Introduction

Development is the key site of global neoliberal governance, serving as the reason for neoliberal interventions. The existence of neoliberalism, therefore, is dependent on the concept of development. The traditional markers of economic growth and efficiency within the framework of development are utilized to push the agendas of neoliberalization of the globe through structural adjustment programs (SAPs). The underlying logic of development-based neoliberal adjustments is founded on the premise that privatization and trade liberalization would lead to economic development by opening up the markets. It is assumed that the global establishment of “free” markets would enable the rational logic of effectiveness to take hold, leading to economic growth and to the trickling down of resources.

Furthermore, the development logic of neoliberalism operates on the notion that the removal of barriers and regulations on entrepreneurial capacity would spark economic growth, thus improving the fundamental condition of the nation state. As depicted in the introduction to this book, inherent in the notion
of neoliberalism as development is the contradiction in the conceptualizations of development, which are deployed to serve the interests of transnational capital and further impoverish the global South in imperial relationships of dependence. It is in this backdrop that we engage with three specific culture-centered sites of resistance: the Save Niyamgiri movement, the Cochabamba water wars, and the Narmada Bachao Andolan. Each of these sites of resistance present us with opportunities for listening to voices of resistance that challenge the top-down narratives of development built into the industrialization, privatization, and liberalization principles of neoliberal reforms.

**Save Niyamgiri Movement**

The Save Niyamgiri movement challenges the key top-down lessons offered by development experts under the modernization framework that puts forth industrialization, urbanization, and land redevelopment as solutions to underdevelopment and poverty. Historically, in the context of the tribal regions of India and specifically in the Orissa state, a geographic region that is rich in natural resources and minerals, the government has contracted out vast parts of tribal land to mining companies, resulting in the large-scale displacement of tribal populations. In almost all of these development projects, the politics of development has been carried out through the marginalization of tribal communities from discursive spaces, without tribal participation in decisions of resource management and utilization. The large-scale usurping of tribal land to carry out industrialization and mining projects under the framework of development has had a long history in post-independence India. Tribal communities have been systematically erased from their traditional forms of livelihood and traditional spaces of living as a result of these development projects.

Furthermore, the development of mining projects has been constituted amidst corrupt practices, with large discrepancies between the promises made to tribal community members and the actual opportunities and compensations offered to tribal community members once the projects have been built. The promises of employment to tribal community members that have often been offered as strategic tools to carry out the displacement
projects have not been met, and even in instances where they have been met, have resulted in the employment of tribal community members as unskilled labor in the mines. It is in this backdrop of historic exploitation of tribal communities in Orissa (also referred to as the adivasis) that the Save Niyamgiri movement is situated. In 1997, the Orissa authorities had signed a contract with Sterlite India for the Niyamgiri mining project. In 2003, the Kalahandi District Administration sent out notices to people in the region, notifying them that their land was to be acquired for the purposes of building the refinery (Amnesty International, 2010). The local people were not consulted and this was in direct violation of Schedule V of the Indian constitution that protects tribal land. Under Schedule V, local authorities are required to consult community members through Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats before acquiring land in Schedule V areas. The Kalahandi District Collector’s office sent out land acquisition notices to landowners in June 2002, noting that the District Administration was going to compulsorily acquire land for the refinery project; people that lost their land would be adequately compensated, and people that lost both their home and their land would be compensated as well as resettled. These letters were not sent to landless laborers whose livelihoods were going to be affected by the acquisition. People who had complaints were asked to register their complaints by June 22, 2002, and the public meetings were held on June 26, 2002. Within two weeks, the land acquisition had started. In September 2004, additional land was acquired by the District Administration and then transferred to the refinery.

In 2006, Sterlite, a subsidiary of the UK-based mining company Vedanta Aluminium built a refinery in Lanjigarh at the bottom of the Niyamgiri Hills of Orissa in India. Since the establishment of the refinery, there have been widespread reports of human rights violations as well as environmental pollution. In 2007, Vedanta Aluminium applied for expansion of the refinery. The refinery had been built on land that was earlier used by the adivasi communities in the area for farming, and it was compulsorily acquired from tribal communities in 2002 and 2004, displacing 118 families and forcing approximately 1,200 families to sell their farmlands to the refinery.
Since 2003, in the face of the top-down displacement projects that were carried out by the government in coordination with the mining company, the local tribal communities started organizing protests and participating in public demonstrations. Through these protests and public demonstrations, they presented the voices of resistance, drawing attention to the ways in which tribal community members were fundamentally absent from the policy platforms and discursive spaces that discussed the mining projects and the establishment of the mines. At the center of the protests was the articulation of the violations of local, national, and international laws that mandate tribal consultations, participation, and informed consent in projects that impact tribal communities. India’s Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA) legislation enacted in 1996 mandates that prior recommendations through Gram Sabhas or Panchayats involving tribal community members at the appropriate level shall be conducted before granting mining leases in scheduled areas (Amnesty International, 2010). Between 2002 and 2009, throughout the entire period where decisions were made that in essence uprooted tribal communities from their spaces of livelihood, the tribal community members were not consulted. Consultation meetings and public hearings that were held regarding the mining project and the distillery were held in spaces that were difficult to reach. Publicity of the meetings and consultations was circulated in newspapers that were published in Oriya and English, and available in the cities. No efforts were made on behalf of the state government or the mining company officials to engage the local tribal community members in the discussions, and most of the tribal community members from the affected areas had not even heard of the consultations and public meetings.

In a report on the processes utilized in securing the land and setting up the mining and distillery projects, Amnesty International (2010) notes that officials of the District Administration and company representatives were present at the consultations, but no one from the Dongria Kondh communities that were affected by the mine site attended. The consent of the Dongria Kondh community members was not sought out; also, they were not involved in processes of decision making regarding the acquisition of the land and the setting up of the mining and the distillery projects.
Noting this absence of villagers from discursive spaces of decision making, N. S., a Dongria Kondh man, shared with the Amnesty researchers, “Please write to Vedanta Resources and ask them to go talk to the Dongria Kondh.” Along similar lines, another Dongria Kondh participant, S. M., noted, “Our message to the company and Sarkar [the government] is simple. We will sit together, us Dongria people, and decide directly” (Amnesty International, 2010, p. 35).

In meetings with community members in the village council meetings for land acquisition, villagers were misinformed that they would each receive 100,000 Indian rupees for each acre of land in addition to jobs for every family member who sold land provided by the company. The dream sown among the indigenous community members was that the area would get supplies of electricity and water, and would soon turn into a Mumbai or Dubai. According to the official records, the District Administration assured the villagers that the proposed refinery would be directly beneficial to the local village as well as to the entire country; they suggested it would also generate job opportunities for the unemployed men and women. This articulation of information manipulation is evident in the resistive voices in the Amnesty International (2010) report:

At no stage, they said, were they told that the refinery processes involved risks of substantial pollution. “We were not told that they will make alumina powder and send it elsewhere,” said S. and K., two women, who attended two of the village council meetings; “We were later shocked to discover so many trucks bringing the bauxite and taking the powder away. We felt deceived, as we were not told that everything would be done here. The officials did not share in the gram sabha meeting or elsewhere that there would be so much dust, chimney smoke, noise, that our river would become dirty. We had never seen a refinery so had no experience or information on what life could be like staying so close to it.” B. N., a man from Kenduguda, whose land was acquired to support the construction of the refinery’s ash pond (see Chapter 5, Photo 10) and who lives close to the pond, said, “we were never told anything about an ash pond or what living next to it would be like.” A. M., a man from Rengopalli, similarly explained that they were never given any information about the two red
mud ponds (see Chapter 5, Photos 11-13), one of which is now being built right next to his village, and they had not been given any information on what the red mud was made of and if it posed any risks to them. He also said that once this red mud pond was constructed it “will close access to the public road and make it difficult for our children to go to school.” “The other road we can use is where they want to build the pillars for conveyor belt [linking the mine and refinery]. I am worried about things falling from the belt on to us.” Other residents of Rengopalli pointed out that their village would soon be stuck between the red mud pond and the proposed conveyor belt from the proposed bauxite mine site at Niyamgiri to Lanjigarh, but had been given no choice in the matter or alternatives. (p. 41)

Central to the voices of resistance was the articulation of the misinformation or absence of information in the community before the acquisition of the land and the building of the refinery. Pointing to their lack of access to structural resources of information, community members noted the manipulative strategies utilized by the administration to deceive them. They also noted within this context the environmental pollution caused by the refinery and the consequences of the environmental pollution for the families living in the area. Furthermore, the communities living on top of the Niyamgiri Hills had no representation in the village council meetings, and this became a key point of contention in the resistance. The use of oppressive top-down forces to displace the Dongria Kondh from their spaces of living is noted in the following narrative: “Once the village officer and the police came here. They did not give any notice to take away the land. Forcefully they built the road and the pipeline” (http://youtu.be/VJt59wbNI6s). Here is another excerpt: “Our land on which we were farming was taken away forcefully by the company” (http://youtu.be/VJt59wbNI6s).

