarding cooperative planning, alternative housing, decentralisation, appropriate technology, and transfer of technology to the local level. Instead, there has been an enormous level of centralisation.

Thus the idea of self-reliance is connected with the idea of decentralisation, even though self-reliance defined at the level of the nation-state does not necessarily imply a decentralised institutional framework. MR did proclaim that a self-reliant economy is the only alternative to imperialist globalisation, which meant strengthening the nation-state. However, MR itself endorsed decentralisation or local level decision making as part of self-reliance. In that sense, assertion of self-reliance does not automatically mean a return to the pre-liberalisation era of a developmental state emphasising on technocratic and centralised planning.

That concepts are subject to different interpretations comes through when we look at the post-MR attempts at consolidation. These attempts resulted in the formation of PDFI, comprised of some of the groups that had come into interaction as a result of MR, as well as the formation of Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF), comprised of groups that had more ideological coherence and aimed at a “new democratic India, eradicating the exploitation and rule of imperialism and feudalism”, and called for boycott of parliamentary elections in India.⁵⁸ RDF, in outlining its alternative model of development, emphasises that such a model must be “people-oriented [such that it] enhances the well being of the majority, conserves the natural wealth, and protects the environment”. After outlining ideas of land reform, rejection of displacement, cooperative farming, infrastructure

development, and industrialisation for a domestic market, it goes on to say that in “this new model of development people themselves will take all the decisions... [P]eople will be organised in democratic structures from bottom to top”.⁵⁹

PDFI had a more limited agenda since it encompassed a greater diversity of groups and, further, it decided to initiate the process of forming issue-based fronts. One of these fronts was on anti-displacement by the name of Vistapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan (VVJVA).⁶⁰ According to Ajay, an activist with the VVJVA, PDFI aimed at a broader consensus among groups which did not all share an ideology. One of the points of consensus is the goal of a “self-reliant economy, which itself is about social change. To talk about self-reliance in today’s imperialist neoliberal world is a big thing. But people have different conceptions of self-reliance. We will talk about land reform, B D Sharma will talk about village swaraj”.

B D Sharma, National Coordinator of Bharat Jan Andolan (BJA), is a vocal advocate of the idea of village self-rule and has been associated with both MR and PDFI. He is widely regarded as a Gandhian and BJA has been campaigning on the issue of tribal self-rule as well as the extension of self-rule to non-tribal areas. In fact, activists of this movement term the alternative as lying in non-centralisation rather than decentralisation by arguing that in the former power has not been devolved from the centre; rather both decision making and management take place at the local level.⁶¹

Rafique’s ideas also have resonances with these ideas of self-reliance; indeed, in his perspective it was MR’s proclamation of a self-reliant economy and socialism that marked its difference from the WSF. He claims that Yuva Bharat’s conception of an alternative is based at once on both Indian-ness and socialism :

Our socialism cannot be separate from our Indian-ness. ... Globalisation is an extension of capitalism, [and] socialism is the broader decision as the alternative in our fight against capitalism. Whatever kind of socialism it is – whether Vivekanand, Bose, Lohia, JP – all of them speak about the alternative society which they call socialist. Gandhi’s thought also comes within the socialist frame.

He says that the language of socialism in the country, just like

the language of mainstream development, is foreign :

The main problem with our westernised thinking is that we are not able to understand this. We use different categories; people have their own different categories. We in Yuva Bharat / Third Freedom Movement hope to be in sync with the general public's thinking. (Jan manas ke saath taal mel banana hai).

The essential question of development, he says, is “through what kind of life can people live a happier life”. This calls for local democracy and minimal powers for the central government and its bureaucracy :

The most important question, as JP discussed, was how can a central government employee who is an IAS from whatever region after studying for 6 months know whether a factory in my village is advisable or not. Decisions should be taken by the local people according to their needs. Socialism cannot be centralised, it has to be decentralised.

It is questionable whether Rafique's interpretation of socialism would be acceptable to his other associates in MR. Nevertheless, such an expansion of the notion of socialism cautions us against a simplistic reading of the labels used to characterise different perspectives. As we shall see in a later section, what also emerges from these explorations into the content of self-reliance is the refusal to get drawn into the national versus local debate.

Community Governance and Community Rights

Discussions on self-reliance and decentralisation foreground the community. For NFFPFW, their idea of alternative development is encapsulated in the concept of community governance. Roma, an activist with NFFPFW, emphasises what she sees as a cardinal tenet of her organisation, especially of one of its constituents, Kaimur Kshetra Mahila Majdoor Kisan Sangharsh Samiti (KKMMKSS) in Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh : “To see things from people's perspective”. Hence the format they chose for their forest peoples' organisation was that of a jan sanghatan, or people's organisation, such that “it is a democratic institution which can think for itself, take its own decisions, it can see things for itself”. This explains their focus on obtaining land and forest rights for forest peoples because for the community land is intrinsically linked to identity, dignity, livelihood, and

its future.

As Ashok Chowdhury, a founder of NFFPFW, says, “the main thing is that people’s livelihood, environment, and culture [should be] protected. On that basis, the production process should be on collective ownership and the production should be for people’s requirements”. The idea is to oppose the commodification of natural resources. As Chowdhury argues, the “use of forests and other natural resources should not be based on profit. This is basically a livelihood resource, resource of cultural heritage, and it must be maintained as such”. This focus on fulfilment of needs requires questioning of the growth model’s logic of ever-expanding needs.

Talking about the ongoing struggle in Sonbhadra, Roma describes how the community, led by women, defied the state by taking over what the state claimed were its forest lands and started cultivation there :

They started by asking [the state] how much land is available. First they were told there is not an inch. Then they questioned it. They trained themselves to measure land, to talk to the officials, meet the press, all on their own, [as well as to] make speeches, to see records. We thus learnt to grasp every nerve of this issue of land and we saw that this was the only way to increase the political consciousness of people tenfold.

The organisation undertook cultivation at a collective level and focused on cultivating food grains. This experiment with collective ownership, production, and distribution is very important for anyone interested in social movement politics in India. Moreover, in the assessment of the organisation, this is the reason why the struggle has stayed alive despite state repression. As Roma claims, “there is no division of land till now ... every year they are coming out with new ways of managing because problems do emerge in organisations. But they have understood that they have to remain as a collective”.

Rafique’s views on the contents of the Indian form of socialism he advocates also centre on the community and its collective nature. According to him, “the core question between socialism and capitalism is over ownership – private or collective”. However, even when it comes to collective ownership, one needs to look into Indian culture for models :

We have to recognise the Indian form of social ownership. Socialist ownership is the ownership in an Indian village, where no individual owned land and all land was village land. Socialism has to build on this collectivity. Since socialism is not to private property, we have been practising such a big socialism for so many years. So we have to bring this model into industry as well.

