

**Adivasis (Original Dwellers) “in the way of” State-Corporate Development: Development dispossession and learning in social action for land and forests in India**

**Les Adivasis (habitants originels) « sur les traces » du développement État-entreprise privée : la dépossession engendrée par le développement et les apprentissages produits via l'action sociale pour les terres et les forêts en Inde**

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Article abstract

This paper traces the kinds of learning engendered through Adivasi trans-local and local subaltern social movement (SSM) action addressing state-corporate developmental collusions, state-caste interests and the resulting dispossession of Adivasis from land, forest and their ways of life given the economic liberalization drive to exploit resources in the rural hinterlands in India since 1991. The paper draws upon insights from the author's association with the Adivasi since 1992 and funded research into “Learning in Adivasi movements.”

# ADIVASIS (ORIGINAL DWELLERS) “IN THE WAY OF”<sup>1</sup> STATE-CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT: DEVELOPMENT DISPOSSESSION AND LEARNING IN SOCIAL ACTION FOR LAND AND FORESTS IN INDIA

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper traces the kinds of learning engendered through Adivasi trans-local and local subaltern social movement (SSM) action addressing state-corporate developmental collusions, state-caste interests and the resulting dispossession of Adivasis from land, forest and their ways of life given the economic liberalization drive to exploit resources in the rural hinterlands in India since 1991. The paper draws upon insights from the author’s association with the Adivasi since 1992 and funded research into “Learning in Adivasi movements.”<sup>2</sup>

LES ADIVASIS (HABITANTS ORIGINELS) « SUR LES TRACES » DU DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉTAT-ENTREPRISE PRIVÉE : LA DÉPOSSESSION ENGENDRÉE PAR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT ET LES APPRENTISSAGES PRODUITS VIA L’ACTION SOCIALE POUR LES TERRES ET LES FORÊTS EN INDE

**RÉSUMÉ.** Cet article dresse le portrait du genre d’apprentissages rendus possibles par les actions des mouvements sociaux locaux subalternes et inter-cités (SLS) des Adivasis s’attaquant aux collusions existant entre l’État et le milieu privé dans les initiatives de développement, les relations entre l’État et les castes suite à libéralisation économique survenue en 1991 et la force motrice qui en a résulté relativement à l’exploitation des ressources dans l’arrière-pays indien. Ce texte s’inspire des découvertes effectuées par l’auteur depuis les débuts de son association avec le peuple adivasi en 1992 et ses recherches financées sur les mouvements d’apprentissages adivasi.

*Who is this government (e sarkar kee?) that lets the paper mills and business people (vyavasahi) take the longest bamboo and best wood for profit and then asks us, we Adivasi who depend on the forest for our lives, for royalty and taxes for small cuts for poles... The ADEA (Adivasi movement organization) is here to fight collectively (sangram) to save (raksha) the forests and to protect our way of life. Our struggle is around food, land, water, forest and unity (khadyo, jamin, jalo, jangalo, o ekta.) Kondh woman member of the ADEA movement organization (Focus group notes, February, 2008)*

*We organize workshops and gatherings and have created a learning environment for all our people – I feel so happy and satisfied, I cannot tell you – we have been creating a political education around land, forest and water issues and debating*

*courses of action. We are expanding in terms of participation and we need to keep generating more awareness on more issues that affect us... it is a political awareness, an adult education about society (samajik shiksha) – a different kind of schooling perhaps.* ADEA movement organization representative/leader (Focus group notes, February, 2008)

The *Adivasi-Dalit Ekta Abhijan* (ADEA) is a movement<sup>3</sup> organization of some 21,000 Adivasis and Dalits (literally means the “downtrodden,” pejoratively referred to as “untouchable” caste groups) located in over 120 villages in the southern districts of the east coast state of Orissa, India. A movement organization that has become more politicized with each attempt to address the developmentalist, casteist and increasingly corporatized state (after India’s adoption of the New Economic Policy (NEP) and neoliberalism, since 1991), the ADEA has matured as a political entity since germination around land and forest struggles in the early 1980s (known then under a different name). It is now poised to take a leading role in a trans-local politics that includes a network of 14 peasant, *Adivasi*, *Dalit* and fisher-folk organizations in the southern region of the state. As a contemporary movement formation, the ADEA draws its impetus from a history of resistance to British colonization (historical memory of *Adivasi-Dalit* communities) and the numerous collective struggles of these groups with state, market and caste interests in the post-independence period (since 1947) of national development and neoliberal globalization (since the early 1990s).