The discursive erasure of the Dongria Kondh from the modernist platforms of development where decisions were being carried out that impacted their lives was accompanied by the circulation of specific truth claims about development, simultaneously erasing alternative rationalities and narratives that were articulated by the Dongria Kondh. For the Dongria Kondh, the Niyamgiri Hills define the spiritual, cultural, social, and
economic aspects of livelihood. The central role of the Niyamgiri Hills to the lives of tribal community members is rendered visible in the following song (http://youtu.be/VJt59wbNI6s):

Today I saw Niyamgiri mountains
And my eyes have become holy
The mountain looks so beautiful
And the nightingale is singing
Since ages, deer and antelopes and bears
Have been living here.

The Niyamgiri Hills are considered sacred by the Dongria Kondh, the adivasi community dwelling and depending almost entirely on the forests for their livelihood. The Niyamgiri Hills constitute the economic, cultural, and social fabric of the Dongria Kondh, offering material and symbolic resources. Another protestor echoes the theme of the sacredness of the Niyamgiri Hills: “Yes Niyamgiri is our God. We live in the mountains and
survive. We don’t have any land on which we can produce and live. We are
dependent on the mountain. We won’t leave Niyamgiri.” Similarly, laying
claim to the historic ownership of the land by the adivasi community, a
protestor shares: “We have been living here for generations, how can the
government now just say that it is their land and decide to allow mining
without talking to us?” (Amnesty International, 2010, p. 3).

What emerges as central to the articulation of resistance is the era-
sure of tribal voices from the processes of decision making. Laying claim
to the land that is their home, the Dongria Kondh voices interrogate the
frame of development offered by the government that usurps tribal land.
The question of ownership is foregrounded to narrate the story of indig-
enous communities living on the land for generations. In the backdrop
of the local resistance against Vedanta and its refinery, when in 2008, the
Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) approved in princi-
ple a bauxite mining project involving the London-based Vedanta in the
Niyamgiri Hills of Orissa, India, the indigenous people of this region rose
up in concerted protest, raising their voices against the mining company,
the Indian government, and the usurping of their land, and joining their
efforts with several national and international actors that created entry
points for exerting pressure.

These voices of resistance discuss the unhealthy effects of the min-
ing operations understood through the lived experiences of the Dongria
Kondh in the region. The everyday struggles of the Dongria Kondh were
constituted amidst the effects of the mining operations. The “Niyamgiri,
You are Still Alive” YouTube video (http://youtu.be/VJt59wbNI6s) includes
experiences of community members, such as “We will not get any water
even if we dig deep. It is only because of Niyamgiri that we get water” and
“When we bathe, the skin itches. When we drink water, we get sores in
our mouth.” Voices of local community members from the area and their
stories of suffering are recorded through mobile phones and uploaded on
social networking sites (see, for instance, http://youtu.be/l_s6HhDAuAY).
Videos, photographs, and audio recordings document the effect of the
Vedanta operations in the region. Videos point to the red mud spill and
document the toxic hazards, and then circulate the evidence through web-
Voices of Resistance

sites and online groups. Consider, for instance, the following posting on the Facebook group “Save Niyamgiri” (http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=31785088220):

News from Samarendra “Vedanta’s environmental crimes: red mud burst again 2 hours ago . . . the sludge has reached the company compound . . . protesters have filmed it in their mobiles . . . Please spread this news to others . . . this is second time the company has tried to cover up the whole toxic affair. Bloddy Vedanta, Once again showed his real face.”

Photographs and videos circulated through Facebook and YouTube generated awareness about the effects of the refinery as documented through the tools available to local community members. These resources became sources for building the evidence base regarding the refinery and its effects on the community. The resistance of the local community of the Dongria Kondh is expressed in the form of the Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti. Here is the voice of Lado Sikaka, a local leader (http://youtu.be/ipHmVee_uXw):
Vedanta has troubled us greatly. It is fighting with us for Niyamgiri. The company people try to lure us with schools and roads in our villages. They cannot trick us like that. We will do whatever it takes to save Niyamgiri. We have a right over the mountain. If they take Niyamgiri our world will be destroyed. We won’t give up Niyamgiri for any price. Can they give us the wealth of Niyamgiri in return? Niyamgiri is not a pile of money. That mountain is our life. We won’t flinch if you take our flesh but we won’t tolerate Niyamgiri being dug up. They have bought Niyamgiri from the Govt. but it doesn’t belong to the Govt. It belongs to the tribals . . . makes me so angry I get tempted to use the axe. We are not afraid of them because it is for Niyamgiri. They might outnumber us but every one of us will fight. We are not afraid of monsters like Vedanta.

Evident in the narrative is the resolve of the Dongria Kondh to stand up in resistance, and to struggle against the various means of control exer-

Figure 6.3. Uploaded by “niyamgiri.” http://youtu.be/ipHmVee_uXw
cised by the company hand-in-hand with the state and the district. The voice of Lado Sikaka challenges the dominant structures of articulation by foregrounding the right of the Dongria Kondh to Niyamgiri. It is in this backdrop that the leader expresses the will of his community to not give up Niyamgiri at any price.

Throughout 2009, there were protests organized by the “Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti,” and the images of these protests were shared through online resources (http://youtu.be/Dm8ljBHv61Y). In the videos of the protests, community members are depicted marching, voicing slogans such as “We won’t be afraid for the sake of mother earth” and “We won’t tolerate devastation in the name of development,” and singing songs and performing dances in groups. Songs on Niyamgiri carry out the message of the movement. For example, the song “Gaon chorab nahin” (“We won’t leave our village”), sung by local performers, depicts the conviction of the Dongria Kondh to not leave their land. Penned by Bhagwaan Majhi, an adivasi

Figure 6.4. Uploaded by “niyamgiri.” http://youtu.be/Dm8ljBHv61Y

Muniguda Convention

niyamgiri Subscribe 16 videos

0:03 / 8:47
leader against bauxite mining in Kashipur, the picturization of the song in the backdrop of the lush, green Niyamgiri Hills, the plants and the trees, and the images of the mines and the aftermaths drive home through visuals the impact of the bauxite mining operations. The song is set to adivasi tune and is presented amidst adivasi art and animation depicting the different aspects of adivasi life in relationship to the mining operations. Here is an excerpt of the lyrics of the song (http://youtu.be/Q49PnMl3HH8):

    We will not leave our village
    Nor our forests
    Nor our mother earth
    We will not give up our fight!
    They built dams . . .
    Drowned villages and . . .
    Built factories
    They cut down forests

Figure 6.5. Uploaded by “actionaidcomms.” http://youtu.be/Q49PnMl3HH8
Dug out mines
And built sanctuaries
. . . Without water, land, and forest, where do we go?
Oh God of development, pray tell us, how to save our lives?

Similarly, other performances, songs, videos, and films are circulated to create spaces for listening to the voices of resistance. Videos on different aspects of the mining operations and tribal resistance are widely circulated through social media. Simultaneously, reports are disseminated across various outlets to raise awareness. In a report written by Das and Padel (2010), Bhagaban Majhi, the leader of the Kashipur movement, is noted as saying:

*Agya, unnoti boile kono?* (Sir, what do you mean by development?)
Is it development to displace people? The people, for whom development is meant, should reap benefits. After them, the succeeding generations should reap benefits. That is development. It should not be merely to cater to the greed of a few officials. To destroy the millions of years old mountains is not development.