Thus what gets emphasised by people like Rafique, or for that matter B D Sharma, when they associate with left wing or revolutionary organisations is the concept of local control over the means of production.

Likewise the opposition of NAPM to the concept of 'eminent domain', incorporated into the programme of Action 2007, is also based on the principle that land and resources belong not to the state but to the community. The Call for Action 2007, the agenda released by the constituents, demands not just the "scrapping of the principle of Eminent Domain" but asserts the "peoples' primary right over water, land, forests, bio-diversity, air, minerals, and aquatic wealth". It further demands the "right to local resources to local community".⁶² Two things emerge from this : First, the 'community' which movements refer to is not necessarily limited to the village or rural community, as some movements may refer specifically to the village as a unit and others may not. Secondly, the assertion of peoples' rights can be read in a broader sense as a rebuttal of the powers of the state and the orientation of development policies, as well as in the specific sense of the right of the local level community to take decisions regarding its resources and policies.

The community is by no means an easy concept to work with. Sreedhar admits that communities are by no means unified :

What counts as a community is a tough question. There are splits within the community. Panchayati Raj Institutions have also brought in political divisions. Plus there are differences of caste, religion. It is not easy to get a consensus, but our experience is that if you spend time then a consensus is possible. Gender is very important here, we find the priorities of women [to be] remarkably different.

In a national seminar on 'Women and Mining in India', organised by mm&P, the neglect of a gender perspective on mining

is stressed and the analysis includes the impact of destruction of community life and knowledge on women as well as the exploitative conditions under which women work in the mining sector.⁶³ In fact, important questions are raised about the mm&P, its constituents as well as the Environics Trust which runs its secretariat, regarding funding. Indeed, the 'NGO-isation' of movements and the role of NGOs are important issues that have regularly cropped up in discussions about social movements. The response given by mm&P, which can be held up to critique only on the basis of further investigation, is that while they can "do participatory research with several groups including the government where different perspectives of development exist, but at the community level it is the community that matters". On a different note, Ajay also hints at the differences within the community when he says that opposition to land acquisition has to pay attention to the caste factor. He recounts an interesting conversation with a dalit villager whose response to land acquisition was : "Let the land go, they are *chowdhurys* [landlords] because of the land, once the land goes they will become landless like us".

Assertions of community rights or local level community governance invite the charge of romanticising of traditional community with its inequities and freezing people in time. As we shall see, major sections of the intellectual and party left in India subscribe to this point of view. This has resulted in the debate on alternative development invariably becoming one of tradition versus modernity.

It is instructive that the language of culture increasingly adopted by international development agencies often glorifies third world rural communities as celebrating a life of scarcity and simplicity. Such celebration is informed by the understanding that the earth doesn't have enough resources for the South to enjoy the average middle-class life of the North.⁶⁴ Hence the issue of North-South equity is deeply implicated in such discussions over the values of alternative conceptions of development, as are issues of equity within Southern countries.

NTUI for instance, of which NFFPFW is an associate, and which has insisted on a social alliance of trade unions with social movements which distinguishes it from the mainstream trade union movement in India, shares these apprehensions over collective ownership or community rights. As Mody admits :

As for community rights, we have to look deeper at that question. We are not entirely sure about traditional rights and about preserving traditional rights, including traditional rights to livelihood. Because we believe that there is a vast part of traditional rights subject to casteism and patriarchy. We also believe that traditional rights don't result in acceptable livelihoods; they for the most part result in enormous misery. One just hangs on to traditional rights in the absence of any other right.

In the work of NFFPFW, there appears to be awareness of such dangers as well as a critique of this understanding. They have strongly prioritised concerns of equity within communities even as they assert the importance of indigenous practices and knowledge. They advocate land reform and redistribution of land on the basis of caste and gender. However, according to them, they differ from other calls for land reform in their insistence that "control over production by labour cannot be individual, it has to be collective", to quote Chowdhury.

According to Roma, one of her key differences with the women's movement in India over land rights is the latter's insistence on individual rights to property, and thus being restricted to the issue of inheritance. In her understanding, "the root of patriarchy, of women's slavery, is privatisation and private ownership of land. She [the woman] was not a slave when in the jungle, but with the agricultural system, she became a slave". The Kaimur struggle has been primarily led by women and it has been the learning of this struggle that women and men have very sharp differences in the way they relate to land, including the faith women have in the system of collective ownership. Chowdhury goes further to argue that their demand is not land reform but agrarian reform, which requires reform in the areas of land ownership, credit, tenancy and labour rights, and technology.

On questions of ecology or social reform, Rafique suggests that they must be culturally based, ie drawing on Indian histories and experiences of reform and struggle. He points to the dominance of western science which continues to provide the prevailing framework of thought despite the wealth of regional and local experiences. According to him, "the whole fight is on knowledge, what should be considered knowledge. We don't dare take up our own ideas and see them as knowledge". He therefore asserts the need to reread Indian

thinkers like Phule and Ambedkar who reflected on social change without imitating given models.

The need to read thinkers as well as recover lost history and experiences, particularly of marginal communities, is also stressed by Chowdhury. Rafique counters the charge that he is treading on the dangerous ground of valorising culture by insisting that culture is never static and its dynamism is reflected in constant change. For him, social change is always a creative activity, and this requires discussions. It can never be imposed from above. A standard assessment of the above discussion would pit Rafique on the one side and Mody on the other, and Chowdhury somewhere in the middle of the spectrum between tradition and modernity. While I found my discussions with Rafique deeply troubling, they were at the same time exciting, and based on this brief interaction, I would hesitate in casting him into the camp of those who 'glorify culture'. As I argue, the tradition-modernity dichotomy is an all-too-easy device available for classification; however it doesn't allow us to understand the dynamics of the debate.

It is also remarkable that the farmers' movement prominently uses the language of culture and Indianness. Yudvir Singh claims BKU is a Gandhian organisation and is critical of big industry. According to him, industrialisation is not a solution to unemployment :

Mechanisation will further increase unemployment since 65% of the population is dependent on agriculture; the most important thing is to stop migration. There is no need for big industry. We need cottage industry and must rethink about urbanisation.

It is interesting that the language of pre-eminence of agriculture is used by an organisation whose major constituents are products of the Green Revolution, the post-independence agricultural policy which industrialised agriculture. The farmers' movement has critiqued the 'urban bias' of India's development policy and understood globalisation as neo-colonialism wherein agricultural policy gets dictated by the interests of global capital.⁶⁵ And yet, the interests of farmers' organisations like BKU are incongruent with the village-centric worldview they endorse.

On the one hand, ICCFM is criticised for its upper caste bias, middle and big farmer focus, and social conservatism by movements like NFFPFW; on the other hand, farmers' organisations are seen as

a necessary ally in the struggle against globalisation. Yudvir Singh however does uphold the logic of land reform, but within the purview of the already existing constitutional provisions, thereby restricting land rights to communities deemed to be farming communities to the exclusion of dalit and adivasi rights.