The emergence of the ADEA as a movement cannot be attributed to an epicentre, one central issue or particular occurrence (as in the case of, for example, an anti-dam movement at a particular juncture in time) but to a history of consistent colonial and “post-colonial” exploitation and marginalization that has warranted both a combination of daily struggles for dignity and survival and some critical struggles in relation to major dislocations around land and forest dispossession and caste-deprivations and assaults. Furthermore, through various engagements in a trans-local politics with neighboring subaltern struggles in South Orissa (e.g. Chilika Andolan against corporate shrimp aquaculture through the 1980s into the early 1990s and the Kashipur anti-bauxite mining movement through the 1990s and up until now) the leadership of the ADEA has continued to nurture and enhance its role in a regional subaltern<sup>4</sup> politics; a politics that continually seeks to address state, market, feudal/caste and civil society groups (e.g. NGOs) and their respective agendas/interests while continuing to assert the claims of *Adivasis*, *Dalits* and landless peasant constituencies.

Learning and local knowledge have been central to the emergence, development and continued maturation of this movement both as received wisdom from elders and as new learning generated through various acts of struggle and movement activism (Kapoor & Prasant, 2002; Kapoor, 2007). The significance of such learning within subaltern social movements (SSMs) (Kapoor, 2008) and

movements of colonized peoples in the "post-colonial" era to outsiders, lies in their relative uniqueness as contemporary anti-colonial political formations. The import of this colonial politics and related learning in social action is not lost on those who recognize a historical juncture where the modernizing and homogenizing colonial impulse is arguably at its most invasive, as expressed through either: (a) the related projects of neoliberal globalization and corporatist development (Barker, 2005; Grande, 2004; McMichael, 2006); (b) the globalist invocations of a civil-societarian social justice politics of participation, equity and inclusion ("empowerment") into modernity, epitomized by an NGOization (domestication) of subaltern social activism (Kamat, 2002; Kapoor, 2005; Manji, 2002; Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001) and incorporation into a human rights discourse that is selectively oblivious to the violence of the market (economic violence) and "development repression"<sup>5</sup> (Donnelly, 1989, p.188; Kapoor, 2008); or (c) an anti-globalization political project which often ignores the political conceptions and aspirations of Indigenous Peoples in transnational advocacy (Blaser, Feit & McRae, 2004; Choudry, 2007). Similarly, (d) a radical western Marxism that elides its modernist ecological and cultural excesses and reduces all radicalism and subsequent political worth<sup>6</sup> to the imperatives of capturing state power and the establishment of a proletarian hegemony (and socialism), invoked as a post-capital universal apparently beyond interrogation, is also complicit in contemporary Eurocentric political homogenizations. Marxist disdain for subaltern politics in some quarters does little to garner the potential support of a multiplicity of such struggles in a counter-hegemonic politics in relation to capital, arguably, a defining element (conscious or unintentional) of several subaltern struggles in numerous development trenches confronting the rapacious appetite of global capitalist exploitation. The incursions of transnational capital itself produce commonalities that connect "ecological ethnicities" (Parajuli, 2004, p. 235) across their differences, creating serious prospects for counter-hegemonic possibilities.

Mindful of such continued colonizations in relation to *Adivasis* and subalterns, this paper elaborates on *Adivasi* learning in ADEA social action and related processes of knowledge production by: (a) describing the *Adivasi* context of struggle; (b) briefly discussing the approach to researching learning in *Adivasi* SSMs and then tracing the kinds of learning engendered through *trans-local movement* participation (critical, strategic, tactical and informational) addressing dispossession instigated by state-corporate development collusion and *local movement* social action and "*own ways learning*" around land and forest action; and (c) briefly drawing on these "within movement" observations to suggest conceptual and analytical possibilities pertaining to *Adivasi* SSMs and learning in social action.

## CONTEXTS OF ADIVASI SOCIAL ACTION IN ORISSA, INDIA

According to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and reports from the UN's Working Group on Indigenous Populations, "problems faced by indigenous peoples of Asia (with considerable overlap in other regions as well) include plundering of resources; forced relocation; cultural genocide; militarization; forced integration of Indigenous Peoples into market economies; and bigotry and discrimination" (Eversole, McNeish, & Cimadamore, 2005, p. 32). Unsurprisingly then, while *Adivasis* constitute 8% (or 80 million or more people belonging to some 612 tribes) of the Indian population, they account for 40% of development-displaced persons and in Orissa (home to 62 tribal groups numbering 8 million or more people) while making up 22% of the population, they account for 42% of development-displaced persons (Fernandes, 2006, p. 113).