Performances on streets share the stories of the community and its experiences of loss. Protest participants carry axes as symbolic representations of resistance. Here is a portion of a speech given by a leader at the site of the protest march: “If they come with guns, we will pick our arrows, spears, and axes.” Another leader says, “We won’t allow mining and we will remain united. . . . We won’t be afraid of death to save Niyamgiri. Die we may we won’t leave Niyamgiri” (Das & Padel, 2010). The deviance of the protests against the top-down structures of development is shared in the weaving together of the movement with similar movements against mega-development projects, providing a broader backdrop for resisting the industrialization projects carried out in the name of development. Here is the voice of another leader at the protest site (Das & Padel, 2010):

Today they have put whole of Orissa for sale while sitting in Bhubaneswar. Our struggle is against these ministers and officers in Bhubaneswar who decide which company will get what part of Orissa. Till today, Tata has not been able to lay a brick in Kalinga Nagar. Vedanta has not been able to set up its university in Puri. POSCO is not being
able to enter Dhinkia. None of the mega-projects announced by the government have been able to acquire land because people are protesting and resisting everywhere.

The protests in Niyamgiri are framed alongside other protests against mega-projects that are touted under the framework of development. It is this very framework of development that is interrogated, with critical questions being raised at the grassroots level. Solidarity across individual sites against projects of mega-development weave together the resistive elements of the movement into broader interconnected narratives that question the assumptions of development. Scholarly articles documenting the human rights violations, environmental hazards, and displacements of communities from their sources of livelihood offer entry points for disrupting the dominant structures of development planning (see, for instance, Das & Padel, 2010).

Critical to the growing movement against the Vedanta mining project was the solidarity that was being charted between the local activists, the national-level activists, and the activist networks at the global level. Tribal communities from the Niyamgiri area participated in concerted efforts of resistance. For instance, in May 2008, hundreds of Dongria Kondh traveled to Bhubaneswar, the capital of Orissa, to articulate their resistance to the mining project to be set up on their sacred mountain. The protest march was covered across several activist outlets and generated global-national-local networks of reporting, reaching a global audience. Here's a report excerpt from Survival International (2008), a global non-governmental organization (NGO) that works on issues of indigenous rights:

Survival has launched a campaign targeting Vedanta, and is urging shareholders, including major British companies Standard Life, Barclays Bank, Abbey National and HSBC, as well as Middlesbrough and Wolverhampton Councils, to disinvest unless Vedanta abandons its plans.

Survival's director Stephen Corry said today, “If Vedanta goes ahead with this mine, the Dongria Kondh will be destroyed. They cannot survive as a people without their land. The Norwegian government
has already sold its shares in Vedanta, and other investors should follow suit, or face boycotts over their human rights record.”

The offline sites of protest organized by tribal community members found their way into mainstream discursive spaces through media reports, reports organized by local and national NGOs, and reports created by global NGOs to organize campaign against Vedanta’s mining project in Niyamgiri. The resistive narratives voiced at the local sites are picked up and re-narrated by NGOs and activists at other sites of protest, drawing global attention to the unethical and coercive practices of Vedanta that severely impacted the environment as well as the local cultural practices of the Dongria Kondh.

Resistance is constituted in the disruption of those spaces of dominant discourses that serve the strategic functions of Vedanta. For instance, when in 2009, the World Environment Foundation (WEF) announced its Golden Peacock Award for best environmental management practices to be awarded to Vedanta Alumina Limited, over 20 activists representing environment and social action groups organized a protest at the opening ceremony of the Global Convention for Climate Change being held at Palampur Agricultural University. The activists carried banners stating, “Stop greenwashing corporate crimes” and “Stop selling climate change,” utilizing the space of the opening ceremony to disrupt the environmentally conscious image of Vedanta by narrating the story of the Vedanta mining project and the refinery plant. Documenting the oppressions carried out by Vedanta on tribal communities, the displacement of tribal community members, the displacement of local livelihood, large-scale environmental abuse, health hazards, and the environmental effects of the distillery, the activists took over the microphone to note the hypocrisy of the awards that conferred the prestige of being environmentally conscious to a corporation that was destroying the environment in a local community in Orissa. Distributing reports on the environmental and human rights abuses of Vedanta, the activists also noted that these types of awards serve as public relations strategies for corporations such as Vedanta to deflect attention away from their environmentally disruptive practices and to counter efforts of regulating the environmental abuses caused by compa-
nies like Vedanta. Here is an excerpt from a speech in Hindi by an activist who took over the microphone at the award ceremony to contest the narrative of environmental consciousness being offered by Madhav Mehra, the chairman of WEF:

Vedanta is globally infamous for corporate crimes. A company that has made mockery of environment laws . . . Those who have paid to come to this convention should know why Norway Govt. banned Vedanta. We are here to protest against such incriminating companies being awarded by Madhav Mehra’s organization . . . These are all entities who only stage drama in the name of environment and such awards are only meant to greenwash their crimes and set their images clean in public eye. We will not let it happen. WEF is a sham! What kind of environmental convention is this? What kind of environmentalists are these? If you come here for the people, to stop displacement, to save the mountains, to protect the glaciers, we welcome you! But kindly stop these festivities. (http://youtu.be/r_FYSGMwoII)

Figure 6.6. Uploaded by “niyamgiri.” http://youtu.be/r_FYSGMwoII
As another activist seeks to take the microphone to translate the speech into English, she is stopped from doing so by the organizers. To this, the activist says, “They are not allowing me to speak in English because their delegates will understand what I am saying. They will see. The fact of the matter is that Vedanta Alumina Resources Limited has already bought people in this country, has already ruined the people in Niyamgiri and other parts of the country.” At this point, she is elbowed off the stage, with the organizers stating, “Throw her off the stage,” “Push her off.” As the activists are being strong armed, one of them notes, “Don’t touch us. There is camera rolling here.” Amidst the end of the speeches and the protest, several participants at the WEF convention walked out of the opening ceremony. After being briefed, the Tibetan Prime Minister in exile, Samdhung Rinpoche, who was the chief dignitary at the event, walked out, along with many local schoolchildren in the area who were attending the event. The raw video footage of the ceremony along with the subtitles of the protest voices are circulated through the Niyamgiri YouTube channel and through Facebook sites. Although the mainstream media largely carried negative reports of the protests, framing the activists as disruptive, multiple activist groups circulated the message of those standing in opposition along with the videos of the protests through the Internet, utilizing social media, including YouTube, Facebook, and blogs (see, for instance, http://goldenpeacockawardsenvironment.wordpress.com/tag/mehra/).

The discursive presence of the voices of the Dongria Kondh at public sites of discussion disrupt the hegemony of the dominant structures that have traditionally narrated frameworks of development. The Belamba Public Hearing witnessed a concerted effort by the Dongria Kondh to resist the discursive erasures of the Dongria Kondh from the platforms of decision making and from the discursive articulations of policy making. Dongria Kondh voices foregrounded the struggles of the community and the effects of the mining and refinery operations on the community. The proceedings are available on YouTube (http://youtu.be/dSKAfx1mOUY). At the hearing, the tribal community members present discussed the hazardous effects of the refinery on the Vamsadhara River, and they resisted
the plans for the expansion of the refinery. Here is the voice of Lado Majhi at the Belamba Public Hearing (quoted in Das and Padel, 2010):

Niyamgiri is our Mother. Our life depends on the mountain. Can you pay five lakhs for one tree? Our Sarkar [Govt] should not sell out to a foreign company. Even if everyone else accepts the project, we can’t allow mining on Niyamgiri.

At the heart of the narrative is the interrogation of the economic metric that drives development planning and programming. Lado Majhi interrogates the meaning of development by probing the very frameworks through which questions of value are assessed and through which values are assigned to specific projects. The value of the forests to the Dongria Kondh community members is tied to the meanings of the forests in the lives of the community and the sacredness of the forests amidst the cultural, social, spiritual, and economic spaces of everyday lives of tribal community members. Meanings emerge into the discursive spaces of development policy as sites of contestation; the meanings assigned to development through values of economic growth privileging the powerful owners of the mining operations are contested by the meanings of sustenance, nurturance, and sacredness held by the Dongria Kondh community members.