The history of community forms of ownership of resources is very diverse depending on the region and its distinctive pre-colonial pattern of rule, but depending also on its specific interaction with colonial rule. Colonialism codified community rights in many regions, especially forest and hill tracts. The process of codification not only whittled down rights but also produced uniformities and essentialised conceptions of community in otherwise fluid arrangements. Nevertheless, these rights and such constructions of Indian society have remained important for movements which question the development paradigm of the post-independence Indian state. We need to look at the discourse of community rights in the context of this history.⁶⁶

The significant insight which emerges from the work of such movements and the ideas that their experiences generate is that it is unproductive to think of the two issues – equity and engagement with indigenous culture / knowledge – as exclusive of each other. The relationship between the two can be contentious but does not mean that the only possible resolution lies in exercising a choice in favour of one or the other.

Industrialisation and the Issue of Land Acquisition

Following the Singur and Nandigram events in West Bengal, and the introduction of various SEZ proposals in the country, the issue of industrialisation, and linked to that the issue of land acquisition, have become a matter of debate. Here as well, movements opposing land acquisition or the SEZ policy find themselves having to confront a dichotomous choice between being pro- or anti-industrialisation, and to be labelled the latter is also to be termed anti-modernists. This debate over industrialisation had specific outcomes for radical politics in India because the CPM in particular, and the parliamentary left in general, which were important initiators of the WSF India process, were implicated. The CPM-led West Bengal government justified land acquisition in Singur on the grounds of industrialisation, and a protest

movement emerged against it. Many social movements including NBA intervened on behalf of this movement by farmers and sharecroppers who stood to lose land. The movement also included a wide range of political forces in West Bengal, including the Trinamool Congress. The chasm created by this between the left and the movements widened with the events in Nandigram.

The response of movements has been to question the content of the industrialisation that has been proposed by the state, including the government of West Bengal. In its annual conference in June 2008, one of the internal debates in NAPM was over its positions on industrialisation. Many opinions were expressed exploring whether industrialisation is exploitative in itself or if it is possible to think of an alternative industrialisation in terms of ownership, the commodities it produces, or its location. Suggestions were made in favour of agro-industry or of industry in order to combat migration, even as some delegates asserted that the promise of employment is not an adequate argument to justify any kind of industrialisation. Subsequently Medha Patkar and Amit Bhaduri published a piece outlining their perspectives on an alternative kind of industrialisation, based on a critique of the growth based development model. They argued for an industrialisation that accords primacy to the concept of full employment, aimed at needs-based production, working with the principles of decentralisation and conservation of the environment and local resources.⁶⁷

Mody clarifies that NTUI is not opposed to industrialisation either, but concerned about the what and the how of it :

We don't support manufacture of cars, but we support large truck factories. We would like to see an economy which needs the manufacture of trucks, rail engines, public transport buses, metro trains. We don't believe in a world where everybody must have a private car but a world where everybody must have an acceptable existence.

The position of PDFI and VVJVA on industrial development is similar :

Indigenous industry that generates employment and displaces none from their natural habitats should be developed. The industry should be run and managed by workers themselves. The pro-people model of development is possible only when

we start from below by depending on and developing [the] agriculture sector through distributing land to the landless peasants. This model should develop with an aim to drive towards community ownership and individual right to use land and industry.⁶⁸

NAPM is often cast as an organisation that celebrates the primacy of agriculture and rural life. NBA, a key constituent of NAPM, and its leader Medha Patkar, have been accused of an ‘eco-romantic’ outlook which addresses the ecological problem by taking an anti-growth position identified with traditional rural ways of life.⁶⁹ In fact, in its letter to the WSF National Consultation dated March 19 2003, referred to earlier, it had argued that the WSF event should assert the value of simplicity and reflect a sense of Indian reality, which is why it proposed that the meeting should be in a “rural or rural-like setting”. Such an intervention can easily be read as ‘eco-romanticism’. At the same time, it is interesting that Patkar and Bhaduri’s ideas on alternative industrialisation have been subject to ‘sympathetic critique’ on precisely the grounds of not taking into account the ecological framework and the limits to growth, and of sidelining “modes of production, consumption and living” other than industrialisation.

Both the standard critique and the sympathetic critique point to the pervasiveness of the tradition versus modernity dichotomy within which the debate is undertaken and understood. One can argue that Patkar and Bhaduri deliberately played down the ecological dimension to widen the debate on industrialisation. At the same time, Kothari’s response underscores the impossibility of addressing the issue of industrialisation and growth without taking the ecological dimension into account and the anthropocentrism of solely concentrating on equity.

VI. FAULT LINES WITHIN AND BETWEEN DIVERSE CONCEPTIONS

As we can see already, there are many differences in the ideas of these various movements, even as there is a consensus on some aspects. Given the multiplicity of the grounds on which alternatives are sought, fault lines would inevitably appear, and these make it important to look at the processes of alliance building and incorporation of concerns. In mm&P, many of the constituent members from adivasi groups walked

out of the front over its refusal to accept 50% reservation for adivasis in all forums within the front. The argument was that mining is an issue overwhelmingly impacting adivasi communities, whereas the counter argument was that different skills are required for different kinds of work undertaken by the organisation and reservation would not be able to address the issue.

Roma discusses her differences with the women's movement given its exclusive focus on inheritance rights and on violence which, according to her, indicate its middle-class nature. She says that when she started working with women in forests, she "did not find the answers in the women's movement for the questions these women were raising". It has taken time, she says, for the women's movement to recognise the Kaimur struggle as a women's struggle.

There is also a clash between the views of NFFPFW and the farmers' organisations. ICCFM does not adhere to the framework of collective ownership. NFFPFW is extremely critical of farmers' associations because they are caste-based and because they oppose land reform or distribution of common lands to the landless. And yet Yudvir Singh, as we saw, claims a Gandhian ideology for the farmer's movement and asserts the primacy of agriculture. At the same time, he is not in support of cooperative farming :

Farming is by interest and hence has to be private. In our country Maharashtra and Gujarat were seen as models for cooperatives but turned out failures. However, things like tube-wells or tractors could be in cooperatives. There is no need for each farmer to own a tractor.

The members of ICCFM are part of Via Campesina, an international peasant and small farmers' movement which aims to protect the cause of peasant and family-based agriculture, and supports organic farming, as well as sovereignty over food, seeds, and water.⁷¹ They have led campaigns in India against the inclusion of agriculture in the WTO, against GM technology especially around the campaign against BT cotton, and for remunerative prices for agriculture as the only solution for the agrarian crisis and farmer's suicides. In spite of this association, Yudvir Singh did not recall the details of Action 2007 even as he remembered attending the session on agriculture in Jantar Mantar on the invitation of people his organisation works with. On the other hand, Chowdhury credits Via's slogan, 'This land is ours!', and

NFFPFW's contact with Via in the WSF, as one of the inspirations for the Kaimur struggle.