The British were the first to restrict tribal rights over land and forests in 1885, consolidating the power of the imperial government by emphasizing the revenue yield aspects of forests and ensuring resource requirements for the military, commercial and industrial sectors through the Indian Forest Act of 1878, 1927 and then the Government of India Act of 1935. 200 years of British colonialism "distorted the land structure, ecology, forest resources and flora and fauna with grave implications for the *Adivasis*" (Behura & Panigrahi, 2006, p. 35), as British rule began the process of detribalization of land and forests, reducing the tribals to encroachers on their own territories. The promotion of State Capitalism in the forest sector in the post-independence scenario continued this trend through the Forest Policy of 1952, as the Forest Conservation Act (1980), the Wild Life (Protection) Act (1972) and the Land Acquisition Act made it possible for forcible evictions for an undefined "larger" public interest.

The post-1991 embrace of neoliberalism has exacerbated this trend. Neoliberal land policies have made *Adivasis* subject to summary evictions through reservation, leasing of state land to industrialists, the activation of a Wild Life Protection Act that defines tribals as the enemy of ecology and demarcations of land/forests for national parks and sanctuaries which exclude tribals (Pimple & Sethi, 2005, p. 242). The establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) as economic enclaves of free enterprise is a clear example of such a process of state-corporate collusion around industrial land-grabs from subaltern groups, as even the CPI(M) (Communist state government) in West Bengal with a traditional peasant support base has earmarked as much as 144,000 acres of land in 9 districts for such acquisitions for private industry (Bidwai, 2007, p.14). As the state opts for a Chinese-styled state-managed capitalism, peasant and tribal subaltern groups confront the Left Front-ruled state in acquisitions for the Tatas in Singur (where the corporation is set to produce the world's cheapest car but has now been compelled, largely by this grounded resistance,

to relocate to Gujarat) and in Nandigram (by the notorious Salim group of Indonesia, a known front for the corruption-plagued Suharto family).

Similarly, in the state of Orissa, South Korean steel giant POSCO Ltd., has signed Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) with the state government to exploit the best coal and iron ore of the state for a period of 30 years, a project that is the single highest foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country; a \$12 billion project that is being held up by betel leaf farmers and the Posco Pratirodh Manch (Vats, 2007, p. 16). Given that 70% of India's (the country has one of the largest deposits in the world) bauxite (ore from which commercial aluminium is produced) deposits are in Orissa and the per tonne spot price of aluminium has increased some 500% over the past 3 years alone, the government of Orissa has made investment in bauxite mining more attractive to private industry. This includes permitting 100% exportation, income-tax exemptions, subsidies, lowering of tariffs for essential equipment and low cost availability of hydro and coal power sources along with cheap labour and a promise of "removal of procedural delays" (e.g. around leases, local consultations, environmental, forestry, pollution, socio-cultural/demographic clearances etc.) under the new National Mining Policy (2006). The government has already leased one billion tonnes (of India's estimated 1.6 billion tonnes) of bauxite to multinational corporations (MNCs) through MOUs (Indian People's Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights, 2006, pp. 6-11). One such joint venture mining project (owned by Utkal Aluminum Industrial Limited or UAIL, a consortium formed in 1993 which was originally composed of ALCAN, Canada; Hindalco of Birla Group, India; Tata, India and Norsk Hydro, Norway) is in the Baphlimali Hills of Kashipur Block, Rayagada district, an open-cast mine scheduled to produce 195 million tonnes a year (at this rate, known reserves would be depleted in 24-25 years). According to some estimates, UAIL could receive a 6300% return on investment as opposed to the consortium's own projection of 11.5% (Indian People's Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights, 2006, p. 9). Requiring 2800 acres of land, the project could displace as many as 60,000 people (*Adivasis* and Scheduled castes or *Dalits*) as compared to the consortium's estimate of 2,005 (Indian People's Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights, 2006, p. 43).