The local sites of activism are connected to the global platforms of activist politics through new media platforms such as web pages, bulletin boards, and discussion groups, through social media such as Facebook, and through audio-visual tools such as YouTube. For example, the Facebook page of the Save Niyamgiri movement seeks to organize public opinion and support through the connections and networking opportunities it offers across local and global spaces (http://www.facebook.com/#!/group.php?gid=31785088220). The Facebook page shares important news directly from the site, compiles a variety of media stories, and connects with videos that narrate through the voices of the tribal community members the experiences they face in the backdrop of the mining project, the threats to their life posed by Vedanta, the violence enacted by the corporation, and the state-sponsored police violence on tribal protests. It emerges as a site for sharing news and information about the movement, providing access to images and videos taken from field sites as communities participated
in their efforts of resistance. Videos of protests and police tortures from local spaces of protest emerged into the networks of solidarity through Facebook. Similarly, videos linking to documentaries on the resistance, videos of performances, and videos utilized by Vedanta for its public relations practices fostered networked sites of resistance. Websites such as “Foil Vedanta” (http://www.foilvedanta.org/articles/battles-over-bauxite-in-east-india-the-khondalite-mountains-of-khondistan/) offer information resources, environmental reports, links to articles, photographs, and steps for action. The online sites of protest became spaces for globalizing the voices of protest; amidst the increasing popularity of the YouTube channel of the Save Niyamgiri movement, it was hacked a day before the Vedanta’s annual meeting in London. After the resurrection of the channel, the following video was created (http://youtu.be/-a_cbyhCCSg), challenging the structural processes through which grassroots participation was erased. The local-global solidarity networks of the movement emerged through the involvement of organizations such as Amnesty International and Sur-
vival International in documenting the corrupt practices of Vedanta and in developing campaigns in London and at other global sites that carried the message of the Save Niyamgiri movement. The local-national-global organizing of the movement was instrumental in pressuring the Indian government to refuse clearance to Vedanta (http://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/dongria); along these very lines, the global solidarity networks pressured the Church of England, the Norwegian government, and investment firm Martin Currie to withdraw their funding from Vedanta. The resistance in Niyamgiri continues as villagers protest the toxic poisoning from the refinery and the red mud spills (see images of these protests by villagers of Rengopalli at http://www.facebook.com/#!/group.php?gid=317850882200); in this backdrop, Vedanta continues its ongoing strategies of exerting pressure on local and national political processes to secure access to the mining sites.

Similar to Save Niyamgiri movement, other movements have emerged across several sites of India, challenging the narratives of development pushed by the local, state, and federal governments in order to drive industrializing, mining, and corporatization projects through land acquisition and through the systematic displacement of the poor from their spaces of livelihood (Das & Padel, 2010). For instance, Lalgarh, a region in the West Midnapore district of West Bengal, has emerged as a site of resistance against state-sponsored violence and top-down programs seeking to displace tribal communities, reflective of large-scale resistance that has emerged across the Eastern corridor in India (Mike, 2009). Although the state of West Bengal, India, has historically experienced systematic efforts of rural resistance over the last four decades, the politics of resistance in Lalgarh erupted in response to specialized development projects that were being carried out by the state government of West Bengal that threatened to displace large sectors of populations from the region, and the continuing police harassment to thwart the protests of local community members. Lalgarh is home to rural communities that depend primarily upon agriculture as a means of living, and it has a large population of indigenous tribes. The struggles in Lalgarh are situated in the backdrop of broader struggles over land in Singur and Nandigram (Bhattacharya, 2009); fundamental to
these struggles is the demand of impacted communities for representation and for opportunities for participation in decision-making processes and structures. Across the Eastern corridor of India, local voices of subaltern resistance have emerged in collectives as these voices have challenged the projects of large-scale displacement of indigenous and agrarian communities carried on in the name of development, and primarily in the form of mining, industrialization, and urbanization (Das & Padel, 2010; Navlakha, 2010). India has responded to these indigenous voices of protest through repressive mechanisms of state control, deploying the paramilitary and the police under the framework of anti-terrorist actions branded “Operation Green Hunt.” Challenging the oppressions and police atrocities in Operation Green Hunt, several local movements, through their networks with national and global activists, have started identifying the atrocities carried out by these actions, documenting the forms of violence, exploitation, and oppression carried on in the name of Operation Green Hunt, and mobilizing resistance through online channels such as Facebook and

Figure 6.8. Uploaded by “niyamgiri.” http://youtu.be/_a_cbyhCCSg

The YouTube Niyamgiri channel was hacked a day before the Annual General Meeting of Vedanta at London
YouTube. These online resources also become conduits for documenting police atrocities and for bringing to the fore images, stories, and realtime videos of state-sponsored violence (see, for instance, the videos on the torture and harassment of the indigenous teacher Soni Sori at http://freesonisoriandlingaram.wordpress.com/category/soni-sori/ that serve as resources for mobilizing resistance against oppressions carried out on indigenous communities in India). Through these voices, local narratives of protest documenting the oppressions and exploitations carried out by the state-corporate nexus offer frameworks for dialogue in dominant discursive spaces of development.

*Cochabamba*

Yet another instance of grassroots protest is the demonstration organized by the residents of the Bolivian city of Cochabamba in 2000 against the high cost of privatized water sold by Aguas del Tunari, a subsidiary of Bechtel that took over the water systems of Bolivia through a World Bank-mandated privatization directive (Olivera, 2004). In their protests against the privatization of water in Cochabamba, the people of Bolivia took to the streets, battling the police and indefinitely blockading the regional highways and roads (Dutta, 2011; Olivera, 2004). The privatization of water resources in Cochabamba played out in the backdrop of water shortages faced by the people, World Bank directives of water privatization in the region, the passing of Law 2029 that declared the privatization of the water and the confiscation of wells and alternate forms of water use, and the signing of a forty-year contract with a consortium of enterprises named Aguas del Tunari. With majority of the interests in Aguas del Tunari held by US-based Bechtel, and including Bolivian companies with political linkages, it became clear that the privatization of water served the interests of the global and transnational elites, simultaneously putting large price tags on water for the poor. La Coordinadora (Coalition in Defense of Water and Life) emerged in response to (a) the inability of local community members to pay the rising price of water; (b) the privatization of water, which Cochabambinos believed was a natural gift and a public service; (c) the nature of government decision making; and (d) the erasure of the
local community from decision-making structures that contracted out resources that belonged to the community without involving the community.

In their protest on January 12, 2000, La Coordinadora members blockaded traffic, busting car windows and forcing shops to close; this was followed by a town meeting in the plaza that demanded the government send a commission. Subsequently, resistance was expressed in the form of planning a peaceful demonstration that was publicized as the “take-over of Cochabamba,” constituting the physical seizure of the main plaza, symbolically representing the coming together of the workers to make their own decisions. On February 4 and 5, 2000, marchers took over the streets of Cochabamba, setting up barricades and blockading the entire city. Subsequently, between April 4 and April 12, 2000, La Coordinadora organized protest marches in Cochabamba, with blockades cutting off the main highways and masses of protestors occupying the city centers in Cochabamba. Here is an excerpt from the writing of Oscar Olivera, a leader of La Cochabamba, whose name became synonymous with the “Water War,” that appeared in the Guardian in 2006 under the title “The voice of the people can dilute corporate power”:

In Bolivia, we consider water to be a common good—a human right, not a commodity. It is central to life and all that it embraces. It is collective property, yet in another sense it belongs to no one. These ideas, which have their roots in indigenous people’s thinking, are what mobilised working people, both in the countryside and in the cities. The struggle to take control of our water supplies in 2000 became known as the “water war” of Cochabamba. (http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2006/jul/19/comment.guardiansocietysupplement)

What is evident in this narrative is the foregrounding of the indigenous belief that water is a natural resource and a common good, not a commodity that can be privatized. This fundamental idea that seeks to define the realm of ownership of water, suggesting that it is a collective property and yet belongs to no one, resists the neoliberalization of global natural resources that seeks to turn these resources into privatized commodities to be traded by transnational corporations (TNCs). The protests of Cochabamba against the World Bank-enforced mandate that sought to priva-
tize water, pushed through by the relationships between the World Bank, Bechtel, and the national government of Bolivia, also symbolize protests against the fundamental principles of neoliberalism that define development in terms of the privatization of resources. Highlighting the commoditization of water as the enactment of multinational greed, an indigenous worldview is put forth to frame water as a collective resource. Even in the face of state-sponsored violence that sought to thwart the protest and unleashed terror on the citizens, the protests continued, ultimately forcing the government to cancel the contract.

In this article written during his visit to the World Development Movement conference in Britain, Olivera notes the following:

This confrontation was against the logic that tries to turn everything into commodities. All over Latin America, people now see that multinationals are trying to take over our resources and our goods held in common ownership including gas and oil—for their own profit. They are mobilising to take them back. Many companies in Bolivia against which we are fighting are British. And the demonstrations are very passionate because it is about our survival.