NFFPFW faults Via's association with these farmers' groups for the non-expansion of Via in India. Even as the Marxist Leninist constituents of MR are aware of the contradictions between their call for comprehensive land reforms and the interests of such farmers' organisations (indeed their inclusion in MR drew criticism), they see the "rich peasants, as far as their contradiction with imperialism is concerned, [as] also an ally of this struggle".⁷²

One of the debates Yuva Bharat had within Action 2007 was on the issue of nationalism; they wanted the name of the front to be 'National Action' but encountered opposition. Rafique is clear that "just because a nationalist can become an imperialist, we don't give up on nationalism". Rather, in his opinion, one needs to think about a different kind of nationalism : "Capitalist nationalism has got globalised and settled. But the ordinary people's nationalism is becoming alive, since their *jal, jangal, jameen* [water, forest, land] is being snatched away". The argument of those who opposed the use of the terms of nation and nationalism is that they did so in order to incorporate the concerns of the self-determination movements in the country. They wished to include concerns of groups from Kashmir and the Northeast and did not want to alienate them by using the framework of Indian nationalism.

Self-Criticism and Assessments of WSF / MR

It is important to note that a movement's assessment of the WSF or MR is part of its assessment of the nature of radical politics and movements in India. Therefore, one comes across a great diversity in the assessments of the WSF / MR. There is a common understanding that the raising of the issues of land, displacement, rights over resources, democratic accountability, and the nature of industrialisation all require engagement with other likeminded bodies. Thus there is a desire for coordination. However, the outcomes of the coordination vary with issue and context.

In the assessment of Sreedhar :

As a process the WSF was interesting and our assessment is that 2004 was a good thing. We did a joint workshop with

ESCR-net and also events with INSAF, NFFPFW, and NAPM. In the 2004 meet mining was brought on to a larger agenda. The process got us related to other groups which we would otherwise not have orchestrated to meet. However, we are not finding cross-pollination, the process of learning from each other – the pace is slow. The WSF did not push the pace.

According to Chowdhury :

Social movements raise relevant questions. But they fail in challenging the state agitationaly. They don't manage to trouble the state. They don't have a language to talk to the state. This is because they share the same ideological framework of political parties and hence use the same language.

As he queries, unless there is such a challenge, “where are the alternatives going to come from ?”.

Roma's analysis is that the problem with many movements is that they don't see their struggle as one of political transformation. And this reflects in their failure to strengthen and build community leadership. Roma notes that many movements attended the WSF only at the leadership level. For NFFPFW, especially its Kaimur unit, the decision to go as a whole community had a major positive qualitative impact. They make a direct connection between participation in the WSF and the success of their land takeover campaigns.

For Rafique, the problem with social movements is that they are unable to provide a vision. Building on his understanding that questions of development and social change are essentially struggles over what counts as knowledge, he argues that movements lack the vision needed to deliberate on these larger questions : “We can ask questions, but only those who have vision can answer”. He considers the discussions which went towards creating the common platform of Action 2007 very important and good, but holds that they had a limited focus as they were primarily aimed at presenting a programme to the state :

We could make their voices [of people's movements, especially against SEZs] reach the ministries; this was the positive work we could do. But we couldn't organise a unified struggle of the people who were raising these questions, which could

challenge the country and society. Social change work is, on the one hand, a struggle against the state but, on the other hand, it is an attempt to establish our ideas / views in society among people. This is creative work. Action 2007 could not undertake this creative work.

According to Ajay, the main impact of MR was the discrediting of the term 'NGO' :

It was because of MR and the debates there that NGO has become a *gaali* (an abuse). Before 2004, people used to proudly proclaim that they worked in the NGO [sector], now they deny it. We experienced this shift. It exposed the politics of NGOs.

It must be noted here that the question of funding of NGOs and its possible impact on movement politics have been increasingly debated by all organisations.

Mody discusses the huge internal debate that NTUI witnessed over participation in the WSF because there was a minority opinion, including from one of their important affiliates, Unilever Union, in favour of going to MR. The organisation took the decision that they would participate actively in the WSF but those of the affiliates who wished to go to MR could do so. Mody recounts :

This really strengthened our notion of multiple political tendencies – where we can be in different political formations but remain within the same trade union. This tested our democratic claim. Neither MR nor the WSF are parties or organisations, they are platforms, and that test was very important for us – that we could actually hold different views, articulate them in different ways, and still remain one united trade union organisation. And in fact it is this that gave us the energy to force the process to federate.

NTUI held its founding conference in 2006, five years after being a loose platform to test the possibilities of forming a federation.

One particular trend that the WSF process did give a fillip to, as mentioned earlier, is the process of alliance building. A great number of the post-2004 joint fronts have been an outcome of the WSF process. Action 2007, World Dignity Forum, the Ranchi meeting which resulted in the formation of VVJVA, the formation of PDFI, were

all related to the process. This process of forming joint fronts has continued, the recent example being the formation of the Himalaya Niti Abhiyan as a joint front of various groups working against destructive development policies and displacement in Himachal Pradesh. As Mody notes, “we are not anywhere near resolving the issues; but the fact that we can sit in one room, year after year, and debate these issues is itself a very, very important point”. These processes of alliance building, however, are different from the WSF process itself in which interest has dwindled.

The energies generated by the WSF or MR are thus very diverse; different movements have various enthusiastic or routine narratives of it. For some, it was one more platform to make one’s views known; for some others, it was a way to meet and network with international or other national groups. There are also those for whom it was an important opportunity to travel. The sheer fact that women from Kaimur could travel to Mumbai or Delhi and meet different people not only enhanced their confidence level, but also led them to conclude that poverty was a common predicament everywhere. The positive outcomes of such events are construed by some in terms of their ability to disseminate new ideas and issues, and for some like mm&P in terms of their ability to hold big events. The tentativeness with which the question of the success or failure of the WSF was approached is particularly noteworthy, and precludes either dismissal or over-estimation of its significance.

Engaging the State : What About Indigeneity ?

The use of the language of culture, indigenous culture, or community invites the charge of glorifying tradition and indigeneity. On the other hand, the use of the language of rights or engagement with the state tempts classification as liberalism or evidence of cooption into the mainstream framework.

Thus it is interesting that NFFPFW makes use of the rights framework even as it provides reasoning for this use. The Dehradun Declaration issued by NFFPFW in June 2009 confronts this issue :

Out of necessity, if you want to talk the language of rights, we are ready for it. It’s your need to recognise our rights over the forests and correct the historical injustices and exploitation. However, if by granting pattas (land titles) over a portion of

forest you conspire to control, commodify, and sell the rest of the forests, then you are wrong. We understand your vested intentions and are determined to save the forests from your corrupt desires of exploitation, developmentalism, ill-sighted conservation, and technological fixes.⁷³

This declaration is simultaneously addressed to the state and to the elites, that is to all those who speak in the mainstream language.