Opposition to the Kashipur bauxite mine is being spearheaded by the Prakruti Sampad Surakshya Parishad (PSSP) movement and several *Adivasi-Dalit* movement organizations in South Orissa in addition to various national and transnational solidarity groups including ALCAN't of Montreal (Kapoor, 2006). Currently 95% of mining activities alone are on *Adivasi* land, while according to some conservative estimates, over 500,000 people in Orissa have been displaced by state-corporate development between 1951-1995 (Behura & Panigrahi, 2006, pp. 203, 211). In the ADEA region, according to the movement organization, over 80% of *Adivasi* families are landless (as per official definition) and suffer the daily indignity of having to endure state-corporate intrusions and land-forest

marginalizations through agro-plantation development, timber/bamboo (forest related) extraction, water/river diversions and the enforcement of land and forest laws that consistently place the *Adivasis* in the position of encroacher. Such historic and contemporary processes of development dispossession of the *Adivasi* and subaltern groups in Orissa have not gone unchallenged as evidenced by numerous movements and struggles in relation to development-related usurpations in Chilika, Kashipur, Lanjigarh, Kalinganagar, Gopalpur and Baliapal, to name but a few relatively known contemporary examples, in addition to the several daily and lesser known challenges posed by organized *Adivasi-Dalit* movement organizations (e.g. ADEA) against detribalization of land, forest and water in the remote interiors of the state.

### RESEARCHING LEARNING IN ADIVASI SSM SOCIAL ACTION

Research into learning in *Adivasi* social action by an investigator who has had a long term relationship with the ADEA movement villages in question is understandably predicated upon the centrality of *Adivasi* agency (Chacko, 2005) and the establishment of a research partnership that seeks to explore and address questions that are of significance to the movement and to outside researcher and academic interests. Research questions, methods of data collection and analysis and subsequent popular and scholarly disseminations are all acts of partnership and collaboration, to the extent possible, given the real and imagined constraints and vicissitudes of inside-outside (cross-location) politics and power relations in such inter/cross cultural efforts, personal intentions aside (Kapoor, in press). Early discussions with the ADEA leadership helped to establish the necessity and use for research, i.e., the researcher had to “make the case” for the idea of research and its possibilities for the movement and beyond. The areas of inquiry were mapped out together with the ADEA and this article elaborates and utilizes research pertaining to the typologies and places of movement learning (what and where questions) and the emergence of these through particular forms of social action (local and trans-local, for example). Other questions, some of which have been addressed in Kapoor (2007), have had to do with collectively defining *Adivasi-Dalit* movement issues and concerns, movement purpose and the role of learning in helping to achieve these movement purposes and directions, including elaborations on how learning contributes towards shaping ADEA movement purposes and their subsequent achievement.

The research in relation to these questions and lines of inquiry has catalyzed (catalytic validity) (Lather, 1993) the movement through processes of self and collective-reflection and inquiry (e.g. into movement issues, purposes and achievements); encouraged movement leadership analysis of past struggles and current strategies; motivated participating villages through the sharing of stories, songs, narratives and testimonies while pursuing research questions together; politicized the movement constituencies through identification of sites of

political discussion and through subsequent attempts by ADEA leadership to use these forums more consciously to help with movement maturation and the continuing development of a movement consciousness; created opportunities to promote functional and political literacy through reading circles and publishing *Arkatha* ("our talk") as a people's research sharing journal; and has augmented local grain banks in all the movement villages to acknowledge the sharing of people's knowledge despite the numerous pressures on their time. From an academic standpoint, the research provides outsiders with an opportunity to try and understand *Adivasi* political preoccupations and learning in social action in a colonial context that constantly challenges outside interpretations and understanding of such phenomena in *Adivasi* lives. Attempting to understand and learn from subaltern social movement politics and learning adds a vital piece to social movement and critical adult learning studies (praxis) that seek to make sense of these political possibilities along with other movements in a world that is wrestling with the implications of the globalization of capital and westernization.