Here in Britain, people have to pay large amounts of money for water. Just as in Bolivia, privatisation deals are signed on the backs of the people. Privatisations are always in the financial interests of the water companies.

There are many ways of commercialising water—not only where a public utility is privatised, but also when water is lost, or when it is polluted. Then people must buy bottled drinking water, which costs far more.

People must be made aware that what multinationals and rich governments want is to turn water into a commodity. (http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2006/jul/19/comment.guardiansocietysupplement)

Resources and goods held in common ownership, such as gas, oil, and water, have become subjects of commoditization in the hands of multinationals, and this notion of ownership of collective resources for private
Voices of Resistance

Voices of Resistance

profiteering lies at the heart of the resistance movement in Bolivia. The local-global linkage of the resistance movement becomes apparent in the articulation that many of the corporations being fought are British; this information is presented alongside a depiction of the picture in Britain where people have to pay large amounts of money for water.

The alternative narrative of water as a public and collective resource lies at the heart of the mobilization in Cochabamba. The mobilization resists the privatization efforts underlying neoliberal expansionism. The story of Cochabamba then emerges on the landscape of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank-imposed neoliberal policies as a story of resistance, placing an alternative rationality that interrupts the discursive articulations of neoliberalism that extend the reach and imperial control of TNCs through the privatization of collective resources. Marcela Olivera, sister of Oscar Olivera and an international liaison for La Coordinadora, noted the following during her April 19, 2010 interview with Amy Goodman on Democracy Now on the ten year anniversary of the “Water War”:

What happened ten years ago, it opened the doors to what we have right now and what we’re going to have later. You know, if we have a president like Evo Morales, it’s because the social movements in April 2000 opened a door for that to happen. And the message, I think, is that we are not—the Water War is not over. The conflict ten years ago was not just about water; it was about something else, especially what we call democracy. It was about who decides about the things that matter to us, that are important to us. And ten years later, we are in a point where we want to say it was not over, it’s not over. We are still trying to not resist—you know, resist privatization, in this case, but to build something. And I think there’s still a long ways to go.

You know, we were—I feel like—personally, I feel like I was a very important part of the history, in that we changed a little bit the curse of what was going on. The lesson of the Water War is that nothing is definitive, that we always can change things. The system was privatized already here; we could put it back, we could break that, and we could get back the company into our hands, something that we never imagined that could happen. And this is something that Os-
car all the time says, that slogan that we always repeat on the streets, that the people, united, will never be defeated, it’s something that we lived here in Cochabamba ten years ago, and it’s something that we believe it can happen again and again and again.

We never thought we were going to win. Never. Never thought we were going to win. What we were doing, it was struggling for that minute and that second. I don’t think in anybody’s head was the fact, we’re going to win this war. (http://www.democracynow.org/2010/4/19/the_cochabamba_water_wars_marcellaオリバ)

The strength of the Cochabamba movement drew not only from the local participation in the processes of social change that involved diverse sectors from within the country, but also from the solidarity that the local movement built with transnational actors. The International Forum on Globalization (IFG), an organization that is made up of academics, activists, economists, and researchers, was invited to participate in a conference on water rights in Cochabamba in December 2000, to create partnership between the local citizens of Cochabamba and the international movement against corporate globalization. Based on the lessons learned from the Cochabamba “Water Wars,” the network of local Cochabambinos and IFG drafted the “Declaration of Cochabamba”:

Here, in this city which has been an inspiration to the world for its re-taking of that right through civil action, courage and sacrifice standing as heroes and heroines against corporate, institutional and governmental abuse, and trade agreements which destroy that right, in use of our freedom and dignity, we declare the following:

For the right to life, for the respect of nature and the uses and traditions of our ancestors and our peoples, for all time the following shall be declared as inviolable rights with regard to the uses of water given us by the earth:

1. Water belongs to the earth and all species and is sacred to life, therefore, the world’s water must be conserved, reclaimed and
protected for all future generations and its natural patterns respected.

2. Water is a fundamental human right and a public trust to be guarded by all levels of government, therefore, it should not be commodified, privatized or traded for commercial purposes. These rights must be enshrined at all levels of government. In particular, an international treaty must ensure these principles are noncontrovertable.

3. Water is best protected by local communities and citizens who must be respected as equal partners with governments in the protection and regulation of water. Peoples of the earth are the only vehicle to promote earth democracy and save water. (http://nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/imf/bolivia/cochabamba.htm)

The right to water is narrated as a human right, and the ownership of water is situated within the agentic realms of the Earth and all species living on it. Countering the Eurocentric universals that have carried out the agendas of privatizing global resources under the individualistic framework of ownership of individual property, the voices of resistance emerging from Cochabamba articulate a collective universal emanating from the global South. Here the depiction of human right springs from voices of the people from the global South, drawing from localized cultural narratives rooted in cultural values in the global South that disrupt the privatizing logics of transnational hegemony. The language of “rights,” which has played an important role in global logics of neoliberal governance, is taken up by the discourses of resistance in Bolivia to offer a resistive framework for collective rights.

The collective struggle of the local communities in Bolivia in the movement against the privatization of water disrupts the hegemonic discourses of neoliberalism that seek to privatize all forms of collective resources and embed these resources into global markets for competition. The claim that water is a collective resource is offered as a knowledge claim narrated through the local struggles of Cochabamba participants who seek to im-
pact global policies that dictate the everyday practices of human beings in their relationships to water. Specific frameworks of knowledge rooted in the cosmologies of the global South disrupt the violence embodied in the privatizing logics of Eurocentric values that drive neoliberal reforms globally.

Simultaneously, the narratives of harmony and respect for nature are offered as universals that counter the neoliberal agendas of water privatization and the reductionist treatment of water under neoliberal frameworks of governance as a resource to be managed. More specifically, the declaration argues that water is a public trust that needs to be guarded by all levels of government against efforts of privatization, commodification, or trade for commercial purposes. The legal-political framework of water ownership removes it from the realm of policy making and program planning under neoliberal governance that seek to restrict its uses among those with resources. The proposal for a universal treaty at a global level stands in resistance to claims of privatization that underlie the neoliberalization of collective resources such as water. In this backdrop of the consolidation of power in the hands of TNCs as a means for commoditizing water and turning it into a commodity to be purchased in the market, the paradigms of “earth democracy” and “save water” emerge as alternative frameworks of organizing that privilege the local ownership of water and other natural resources. Resisting the consolidation of decision making and management control in the hands of TNCs, the declaration foregrounds the agency and vital role of local communities in deciding how water is managed and regulated. Democracy as understood in the language of the global South is constituted in the agency of everyday people from the global South and in their active participation in decisions related to the management and regulation of natural resources at a local level. This theme of collective public ownership of public resources is then played out also in the following water and gas wars in Bolivia, and fostered a climate that led to the election of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) in the general elections in 2005. The “Narmada Bachao Andolan” in India carries the same theme of local ownership and decision making that emerges so strongly in the Cochabamba movement.
Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)
The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) is a movement in India that offers a framework for resistance against the building of mega-dams on the river Narmada, a struggle started in 1987 that offers leadership for global movements of resistance against neoliberal policies of development that privilege the building of dams as a solution to issues of development. The offline resistance of the movement primarily draws upon strategies of non-violent resistance, fasts, protest marches, sit-ins, and noncooperation, and is complemented by web-based strategies put forth by groups such as the “Friends of River Narmada” (www.narmada.org), a website dedicated to the cause of the NBA, and to the broader global struggle against the construction of mega-dams on rivers. The website of Narmada opens with the following introduction:

The construction of large dams on the River Narmada in central India and its impact on millions of people living in the river valley has become one of the most important social issues in contemporary India. Through this website, we the friends of the Narmada valley and its people hope to present the perspective of grassroots people’s organisations on the issue. Read an introduction to the issue.

The Friends of River Narmada is an international coalition of organisations and individuals (mostly of Indian descent). The coalition is a solidarity network for the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement) and other similar grassroots struggles in India. (http://www.narmada.org/)

Evident in the narrative is the linkage of the international coalition with the grassroots movement at the local site. Essential to the impact of the struggles is the solidarity between the local and global, circulating the stories of the local struggles at global sites and generating support in disparate contexts and at disparate levels.