Most remarkable is the framework that Chowdhury draws up for thinking in terms of alternatives and this understanding is also reflected in a number of joint struggles launched under the banner of Action 2007 :

Alternatives need to be built on three bases – Constitution, human rights, and indigenous social practices. They need to address three concerns – livelihood, social security, cultural and emotional sovereignty.

Neither the three bases nor the three concerns are classified in an order of priority. A person adhering to the framework of traditional practices is not normally expected to discuss the Constitution. And yet not only for NFFPFW, but also for movements like NBA, the Constitution has been an important frame of reference.

Even on the question of self-reliance, as pointed out earlier, movements do not focus exclusively either on the national or on the local level. Indeed, declarations by movements demand exercise of self-reliance by the country at a national level in international institutions as well as decisions at a national level regarding development priorities without submitting to the pressure from powerful players in world economy. Action 2007 for instance demanded that India “derail and quit WTO ... disassociate with World Bank, ADB, IMF, JBIC, DFID and other IFIs”. Removal of agriculture from the WTO has also been a primary demand of farmers’ organisations in the country including ICCFM.

At the same time, the central government is the target of campaigns from movements for laws and policies which will enable the translation of the principle of self-reliance at the local level. Thus slogans like ‘*Hamare Gaon Mein Hamara Raaj*’ (Our Rule in Our Village) or ‘*Jal, Jangal, Jameen Hamara Hai*’ (Water, Forests, Land are Ours)

are asserted alongside demands to implement specific constitutional provisions like Article 243 of the Indian Constitution, Forest Rights Act 2006, PESA 1996, or the 73rd and 74th Amendments regarding local self governance, as well as demands for new laws and provisions. Additionally, movements hold up their specific local level experiments as examples of local self-reliance underscoring the importance of community governance. NBA's experiments with micro-hydel projects as well as schooling through jeevanshalas (schools of life) are well known. The Kaimur struggle is another experiment which has attempted local level self-reliance while engaging with the state. Likewise, VVJVA cites the example of Azadi Bachao Andolan in Karanpura, Jharkhand, where a small thermal power plant has been set up by the movement which supplies electricity to the village through coal.⁷⁴

As my field notes from the NAPM conference record, the speeches by the delegates often sounded like a long list of demands from the state. However, the issue-based groups saw more discussion both on developing a perspective and devising a strategy of struggle. The farmers' movement is indeed totally directed at the state. Almost every response of Yudvir Singh to issues concerning farmers or agriculture revolved around the functions of the government. However, the language of the Ranchi Declaration of the anti-displacement conference initiated by PDFI is self-consciously more radical in its tone, and indeed the conference asserted this difference from Action 2007 which was simultaneously underway. Even then, this declaration also demands specific policies from the state both in terms of new laws as well as of scrapping of policies like National Agricultural Policy, or withdrawal of the principle of 'eminent domain' and withdrawal from international agreements and MOUs with MNCs.⁷⁵ NFFPFW thus engages with the state even as its activities are in defiance of state laws. The Forest Rights Act, NFFPFW stresses, is a tool in their struggle; neither is it a perfect piece of legislation nor is the law the sole focus of the movement.

Social movements' engagement with the state is unavoidable, given the importance of the state in the present order of society and the powers it has come to be vested with. A great deal of energy of movements is spent in countering the arguments used by the state and advocates of mainstream development. For instance, they question the cost-benefit analysis of a project, or question the data, including scientific data, which forms the basis of a project. These

are necessary aspects of the activities of movements; however, the question does emerge whether in the process the arguments of movements are conducted solely on the terrain defined by the mainstream paradigm.⁷⁶ Further, since movements mount different kinds of critiques of the development paradigm, the question also arises whether these different critiques can co-exist. Some critiques question the arguments offered by the state whereas others posit different principles on which the agenda must be evaluated. For instance, can questioning the cost-benefit analysis of a project co-exist and cohere with the argument that the project is undemocratic as it does not respect people's primary right over resources ?

While these questions require a separate engagement, what does emerge from this discussion is that the **politics** of the social movement or the alliance (including the politics of forming an alliance) is as significant as the political setting. The language in which the movement speaks to the state is one part of the vocabulary which movements develop in the course of their work. The same applies to the language of indigeneity used by movements.

Baviskar argues that social movements often adopt the strategy of making arguments of cultural essentialism and produce simplified oppositional categories, for instance state versus community, but these must be read as part of the politics of the movement.⁷⁷ In the assessment of this paper, the language of indigeneity is one of the languages used by movements. The argument is not that it is not a 'true' or 'actual' language or that it is merely a strategic one but, rather, that it must be seen alongside other arguments. Privileging this language and argument around culture is to not read movements in their entirety.

Thus we can see that the key concepts around which the question of alternative development is discussed are self-reliance, rights to resources, control over productive process, production for needs, and community governance and decentralisation in all sectors including industry. In this shared terrain there are debates and divergences. However, for each of these issues the academic framework of classification and analysis used consists of versions of the tradition versus modernity dichotomy, whether it is agriculture versus industrialisation, community governance versus equity, or national self-reliance versus local governance. However, it is clear

that these dichotomies into which the debate over alternatives is cast are unable to capture the divergences and nuances over issues, personalities, and strategies.

Social movements have to be evaluated on the kinds of alternatives they articulate and on their ability to lead a debate over alternative conceptions. Such an evaluation cannot be made within this reductive framework. And yet, it is true that there is greater focus on the part of movements on articulating principles on which alternatives must be based than on providing examples of practice. If we refer back to Santos's distinction between positivity and negativity in articulating a critical utopia, the perspectives of movements do veer towards negativity. Their assertions of alternative possibilities are attempts to break the stranglehold of this theoretical framework and seek an 'open space' of debate and discussion. Even so, their understanding cannot be seen only in terms of negativity so defined, as they do articulate principles on which alternatives should be based, experiment with alternatives, and draw on examples which could serve as possible models.