The research employs a combination of what Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, p. 177) refers to as a "strategy of consultation where efforts are made to seek support and consent" from the *Adivasis* and a "strategy of making space" whereby more *Adivasis* consciously become a part of the research process. Graham Smith's (1992) model of power sharing where researchers seek the assistance of the community to meaningfully support the development of a research process that seeks to be of benefit to the community has also been instructive here. The research is being conducted with a gender-balanced team of six community (movement)-based research assistants. Keeping in mind the key research questions just referred to and emergent questions, data sets are being developed around "mini research projects" defined by the team and the ADEA. Some examples include: (a) tapes and notes on ADEA leadership gatherings; (b) village/regional case studies around land and forest action; (c) developing a collection of cultural-political forms of expression (e.g. songs, poetry, laments, narrations with movement meaning and learning implications) and using this for movement education through *Arkatha*; and (d) participant observation in specific ceremonial and movement-related gatherings (e.g. trans-local movement gatherings). Data consists of observation and interview notes, diagrammatic and pictorial representations and taped songs, poetry and narrations, copies of which have been shared with the communities on several occasions. Whenever possible, data is jointly analyzed to determine emergent themes and key reflections (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the event this is not possible, research team members are collectively engaged in this task, checking back (member checks) with the communities and people concerned if uncomfortable with the interpretations being gleaned from the data. This enhances the plausibility of such interpretations and reduces the likelihood of distortions of *Adivasi* constructions.



The following discussion of learning in *Adivasi* social action pertains to the kinds of learning evident in and emergent from (a) ADEA engagements in trans-local movement activism addressing state-corporate machinations and development dispossession in South Orissa and (b) localized social action in the ADEA region in relation to state-caste interests and land and forest marginalization of *Adivasis* and *Dalits*.

***Critical, strategic, tactical and informational learning from trans-local movement activism: Addressing state-corporate machinations and development dispossession in South Orissa***

*Critical learning* pertains to the development of an analytical appreciation for the nature and process by which structured unequal relations of power (political-economic, cultural/racial/caste, of violence and the associated macro-micro socio-political interpolations) play out in relation to *Adivasi-Dalit* lived situations (e.g. the ability to read and expose the state-corporate nexus and its implications for *Adivasi-Dalit* past, present and future) – a type of learning that enhances or obscures (if readings are misjudgements) *strategic* and *tactical* learning. *Strategic learning* refers to the knowledge and learning crucial for the development of a “movement position” (e.g. developing an experiential and tacit sense of why it would be better to take one broad approach, such as outright resistance to development dispossession than another) during a given period of time, while *tactical learning* refers to the development of ideas and learning to select from a host of possible and specific manoeuvres that the movement organization would need to consider in relation to its strategic orientation (e.g. choosing when to initiate or escalate political pressure using several or particular means or a combination of means in a given time or contextual frame such as from gheraos or encirclements, rallies, blockades or letters to officials, etc.). *Informational learning* refers to the acquisition of new facts (mostly “outside or alien” constructs in relation to *Adivasi* conceptions of life such as legal and Constitutional stipulations and constructions of modernity that *Adivasi* social action inevitably “bumps into”) that inform *tactical, strategic and critical learning* as *Adivasis* learn what it takes to address development.

A focus group of 23 members (February, 2008) of the ADEA leadership (120 *Adivasi/Dalit* women and men) shared their observations pertaining to state-corporate development, elaborating on what they had learnt (elements of *critical, strategic, tactical and informational learning* cohere in these conversations) from trans-local movement participation in Kashipur and Chilika and other struggles in the Southern region. The Convenor of the ADEA (lead representative of the movement to outsiders) began proceedings with an exposition on state-corporate development and dispossession in the region that typifies the position of these leaders:

We are gathered here today as *Adivasi, Dalit* and peasant and fisher folk, as people of nature and as natural resource-dependent communities. We are

also the most "burnable" (expendable) communities and by this I mean we, the *Dalit*, the *Adivasi*, the farmer and the fisherman are always forced to give up whatever we have, suffer and sacrifice for the sake of what they call development. Why should the government develop this country at the cost of our way of life? The government and the industrialists and their intellectuals accuse us of being obstacles in the process of development and as enemies of modernization, enemies of progress and enemies of Indian society.

What they mean by this is that we are in the way of their process of exploitation of natural resources for this development. With the help of the big companies and industrialists and multinationals, the state and central governments want to continue to exploit our natural resources to the maximum. And we know what this means for us - we have people here from Maikanch who know how the state police always act for the industrialists and their friends in government who want to see the bauxite mine go forward in Kashipur against our wishes, even if it meant shooting 3 of our brothers; we have people here from Kalinganagar where *Dalits* and *Adivasis* are opposing the Tata steel plant and there too, 13 of us were gunned down by police; we have people here that opposed Tata Steel in Gopalpur and their shrimp-culture in Chilika - in all these movements and struggles many people have been killed by the state and industrialist mafias.