Also at the heart of the online presence is the desire to recognize and represent the local voices of community organizers and community activists in their resistive struggles to transform the inequities written into the dominant structures. The image accompanying the text on the front
page is the image of a rally in Khandwa organized in 2008, representing visually the collective agency of local communities in coming together to resist their displacement. The Friends of River Narmada coalition further goes on to explain its identity:

The struggle against the construction of mega-dams on the River Narmada in India is symbolic of a global struggle for social and environmental justice. The Friends of River Narmada is an international coalition of individuals and organizations (primarily of Indian descent). In particular, we are a support and solidarity network for the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada movement) which has been fighting for the democratic rights of the citizens of the Narmada Valley. (http://www.narmada.org/about-us.html)

Once again, worth noting here is the framing of the local struggle for justice amid a global framework of struggles for social and environmental justice. Therefore, the local resistance against the construction of dams on the Narmada River becomes the exemplar for global struggles against the construction of mega-dams, offering entry points for solidarity and collective action. The agency of the Friends of River Narmada is depicted in relationship with the localized agency of the Narmada Bachao Andolan that is fighting for the democratic rights of the citizens of the Narmada Valley through various forms of localized participation.

The NBA has emerged on the discursive spaces of Indian public policy as a key site of contestation, resisting the state discourses of development by foregrounding the voices of local communities that have been displaced and continue to be threatened to be displaced by the building of the dam. This recognition and representation of the displaced voices counters the mainstream narratives and processes of development decision making that have traditionally operated by systematically erasing the voices of subaltern communities that have been rendered as targets and/or recipients of development policies and programs (Dutta, 2011). Questioning the authenticity (truth/falsity) of statements issued by the state and national governments to justify the building of the project, the voices of resistance narrated in the NBA point toward the gaps between the promises made by the project and the reality of the inequalities and oppressive
effects on subaltern communities produced by the project. The question of development once again emerges onto the discursive space as a marker of contestation; the mainstream ideas of development that are pushed in the dominant structures are actively resisted by the subaltern frames of meaning. The notion of symbolic resistance is reiterated in the principles:

- that the Narmada Valley Development Project (NVDP) has been conceived without adequate participation from the people who are going to be affected;

- that many dams of the NVDP are not viable solutions to many of the problems (power, drinking water, flood control, irrigation) they set out to solve, and that there needs to be a greater emphasis on the search for alternative solutions from all concerned (Government, NGOs, people);

- that the construction and planning of many dams of the NVDP has disrupted (and will potentially disrupt) the lives of millions of people without just and adequate compensation;

- that the people of the Narmada Valley are waging a just and legitimate struggle to assert their right to life, livelihood, and participation in their own development;

- that while the country can ask for sacrifices from its people, such people must be justly and adequately compensated for the sacrifices that they are thus making;

- that while the country can ask for sacrifices from the people of the Valley for the greater cause of national progress, the burden of sacrifice should be distributed across the nation, and not be restricted to a specific group of people;

- that the NVDP is merely an example of a much bigger problem that is manifesting itself across the country: the Union Carbide disaster in Bhopal, the Enron controversy in the Dabhol Power Project in Maharashtra, the controversy over the Cogentrix project, the forgery of Environmental Clearances by Ernst & Young;
the controversy over the construction of the Bangalore-Mysore highway, the human rights abuses over the port construction at Maroli, and the list goes on.

- that the struggle in the Narmada Valley consequently throws up much deeper issues about the developmental choices being followed in India and elsewhere, and that there needs to be a much wider debate of these choices;

- that the Narmada Bachao Andolan is a symbol of hope for people’s movements all over the world that are fighting for just, equitable, and participatory development. (http://www.narmada.org/about-us.html)

The frames represented in the principles of the Friends of Narmada draw attention to the fundamentally inequitable nature of the communicative processes through which development decisions are made, excluding the subaltern sectors that are impacted by the policies and programs that are put forth under the framework of development. The principles also highlight the lack of participation of the displaced communities in the processes of decision making, and in the specific outcomes that result from these processes. The logic of development is interrogated by contesting the value of mega-dams to the everyday lives of the people who reside in the valley. The rights of the subaltern sectors are juxtaposed in the backdrop of the corporate-state nexus that push development projects and carry out exploitations and oppressions of the subaltern classes through these development projects. The depiction of the struggle in Narmada then offers a framework for situating other global struggles on choices of development, symbolizing an alternative framework of development as envisioned by peoples’ movements from the grassroots.

The interrogation of the dominant framework of development continues to reverberate through the various facets of the online site. For instance, deconstructing the claim made by the national and state governments that the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) would address issues of development by offering drinking water and by bringing irrigation water to drought-prone areas of Gujarat, a document prepared by the “Free the Narmada Cam-
“Paign” notes the social classes that will benefit from the project (http://www.narmada.org/sardar-sarovar/faq/whopays.html):

Cities, rich farmers, industry, politically powerful lobbies, not the people from drought prone areas. (See Map; link to http://www.narmada.org/sardar-sarovar/faq/map.html) Before the water can reach Kachchh and Saurashtra, it will have to negotiate-literally—the water-intensive cash-crop growing, politically powerful districts of Vadodara, Kheda, Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar and Mehsana. Against their own directives, the authorities have allotted Vadodara city a sizeable quantity of water. Sugar-mills, water-parks, golf-courses, and five-star hotels are already positioning themselves at the head of the canal, and many have already been issued licenses.

Development emerges as the site and axis of contestation. Worth noting in the voices of resistance is the reframing of the role of dams in perpetuating local-global inequities hidden in the claims of pro-poor policies of development. Asking the questions of who will benefit turns the scrutiny onto the dominant structures of development that often use the language of helping the poor to develop solutions that disenfranchise the poor as they concentrate resources and wealth in the hands of the rich.

The document specifically deconstructs the arguments that the SSP would provide drinking water to communities in need and offer irrigation water for the drought-prone communities in the Kachchh, Saurashtra, and Northern Gujarat. It points out that no money in the SSP project has been spent on drinking water and that the project will actually provide minimum water to the drought-prone areas, instead making the drought problem worse by diverting money from meaningful and effective local solutions. Also, the voices of resistance that come together in the NBA point out the violations of the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDT), documenting the lived experiences of displaced communities who have not been compensated by the government, and sharing the stories of families whose homes are submerged as a result of the dams. The promises of development and progress are set in relationship to the experiences of marginalization by displaced communities who were not even consulted as the project was set in motion. The communicative erasures of commu-
nities that were and continue to be severely affected by the mega-dams lie at the heart of the struggles of resistance. It is in the backdrop of these communicative erasures that the online site becomes a space for narrating the voices of local protests and struggles. Consider, for instance, the following story on a march held by dam oustees in October 2009 in the Khandwa district:

The oustees said that there is large scale corruption in the Harda area of the Indira Sagar dam and rehabilitation grants put into hundreds of personal savings accounts in the post offices and banks have been taken out and pilfered by middlemen and people related to the Company. Officers and middlemen are demanding thousands of rupees to give oustees their entitlements. The oustees also expressed shock that the NHDC has erased the water level marks in the Indira Sagar dam last month so that the public can no longer know what the water-level in the dam is. They said that this is part of a conspiracy to flood the area, and increase the water level above 260 meters which has been fixed by the High Court at the present. The oustees also stated that on one hand, the adult sons of farmers will have to be given 2 ha. of agricultural land each, and on the other the draw-down land of the dam will have to be distributed to each land-less oustee family, so that the livelihoods of the oustees are replaced. They said that all the affected villages will have to be surveyed and provided compensation and rehabilitation entitlements and they strongly oppose the exclusion of the 41 affected villages of the Indira Sagar dam. The oustees also opposed the terror being perpetrated in the area by the contractor who has taken the contract for the fisheries in the Indira Sagar dam, and his armed men. Routinely villagers are being beaten up, even if they fish only for their personal consumption. The oustees declared that they would continue to fish for their food and no Government and contractor can stop them from doing so. They also demanded that the contract for fisheries should be given to the oustees next year, and the present contract with the private contractor should be discontinued. (http://www.narmada.org/nba-press-releases/october-2009/28Oct.html)
In this depiction of the local struggle, the voices of the oustees challenge the terror perpetrated by the state under the name of development. The voices also question the specific mechanisms and processes through which the compensations are given out, this pointing out the oppressions and inequities that are built into the processes of compensations. Corruption and mishandling of settlement money are foregrounded, pointing out the multiple instances where displaced peoples have not received compensation. Attention is drawn to the removal of markers of the water level, which local communities see as a strategy for flooding the area.