The Question of the Left

The stranglehold of this theoretical framework of tradition versus modernity is vividly demonstrated when one examines the intervention of the parliamentary left in the debate over land acquisition and industrialisation. The WSF process in India is usually assessed as one which not only brought various movements together but most importantly, effected a rapprochement between social movements and the left. Compare, for instance, Prakash Karat's important article in 1984 to the position taken by the left in the WSF. In the former Karat had made no distinction between social movements and voluntary groups (or NGOs, as they are better known now) and categorised them as groups promoted by international agencies as part of an imperialist strategy to depoliticise the development agenda and weaken the left.⁷⁸ In the WSF, Karat spoke about the "convergence of interests and activities within the framework of a struggle against imperialist globalisation" and the "complementary and sequential role" that movements and left political parties can play in social transformation.⁷⁹

In the post-Nandigram context, there has been an unravelling

of this rapprochement. The events in Singur and Nandigram have led to an acrimonious debate between the CPM and social movements, as the latter have lent support to the protestors in Singur and Nandigram. This unravelling has important implications for the future of the WSF in India as well as for further attempts at any kind of united resistance or action including the mainstream left, in particular the CPM. It has prompted the positing of a left versus social movements framework, within which subsequent enquiries into the WSF process have predominantly been made.⁸⁰

However the debate over alternative development cannot be exclusively understood within such a framework. To start with, both 'the left' and 'social movements' are not monolithic categories, as the previous sections demonstrate. Further, much of the 'left' in India has opposed both the action as well as the reasoning of the West Bengal government. Even among the parliamentary left front composed of the CPM, CPI, Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), and Forward Bloc, the non-CPM partners have voiced misgivings about the approach of the CPM towards land acquisition in particular and the turn towards neoliberalism in general. Abani Roy, leader of the RSP, one of the constituents of the Left Front government in West Bengal, was one of the participants in the meeting organised by NAPM in the ISF over the SEZ policy. The anti-POSCO struggle in Orissa is led by the CPI. Further complicating the issue is the fact that the CPM itself is one of the members of the anti-SEZ front opposing the Reliance SEZ project in Raigad district of Maharashtra. This contradictory approach of the CPM raises important questions about the ability of progressive groups to implement their agendas when in power. It requires analysis about the nature of political power and the institutional system of representative politics in India. Rafique, for instance, while being extremely critical of the CPM, rules out the possibility that the "CPM will be barred or that we will not talk to them" because of events in Nandigram.

Supporters of the CPM have indeed read the current divergence between the CPM and social movements as one centrally over the question of development. They have cast the debate as one between those who are for development and those who are anti-development, and social movements are further seen as advocates of traditional pre-modern rural culture. Prabir Purkayastha has argued that for social movements "the 'enemy' is science, technology and development, divorced from the class issue of who owns the means of production,

which in traditional modes of production amounts to who owns the land. For them, land reform is therefore not on the agenda; neither is industrialization".⁸¹ He argues that movements see no role for the state in development, lack an understanding on imperialism as they appeal to international agencies against the Indian state, and demand a moratorium on development because they are unable to understand the difference between 'development' and 'capitalist development'. In his understanding development is growth and increase in productivity without which the standard of living of the poor cannot be improved. Hence those who oppose growth or posit a utopia of scarcity cannot understand the need to increase productivity of food and enhance consumption of energy, neither of which can be accomplished by traditional communities or without the use of modern technology.

As the previous sections show, the ideas of movements do not lend themselves to such conclusions, neither on the nature of the state nor on the issue of technology. Prabhat Patnaik describes the opponents of the CPM as "messianic moralists" who seek to "detach 'development' from politics".⁸² Patnaik characterises the opponents of the CPM as "anti-organized Left, especially anti-Communist (and in particular anti-CPI(M)), belonging as they do to the erstwhile 'socialist' groups, to NGOs, to the ranks of Naxalite sympathizers, to the community of 'Free Thinkers', and to various shades of 'populism'". Such a characterisation clubs together in one stroke a great diversity of movements, whereas this paper's sample itself showed ample evidence of important differences among them. Secondly, it constructs the opposition between the left and the others as a wide and essential one.

Thus the CPM constructs the debate over development as one between 'tradition' and 'modernity'. However, it is intriguing that both Purkayastha and Patnaik have taken nuanced positions on the question of development. Patnaik's earlier intervention in the Nandigram issue rejects the lens of the industrialisation versus peasantry framework and argues that the neoliberal and corporate nature of the industrialisation pursued deserves attention.⁸³ We referred to Purkayastha earlier as the person who drafted the theme note on alternatives for the ASF containing a discussion on the impacts of technology and the definition of needs in a consumerist neoliberal framework. Such divergences in the perspectives of the intellectuals associated with the CPM draw our attention to possible

internal debates as well as to the predominance of the traditional versus modernity dichotomy which can be easily resorted to as a counter to criticism.

Despite being constantly invoked, the framework of tradition versus modernity is incapable of capturing the dynamics of the debate over development and possible alternative conceptions. It eludes, as we have seen, such a simplistic categorisation. While the unravelling of the WSF alliance between the mainstream left and social movements has been over the question of development, it is more a commentary on the nature of resistance to mainstream models in the era of globalisation. Though the WSF process has dissipated in India as a consequence of this unravelling, the key points of divergence were present throughout the duration of what can be called the WSF period. Furthermore, as pointed out earlier, such contradictions interrogate the possibilities of social transformation within the logic of representational politics.

Most importantly, this framework does not apply to the debate over alternative development in India. The assessment of this paper is that when it comes to debates on alternative development, the mainstream left cannot be seen as a major participant. On the questions of ecology, forest rights, or industrialisation, the positions of the CPM have been that of mainstream modernisation, albeit what they call 'non-capitalist'. This holds despite the fact that it has pushed for the Forest Rights Act or for NREGA within the UPA regime. According to Ashok Chowdhury, the left pushed the forest bill because it realised that it was not "present in these sections and they need to go to these sections ... they thought it would be politically gainful". In actual fact, the record of the left front governments on the Act has been abysmally poor. Further, the process of government formation after the 2004 elections included the constitution of a National Advisory Council (NAC), which included people like Aruna Roy and therefore it was able to push for RTI and NREGA. However, the NAC did not last very long.⁸⁴

Sreedhar also points out that while the left parties are different from other political parties and it is possible to talk to them, they do not have a good record on human rights and environmental issues. Moreover, they do not have an overall position on mining or use of resources, and instead want to take it 'case by case'. Even

Mody, who believes that the left activists “internalised the WSF at more levels than people can even imagine” and echoes concerns that social movements romanticise traditional society, opposes the land acquisition and industrialisation policy of the CPM as not addressing the genuine development concerns of society. The role of the CPM in promoting neoliberalism has been subject to much critique from sympathisers as well. As a CPM sympathiser asks :

Why cannot the CPI(M) leadership in West Bengal government show an alternative path towards industrialisation for the rest of the country different from the neoliberal model, even within the capitalist framework ? Why cannot the LF government come out with an agrarian strategy to ensure all-round development of the peasantry along with its efforts towards industrialisation ? In the present context, such an alternative policy direction by the LF government would provide tremendous scope for the people’s movements to advance.⁸⁵

This ‘sympathetic’ query demonstrates the inability of the parliamentary left to engage with possible ideas and policies for alternative development even as it denounces movements for not outlining viable alternatives. Further, on the issue which has caused the maximum debate – land acquisition – the position of the left has remained steadfastly narrow. It emphasises the need for legislation enabling land acquisition for industry and has restricted all discussion on displacement to the issue of what constitutes ‘just compensation’.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to examine the nature of the debate over alternative development in contemporary India. It argued that the experience of globalisation provided a moment where different social and political actors were able to come to a consensus on what constitutes a dominant development paradigm and on the need to resist it. Since different actors brought with them specific points of critique of globalisation and linked them to the specific experiences of the post-independence modernisation model, consensus building has been a complex process, especially as the positions of these actors include points of conflict with one another.