Meanwhile, the state government continues to sign MOUs with Indian and multinational mining companies - POSCO of South Korea alone is going to be responsible for the largest investment in India right here in Orissa and has proposed some 30 or more iron, steel and coal projects. The state policy makers, higher level officials of the state bureaucracy and administration, contractors and mediators and hired mafias all get rich through these projects and the big companies make big profits from exploiting our livelihood resources - why don't you ask the fishermen where all the fish have gone? - of course, all this is with the help of government acknowledgement and protection.

It is time we seriously start to think about this destruction in the name of development.... otherwise, like yesterday's children of nature, who never depended upon anybody for their food security, we will have no option but to go for mass transition from self-sufficient cultivators and forest and fish gatherers to migratory labourers in far away places. After displacement we stand to lose our traditions, our culture and our own historical civilization... from known communities we become scattered unknown people thrown into the darkness to wander about in an unknown world of uncertainty and insecurity.... People's movements have a duty to fulfill and must carry forward our aspirations and hopes, we must come together and engage in introspection and analysis and join together in a greater spirit of solidarity and cooperation to address this destruction. (Focus group notes, February, 2008)

This rendition was followed by an Oriya song (initiated by a member of the group with others joining in) that was repeated at several key junctures in the collective dialogue over the course of the afternoon:

People's organization (sangathan) is the only help, the only way  
It is the fountain of knowledge for the poor.

If we come together and get organized,  
 That will be the end of the exploiters and oppressors.  
 Out of hundred, 85 are poor, can 15 equal the strength of 85?  
 In the fight the 15 will be vanquished.  
 If we get frightened and withdraw like cowards, we will perish  
 We will fight through non-violent means (ahimsa rana)  
 How many deaths will we die from running away in fear?  
 Our hearts are weeping, our hearts are bleeding  
 But the people's organization (sangathan) is the only way...  
 (Focus group notes, February, 2008)

An analysis of the conversations shared during this gathering reveal several emergent *critical, strategic, tactical and informational* learnings around ADEA social action in trans-local political engagements in South Orissa, primarily related to Kashipur and with some references to Chilika, pertaining to expositions of state-corporate violations, development destruction and impositions on their communities.

ADEA leadership (through their engagements with these and several other struggles in the state) were only too well aware of Fifth Schedule Area land rights and protections (para 5(2)) available to tribal communities under the Indian Constitution or provisions that aim to prevent the dispossession (by non-tribals, corporate bodies and the government) of Scheduled Tribes and ensure preservation of their unique cultures and livelihoods. There was a clear understanding as well, that in the event there was to be any Scheduled Area (protected areas) land acquisition for development projects by non-tribal entities, it would be necessary for the parties concerned (under the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas or PESA Act) to: (a) hold consultations with the tribals prior to such acquisitions, (b) formulate and share details of a rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) package and (c) obtain consent of the localities concerned as per the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution recommended by the Bhuria Committee. *Gram Sabhas* or *Panchayats* (institutions of local self-governance and administrative units) have the power to prevent land alienation, even if it is instigated by higher levels of government. With this clear understanding in mind, the following alleged machinations (among other examples) were exposed:

Although the UAIL consortium was required to consult with the local people in Kashipur before attempting to acquire over 2600 acres of land for the proposed bauxite mine and refinery, the ADEA leaders claimed that consultations were a farce as:

- (i) police were used to obstruct participation in such consultations by affected villagers while outsiders (some of whom had been promised jobs) were bussed in for these sessions (as was the case for the Orissa State Pollution Control Board hearings around pollution control clearances for the project);

(ii) strong shows of local protest preceded attempts at consultation by UAIL and were then met with repression and bribes as compensation packages were raised (by as much as eight times) after the Maikanch firing and thumb prints secured and compensation forced on to those still resisting -

as one participant pointed out, "people were questioning why after so many years of protesting for a school and health centre which is not available in a 35km radius, they are now building a police station in Kuchipadar village instead!" (Focus group notes, February, 2008). Another member present stated (while lifting his pant leg to disclose scars),

... there were at least 5000 of us when they fired. I too was one of 12 injured (pointing to scar on the thigh) but I never spoke up for fear of police reprisals. I have endured my lot in poverty and silence and could not get treated... but we will never back down.... even in Chilika, after Tata's got shut down by the Supreme Court decision because they violated the Coastal Regulation Zone with their aquaculture project, their mafias came and destroyed people's fishing boats... it seems we act non-violently and use the law and the courts but they always respond with customary violence and break their own laws... (Focus group notes, February, 2008);

(iii) UAIL Communicators allegedly work with police and hired goons to coerce consent and ADEA members present mentioned that some signatures were taken at gunpoint while community leaders often felt pressure to consent given the heavy police presence and after "consenting," were fed meat and liquor; and

(iv) relocation and rehabilitation packages were never presented in writing (strictly verbal interactions) and several examples of exaggerated promises were shared in this focus group discussion.