Based on its local politics of change, the NBA has become symbolic of a global struggle for environmental and social justice, emerging as a space for the articulation of local voices of communities at the margins of development that have been rendered silent precisely through the marginalizing discourses of development. The decade-long protest against the Sardar Sarovar reservoir has become an exemplar of people’s movements, foregrounding in narratives of development the voices of those whose lives and lifestyles are erased by projects carried out in the name of development. The proposed hydroelectric projects on the Narmada River in western India are hotly contested, once again through the voices of protest that articulate alternative narratives. Attending to the local politics of resistance, the NBA has grounded its struggle against the dams in the villages along the Narmada valley, mobilizing indigenous communities to resist displacement, and simultaneously foregrounding these stories of resistance as inspiration and guidance at global sites of struggle (Routledge, 1993). On one hand, the online presence of solidarity emerges as an entry point for solidarity; on the other hand, the struggle itself becomes an exemplar of strategies of social change.

In narrating their dissent, local communities of organizers refer to cultural logics of resistance, drawing from the rich narratives of India’s freedom struggle against the British. “Satyagraha,” the strategy of non-violent noncooperation that became a key political strategy of resistance in India’s freedom struggle, emerges as a key form of protest. In the call for satyagraha in 2000, a peaceful form of protest through persistence,
an NBA invitation notes the following (http://www.narmada.org/events/satyagraha-2000/invitation.html):

On this backdrop of constant struggle and challenge to the displacement and submergence, the height of the dam remained the same this year, despite the repeated efforts of Gujarat government to get the work on the dam restarted beyond 88 meters. However, though the height remains the same, last year the rains were below average. This year, the average rainfall would bring in the greater submergence than that of last year. There would be more destruction of houses and farms during this monsoon. The people have decided to challenge the imposition of unjust submergence, displacement by the government and demand for the complete review of the dam.

People will be observing the monsoon-long Satyagraha again this year as part of Satyagraha 2000, which will be launched on July 15, at Jalsindhi, Domkhedi and other villages in the valley. The details of the Satyagraha will be announced on the first day of Satyagraha in the valley. This time, along with the struggle, we will also pursue the constructive work (navnirman), surveying with the villagers the resources of the adivasi area, with village mapping and participating in the daily village chores or in the work of the people’s school (je-evanshala).

Once again, the struggle is round the corner and at this decisive hour, we wish you to be with us, as comrade-in-arms, friends and witness to this non-violent assertion of the rights of the people of this country. The people in the Narmada valley once again call unto you to join in the Satyagraha and strengthen the resistance in the valley against the displacement and destitution. The struggle in the valley is a joint endeavour of us all against the repression and destruction in the name of development.

The call for protestors to join in the local struggle of the displaced and submerged communities is articulated within specific demands that are made by community members, asking the government to conduct a complete review of the dam and to prevent the forced submergence of villages. Locally situated historico-cultural narratives of satyagraha are introduced in
order to craft out spaces for the enactment of agency. Culturally located concepts such as navnirman (constructive work) and jeevanshala (people’s school) are put forth to offer subaltern rationalities of sustenance that challenge the neoliberal frameworks of development imposed by the dominant structures. Constructive work provides an alternative rationality of development. On a similar note, the concept of people’s school democratizes the spaces of learning and seeks to place legitimacy within the lived contexts of learning in subaltern frameworks. Conducting chores in the village, engaging in constructive work, and participating in people’s schools become strategies of resistance that draws from the cultural logic of protest in the historical context of India. Every day practices of participation emerge into the global sites as strategies for protest against the hegemonic top-down frameworks of development.

During the protests throughout the monsoon seasons, as the water continued to rise, protestors continued to carry out their resistance by standing in the waters, articulating their resistance in “facing the water.” In the monsoon seasons of 1999 and the subsequent years, the protestors from the displaced and submerged villages along with several activists from around the country started off the protests with songs, performances, and slogans. An effigy of the Demon of the Dam in Narmada was submerged in the river, and a mahua tree was converted into a “tree of resolve,” nailing the names of the villages that have been submerged by the dam and symbolically narrating the protest of the communities to assert their right on the land on which they have lived for generations (NBA, 2000). The images, voices, and narratives of the protests are then posted and re-posted online, creating entry points to solidarity, and urging actions elsewhere in the globe (see, for instance, http://www.narmada.org/images/haripics/harikrishna.pictures1.html). During the Domkhedi satyagraha in 1999, after breaking her fast, Medha Patkar, a leader of the NBA, gave the following speech (http://www.narmada.org/events/satyagraha-2000/medha.statement.html):

We will be confronting the submergence, (which is bound to come at any time) in the spirit of dedication and sacrifice. We will stay put resolutely at the centres of Satyagraha, in every house, wishing that
the water may not rise—yet ready to sacrifice the life. We wish that the Mother Narmada shall remain free, flowing, even if we have to sacrifice. We will see how many and who all would come and from where to be with us.

The government shall not play the game of “saving the lives” after it had fully prepared to submerge the entire valley. No false promises. If that happens, we would confront their design. We will decide about the strategy, policy accordingly and will not leave them scot free this time.

The time has come to raise question on the judicial process through which the life and resources of the people in the valley are being taken away. Why not question it? After all the objective of such process is justice, and not certainly injustice. This is a part of the system created by human beings. It is not only the matter of abstract theory but the questions are being raised out of the actual reality.

The impending submergence would violate the stipulations of the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDT) and the orders of the Court itself as there is no land or resettlement. At this juncture we will have to think of the justice and injustice. How come it cannot be? We are raising the issues, following the path of constitution and legal propriety, so that the judicial system should not be proved unjust due to the machinations of the power holders, so that the dignity and position of the judiciary should be intact.

The satyagraha becomes a site of protest, questioning the unfair and inequitable judicial processes that marginalize the subaltern sectors. The readiness to sacrifice life emerges as a strategy for resistance, turning on its head the role of the government in building the dam and in submerging villages that are home to many of the protestors. In seeking to foster a just system of decision making and arbitration, the satyagraha draws attention to the unfair and inequitable processes through which those in power have created specific policies and programs to displace the subaltern margins from their rightful spaces of livelihood. The protest marches, performances, songs, and fasts (dharna) are accompanied by interventions
within legal and juridical structures requesting for transparency, for additional information on studies conducted on the benefits and drawbacks of the dams, and exerting the rights of displaced communities under legal configurations to forms of resettlement. Several cases filed in courts seek to fill the discursive spaces of jurisdiction with the voices of the poor from displaced and submerged communities (see Figure 6.1).

The protests carry out the demand for resettlement by highlighting through performances the stories of removal of the subaltern sectors in the region from their homes. Letter writing campaigns directed at ministers, as well as direct forms of protest that seek out opportunities of dialogue with political actors, are additional strategies of resistance, with online forums and discussion groups requesting participation through online channels such as e-mail and websites. As the state responded to the ongoing protests with the use of violence through lathi charges (attacks with police sticks) and arrests, the protestors responded with innovative strategies of protests such as “machali satyagraha” (catching and eating the fish from the river as divine blessings) and “jan sunwai” (public hearings) (NBA, 2009). These innovative strategies draw from local cultural frameworks and offer entry points for the enactment of agency. Culture emerges at the site of global struggle in resistance to neoliberalism. As opposed to neoliberal conceptualizations of multiculturalism and diversity, cultural logics in movements such as the NBA operate in global discursive sites as resistive strategies for disrupting neoliberal assumptions and everyday strategies of neoliberalism. The market logics of neoliberalism that imperialize development frameworks are resisted by the local logics of communities built on autonomy and self-reliance.

In this context of resistance against global neoliberalism, the movement communicates how local struggles against globally powerful stakeholders can indeed bring about change, thus offering an exemplar for constituting resistance against the global projects of mega-dams. The narrative of resistance is centered on the key role of agency, noting how displaced people came together for resistance:

The struggle of the people of the Narmada valley against large dams began when the people to be displaced by SSP [Sardar Sarovar Project]
began organizing in 1985-86. Since then the struggle has spread to encompass other major dams in various stages of planning and construction chiefly Maheshwar, Narmada Sagar, Maan, Goi and Jobat. Tawa and Bargi Dams were completed in 1973 and 1989 respectively have seen the affected people organize post-displacement to demand their rights. (http://www.narmada.org/nvdp.dams/)

The movement became a model for organizing. The history of the struggle served as a backdrop to the movement’s modern struggles amidst Narmada valley politics. Current issues faced by the movement are presented in the form of press releases by NBA. The webpage includes an archive of press releases that document the different aspects of the struggle against structural forces.