The WSF India process showcases these tendencies within the space of radical politics in India and highlights the points of consensus and the continuing areas of debate. The paper zooms in on one aspect of the WSF that can also be seen as the main trend of the post-1991 arena of radical politics, namely the formation of joint fronts and alliances. The WSF process is itself both an outcome of and a contributor to this trend. It is with reference to this trend that the paper sought to examine the debate over alternative development.

The paper has highlighted the key ideas, concepts, and experiences articulated by movements when they think in terms of alternatives to mainstream models of development. This articulation is through raising certain issues and as a response to institutions especially of the state but also of international agencies. We find this articulation of ideas and responses by and large framed within the prevailing theoretical constructs of a simplistic and dichotomous nature. The paper argues that these frameworks have to be rethought as they tend to curtail rather than enhance understanding.

This study identifies three such theoretical frames. In the specific context of the Indian debate on development, the framework of social movements versus the left used to understand the radical space in Indian polity is inadequate. This applies to the WSF process as well. While this framework illuminates specific aspects of the WSF process in India, it does not enable understanding of the vital aspects of the debate over development.

Further, the left versus social movements framework is closely related to various versions of the tradition versus modernity dichotomy applied to the different actors' perspectives on development. This specific construction of the debate on development results in unimaginative and simplistic dichotomies and recasts the actors into extremities. Such extreme characterisations colour all assessment of their activities even by otherwise nuanced scholars. What these ideas primarily lack is an understanding of 'politics'. Hence the process of engagement with the state, or seeking or opposing laws, gets cast as co-option or a sell-out, while many ideas for change get termed as utopian or romantic.

The last framework which needs revisiting is the division between alternative development and post-development. In this respect, I would like to return to Pieterse's distinction between alternative

development and post-development where alternative development is seen as reform within mainstream conceptions and post-development as one where alternative frames are sought and 'development' is rejected. He also cautions that post-developmentalists do not have any positive programme and romanticise pre-modern and traditional society. While the dangers of valorising unequal and hierarchical pasts are present throughout the debate, this investigation into the debate over alternative development in contemporary India advises caution in adopting Pieterse's classification. A particular reading of post-development gets privileged when rejection of development is equated with valorisation of traditional lifestyles.

If we adopt Santos's understanding of the negativity of critical utopia, it is akin to post-development's critique of the discourse of development even as it doesn't lend itself to celebration of tradition. Moreover, the WSF process is an instance of alliance building and debates within the radical space, and has shown evidence of incorporation of different concerns within common platforms. Declarations and manifestos of movements tend to address a wide range of concerns – of farmers, women, dalits, adivasis, regional and self-determination movements, and urban poor, even if the constituents have a narrower focus. Also they question growth-centrism even while pointing out the lack of fulfilment of certain needs and the need for investment in certain sectors. They point to neglect of traditional knowledge even as they critique the unequal terms of technology transfer between the developed and developing worlds. While the articulation of diverse concerns may be more rhetorical or symbolic, it is nevertheless significant as it foregrounds attempts at harmonising different points of critique and different suggestions for alternatives.

Also, drawing boundary lines between alternative development and post-development, even as a heuristic device, proves difficult and could lead us to dismiss any attempt at engagement with questions of rights or law or the state as a 'compromise' with the mainstream. At the same time, the ability of the mainstream to absorb and domesticate critique is very real, especially as radical struggles tend to be constantly involved in countering the logic of the state or the dominant paradigm. The struggles could thus end up making most of their arguments within that frame, thereby losing sight of the alternative frames they call for. Indeed, we have pointed out that there seems to be a shared vocabulary of development used by all players,

whether a small movement, or a national level front, or NGOs like Oxfam or DFID, or agencies like the World Bank. A cursory look at the programme schedule of the WSF events also makes this apparent. To what extent can this language become a 'tool' for movements and to what extent it hampers an effective dialogue over alternatives is a question with no easy answers.

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List of Abbreviations

NFFPFW	National Forum of Forest Peoples and Forest Workers
mm&P	Mines, Minerals and People
NTUI	New Trade Union Initiative
ICCFM	Indian Co-ordination Committee of Farmers Movements
NAPM	National Alliance of People's Movements
PDFI	People's Democratic Front of India
VVJVA	Vistapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan
BKU	Bharatiya Kisan Union
KRRS	Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha
BJA	Bharat Jan Andolan
KKMMKSS	Kaimur Kshetra Mahila Majdoor Kisan Sangharsh Samiti
CPM / CPI(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
RDF	Revolutionary Democratic Front
CPI	Communist Party of India
RSP	Revolutionary Socialist Party
NBA	Narmada Bachao Andolan

ENDNOTES

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² Maaji is a leader of the adivasi struggle against bauxite mining in Kashipur. A short film called Gaon Chodab Nahi by K P Sasi features this song. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8M5aeMpzOLU>

³ 'WSF India Policy Statement', in Sen et al 2004, p 269.

⁴ Santos 2004, p 236.

⁵ In this paper I use the term globalisation to mean a model of development only, and hence refer to terms like neoliberal globalisation or capitalist globalisation.

⁶ See Development Dialogue, No 47, June 2006.

⁷ See Truman's Point Four Program speech in this web link <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/ht33/speeches/truman.htm>.

⁸ See Escobar 1995, Rist 1997, Sachs 1992, Ferguson 1990, and Mitchell 2002.

⁹ Such is the stated definition. Both resistance movements and academic engagement have contested the 'free' nature of each of these components, particularly the 'free' movement of people and goods, given the nature of immigration laws instituted by countries of the north and the provisions of various trade agreements.

¹⁰ Saad-Filho and Johnston 2005, p 3.

¹¹ Sklair 2007.

¹² Pieterse 2001, p 77.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Escobar 2004, p 349.

¹⁵ For a lively account of these protests see Klein 2002.

¹⁶ ATTAC was leading a campaign to impose a tax on stock market transactions, called the Tobin tax, to be used to fund welfare activities in the Third World.

¹⁷ Porto Alegre is the Brazilian city which was successfully experimenting with decentralised planning and participatory budgeting, a process initiated by the Workers Party (PT) in Brazil. Brazil's President Lula belongs to the PT, most movements have supported it, and the PT has been deeply involved with the WSF since its inception.

¹⁸ Iqtidar 2004.

¹⁹ www.forumsocialmundail.org.

²⁰ Wallerstein 2004.

²¹ Santos 2004, pp 236-237.

²² Omvedt 1993, Sheth 2004, Kothari 1984, and Tandon and Mohanty 2003. See Chandhoke 2003 for a critique of the concept of civil society.

²³ See Shah 2004. For a recent survey see Nigam 2008.

²⁴ Sheth 2004, pp 45-51.

²⁵ Though I was aware of the Asian Social Forum event, I knew little about it more than its being a meeting place for various movements from Asia, and I barely knew about the WSF.

²⁶ In Singur the CPM-led West Bengal government acquired agricultural land from landowners and sharecroppers under the colonial land acquisition law in order to hand it over to the TATA conglomerate for its small car (Nano) plant, and later in Nandigram the state police fired on people protesting the proposal to build an SEZ. These events have been read as putting an end to the rapprochement between the mainstream left parties, led by CPM, and social movements. The left was an important constituent of the WSF India process.

²⁷ www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/noticias-01.php?cd_news=2656&cd_language=2.

²⁸ This selection of organisations is by no means an exhaustive one; rather it is a selection suitable to the focus of this paper and a research of this scale.

²⁹ Methodological Note : Apart from interviews and discussions with representatives of these organisations, and discussions with scholars, the paper draws from the documents of these organisations, news reports, charters of demands, pamphlets, and reports prepared by not just these but other organisations and movements in various contexts. The study on NAPM is based not on interviews but rather my observations of and discussions in the NAPM conference in June 2008. Personal observation and field notes are also used for references to the Ranchi meeting of March 2007. Specific interviews for this paper were conducted in the period of January to April 2009. Interviews were conducted in both English and Hindi; in case of the latter the translations are mine. All quotations of individuals, unless otherwise referenced, are based on interviews conducted by me. The paper also uses as an archive documentation regarding the WSF process and the exchanges which took place between various organisations and individuals in the run up to the WSF events. All web links referenced in this paper were checked as active last on September 30 2009.

³⁰ Letter written on behalf of IOC, January 31 2002.

³¹ Whitaker and Haddad are representatives of Brazilian organisations that have been associated with the WSF process from the time of its inception.

³² Report of the December 2001 Meeting.

³³ Report of the Asian Social Movements Meeting Day 3 : August 12 2002, held in Bangkok.

³⁴ WSF India Organising Committee, 'The Global South Joins Hands', in Sen et al 2004, p 263.

³⁵ 'WSF India Policy Statement – Charter of Principles', in Sen et al 2004, p 270. The

WSF India Working Committee approved the Statement on May 25 2002 in New Delhi.

³⁶ Ibid, p 271.

³⁷ 'ASF Program Note'.

³⁸ 'Invitation to ASF'.

³⁹ 'WSF India Policy Statement', in Sen et al 2004, p 269.

⁴⁰ 'Invitation to ASF'.

⁴¹ ASF Program Note and emails of draft versions.

⁴² This note was written by Smitu Kothari.

⁴³ ASF Program Note and emails of draft versions.

⁴⁴ Sen 2002.

⁴⁵ Dunu Roy, January 15 2002.

⁴⁶ ASF, Reporters' Report, January 2-7 2003, Hyderabad. Ananth identifies himself as someone who began in the mainstream left movements and notes that for people like him, this transformed scenario was significant.

⁴⁷ CR4WSF is an association of different child rights organisations in India. It was formed in order to put child issues on the agenda of the WSF.

⁴⁸ NFFPFW, pamphlet titled 'National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers : Protect Livelihoods – Protect Resources'.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ <http://napm-india.org/aboutus>. The other two pillars are the goals of secularism and caste annihilation, with opposition to fundamentalism and discrimination of all kinds and support to an alternative paradigm of development, based on equity, justice, and sustainability with appropriate technologies.

⁵¹ <http://napm-india.org/aboutus>.

⁵² <http://www.mmpindia.org/indexmm.htm>.

⁵³ NTUI, pamphlet called 'For a New Initiative'.

⁵⁴ Letter from NAPM to the WSF National Consultation, 2003.

⁵⁵ NAPM 2003.

⁵⁶ This has been reported in a number of accounts of the WSF in India and the Mumbai event in particular. For instance, see Guttal 2005.

⁵⁷ MR Organisers 2003, p 9.

⁵⁸ RDF Manifesto.

⁵⁹ RDF 2007, pp 112-114.

⁶⁰ The use of vikas, meaning development, in the name of this front itself is meant to counter the familiar charge that those protesting displacement are anti-developmentalists. This indicates the reductive frames in which these issues are

popularly cast, as discussed in the previous section.

⁶¹ Behar 2002.

⁶² Action 2007, Call of Action 2007.

⁶³ mm&P National Seminar on Women and Mining in India, 24-4-03 and 26-4-03, A Report.

⁶⁴ Sarkar 1995.

⁶⁵ See Omvedt 2005.

⁶⁶ See Upadhya 2009.

⁶⁷ Patkar and Bhaduri 2009.

⁶⁸ Saibaba 2008.

⁶⁹ See, for instance, Gail Omvedt, 'Dams and Bombs'. Following an open letter by Omvedt to Arundhati Roy, a debate ensued on the question of alternatives, the role of traditional knowledge, and the exploitation of traditional communities. See <http://www.narmada.org/debates/gail/index.html> for some of these exchanges.

⁷⁰ Kothari 2009, pp 76-77.

⁷¹ Desmarais 2007.

⁷² RDF, 'Constitution of Revolutionary Democratic Front'.

⁷³ 'Dehradun Declaration'. NFFPFW 2009.

⁷⁴ Saibaba 2008.

⁷⁵ Ranchi Declaration, Adopted by the Conference against Displacement at Ranchi on March 22-23 2007.

⁷⁶ Thanks to Jai Sen for drawing my attention to this point.

⁷⁷ Baviskar 2007.

⁷⁸ Karat 1984. Here he calls Rajni Kothari and D L Sheth the ideologues of this depoliticising trend.

⁷⁹ Speech made by Prakash Karat on January 18 2004 at the WSF panel on Political Parties and Social Movements. http://www.cpim.org/wsf/01182003_prakash_wsf.htm

⁸⁰ See Michael Gillan 2008. Articles by Prabir Purkayastha and Prabhat Patnaik discussed below also use this framework.

⁸¹ Purkayastha 2008.

⁸² Patnaik 2007.

⁸³ Patnaik 2007, pp 1894-1895.

⁸⁴ Thanks to Himanshu Upadhya for drawing my attention to this point.

⁸⁵ A CPI(M) Supporter 2007, p 1597.

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