For the Friends of Narmada website, localized processes of capacity building focus on the exchange of information regarding resources, policies, strategies, and tactics, which then are shared in multiple discursive platforms as entry points for transformation. This capacity building is achieved in a plethora of platforms and flows in numerous ways, serv-
ing a multitude of functions simultaneously, drawing upon multiple intersec-
tions of collaborations. It is this simultaneity of capacity building that demonstrates the ways in which resources flow in communicative platforms of global activist organizations. For instance, one aspect of capacity building of the project focused on providing resources about the movement to global stakeholders. In this context, the website serves as a repository of information, contributing to the capacity of global movements of resistance by documenting the steps, stages, successes, and failures of the movement. This presentation of resources offers opportunities for interested parties to learn about the movement and develop their own information resources regarding the movement. The archives of pictures and press releases provide insights regarding the lessons learned from the movement and become learning tools for other groups interested in similar issues. These resources also become points of solidarity building for other movements, connect these movements with each other, and provide networks of solidarity among movements.

Furthermore, this global-level activism is mobilized for local purposes. For instance, the website discusses the ways in which global publics could participate in protesting the building of the dam by signing petitions on the Web, by participating in virtual hunger strikes, and by participating in rallies and protest marches in their respective locations. In this way, globally dispersed local publics are mobilized for a local cause. The activist capacity of individual local actors is mobilized at the global level to support the capacity of a specific local movement. Ultimately, online resources serve as platforms for community capacity building and for mobilizing resistance.

**Conclusion**

What we learn through the voices from the global South that co-construct the narratives of resistance against neoliberal definitions of development is the expression of local agency of communities in the global South in actively redefining the meanings of development. Resisting the depiction of communities in the global South as passive, participants narrate their stories of active meaning making and participation in processes of change
directed at altering social structures. These voices question the dominant narratives of development that are utilized to carry out top-down interventions through the participation of the state, national, and transnational corporations. Meanings of development narrated through SAPs are interrogated in terms of the effects they produce, and the agendas and actors that they serve. The Save Niyamgiri, Cochabamba, and Narmada Bachao Andolan movements are all constituted around defining the key terms in the dictionary of development, pointing toward the ways in which these terms have carried out the interests of the dominant sectors, and marginalizing the poorer sectors from the global South. The linkages of the North and the South, the local and the global, also emerge in Global Exchange, an education and action resource center that builds networks of resistance to globalization politics by empowering communities locally and connecting them to global solidarity networks (http://www.globalexchange.org/mission). Also, the IFG carries out the theme of offering alternatives through networks of resistance (http://www.ifg.org/about.htm):

The International Forum on Globalization (IFG) is a North-South research and educational institution composed of leading activists, economists, scholars, and researchers providing analysis and critiques on the cultural, social, political, and environmental impacts of economic globalization. Formed in 1994, the IFG came together out of shared concern that the world’s corporate and political leadership was rapidly restructuring global politics and economics on a level that was as historically significant as any period since the Industrial Revolution. Yet there was almost no discussion or even recognition of this new “free market,” or “neoliberal” model, or of the institutions and agreements enforcing this system—the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and other such bureaucracies. In response, the IFG began to stimulate new thinking, joint activity, and public education about this rapidly rising economic paradigm.

Unique in its diversity, depth, and breadth, the IFG works through an active international board of key citizen movement leaders; a small,
dedicated staff; and a network of hundreds of associates representing regions throughout the world on a broad spectrum of issues. Our work is closely linked to social justice and environmental movements, providing them with critical thinking and frameworks that inform campaigns and activities on the ground.

The IFG produces numerous publications; organizes high-profile, large public events; hosts many issue-specific seminars; coordinates press conferences and media interviews at international events; and participates in various other activities that focus on the myriad consequences of globalization. During the last few years, the IFG has launched a pioneering program that focuses on alternative visions and policies to globalization that are more equitable, just, democratic, accountable, and sustainable for people and the planet.

Essential to the organizing of the IFG is the creation of participatory spaces for discussions of evidence and for sharing of information to assess the impact of globalization processes. Because globalization processes are fundamentally carried out through the presentation of information as evidence to justify neoliberal policies, a key function of the IFG in fostering spaces for articulations of alternatives is to deconstruct the underlying logics and assumptions that are carried out in globalization. This function of deconstructing the underlying logics of neoliberal policies also lies at the heart of the Oakland Institute, a think tank that publishes evidence-based analyses on globalization policies (http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/node/468):

The Oakland Institute is dedicated to creating a space for public participation and democratic debate on key social, economic, environmental, and foreign policy issues that affect our lives. By becoming a member of The Oakland Institute, you are building the foundation for a democratic and peaceful future.

The Oakland Institute accepts no funding from corporations or governments. Your tax-deductible donations allow us to conduct independent research, analysis, and advocacy to facilitate democratic participation in critical social, economic, environmental, and foreign policy decisions that affect our quality of life.
When you join the Oakland Institute you have the satisfaction of underwriting open discussion of critical issues. Free trade agreements, new technologies such as genetic engineering, and governmental funding priorities to challenge growing hunger and poverty, call for vigorous public discussion of the pros and cons. The Oakland Institute is providing a progressive perspective on such critical issues that are currently greatly under-reported and largely neglected by the mainstream media.

Fostering democratic spaces for discussion and creating open forums where public discussions and public participation offer entry points for conversations on key global issues, the Oakland Institute voices resistance to neoliberal policies by disrupting the closure of discursive spaces and sites. As depicted in the examples of the IFG and the Oakland Institute, voices of resistance against neoliberalism seek to thwart the top-down exploitative impact of neoliberal policies by resisting the minimization of discursive spaces for informed participation under the manipulative and constraining strategies deployed by the transnational hegemony. The politics of change of alternative to dominant logics of development is accomplished by critically interrogating the manipulative strategies, the public relations ploys, the misrepresentation of information, and the erasure of discursive sites of contestation that are essential to the logics of neoliberalization.

Similarly, organizations such as Focus on the Global South create legitimate entry points for the articulations of alternative frameworks of development and for the teaching, research, and applications of the alternative ideas. For instance, deglobalization, one of the flagship offerings of Focus on the Global South, seeks to build an alternative framework for economic systems (http://www.focusweb.org/content/paradigm-deglobalisation):

It is in response to the growing clamor for alternatives to the current system of global governance that Focus has elaborated the strategy of deglobalisation as the guiding paradigm for its programmatic work in the next three-year period.

Deglobalisation is not a synonym for withdrawing from the world economy. It means a process of restructuring the world economic
and political system so that the latter builds the capacity of local and national economies instead of degrading it. Deglobalisation means the transformation of a global economy from one integrated around the needs of transnational corporations to one integrated around the needs of peoples, nations, and communities.

We cannot talk about construction without deconstruction, reintegration without disintegration. Today there are many experiments in alternative economics, for example local currency systems, participatory budgeting such as that practised in Porto Alegre, or ecological communities like Gaviotas in Colombia. The reigning god, however, is a jealous one that will not take lightly challenges to its hegemony. Even the smallest experiment or alternative to the dominant model is stopped, weakened, or co-opted. Peaceful coexistence between different systems, a pro-corporate one and a pro-people one, is, unfortunately, not an option.

Thus the deglobalisation project must have two prongs, two logics that are in synergy: deconstruction and reconstruction or recreation. Evidence of the effects of globalization including poverty, unemployment, rising inequality, and economic stagnation are presented to create a discursive opportunity for the articulations of openings. Drawing out the possible spaces of resistance against the deglobalization processes, the voices from the global South articulate the importance of a collective resistance that is simultaneously deconstructive as well as co-constructive. In conclusion, the voices of resistance foregrounded through the examples and cases presented in this chapter offer critiques of the power and control exerted by transnational hegemony through the narrative of development, and simultaneously foster spaces for democratic participation to enable the alternative stories of development voiced through the participation of people and communities who have been historically erased from discursive spaces.