Even though the companies are required to secure mining leases before proceeding with acquisition and project activities, as the UAIL case demonstrated to ADEA leaders, with the assistance of the Orissa Mining Corporation, a state body, the companies continued activities despite the expiry of the lease (which was obtained under questionable circumstances anyway) in 1996. Adivasi leaders said that environmental clearances were not obtained prior to the issuance of mining leases to UAIL and that the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) had eventually issued clearance based on an incomplete rapid Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), not to mention that site clearance was given to UAIL by MoEF in just 18 days when the norm is closer to a year from the date of application. The EIA conducted by Engineers India Ltd. was never made public as is required by law and Adivasi leaders suggested that UAIL claimed more land than they required for the proposed project. While plans were apparently made to conduct mandatory assessments of social, cultural and demographic impacts (given that this is a Scheduled Area) as late as in 2000, such information was never disclosed. Additionally, the Forest Act

requires forest clearance when forests are used for commercial projects and given that UAIL needed at least 200 acres of forest land, such clearances were also necessary. Similar discrepancies existed in relation to air and water pollution requirements. Armed with the knowledge of these irregularities, participating ADEA leaders emphasized the strategic importance of exposing the state and the UAIL consortium of companies through the progressive and alternative press, people's tribunal hearings (e.g. Indian People's Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights) and through international solidarity and corporate watchdog groups (e.g. Mines, Minerals and People). Furthermore, they spoke of how important it was to develop a people's consultation process like they did in December 2000, documenting written opposition to the project by all the affected Gram Sabhas and submitting these to the Chief Minister, Prime Minister, and the President of India. Such discrepancies were politicized in the movement constituencies thereby de-legitimizing UAIL and state claims in the region and increasing the tenor of outright opposition to the mining project (which has subsequently resulted in the withdrawal of multinationals Norsk Hydro of Norway, ALCAN of Canada, and Tata India due to company-cited "political concerns"). As one ADEA leader put it:

They are fighting against those who have everything and nothing to lose. We will persist and as long as they keep breaking their own laws - this only makes it easier for us! That is why even after the police firing in Maikanch in 2000, over 10,000 of us showed up to oppose the UAIL project the very next month. (Focus group notes, February, 2008)

ADEA leaders present at this focus group were aware that prolonged protest and social action in relation to such ventures (in the case of Kashipur, for instance, 15 years and counting) raises the cost of such projects (e.g. through escalating demands around relocation & rehabilitation and increased market rates for purchase of private lands from those owners with speculative interests around such developments, not to mention raising risk ratings for the state and the region which has an adverse impact on the financial feasibility of such investments).

Participant leaders in the focus group also revealed that in their desperation, when the state-corporate nexus fails to achieve its objectives for the project, they resort to extreme measures such as the alleged attempt to "denotify" Scheduled Tribes/ST (removal from the scheduled listings as tribes) as in the case of some 40,000 Jhodia Adivasis in Kashipur who once denotified and re-categorized (as Other Backward Classes or OBC) would be stripped of their Constitutional rights as tribes, thereby removing legal obstacles to land acquisition in Scheduled Areas that protect them. Participants pointed out that Jhodias living in areas that were of no commercial value were still being issued ST certificates, while they say the Paroja tribe has met this fate already in the interests of facilitating mining acquisitions. Other leaders present pointed to similar legal gymnastics while referring to the "successful" Chilika

Andolan – despite the movement’s victory in persuading the Tatas and the state government to abandon the proposed shrimp culture project in the early 1990s and the Orissa High Court decision that prohibited shrimp culture in Chilika lake, the victory was short-lived as even in the face of a Supreme Court judgment upholding the High Court decision, the industry lobbied the state to push through an Act of Parliament to nullify the court’s decision and pass an Aquaculture Authority Bill in 1997 that makes aquaculture permissible within the Coastal Regulation Zone. Under pressure from industry, the state is also being asked to take another look at the Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Constitution; Schedules that have been successfully utilized to defend Adivasi rights in Scheduled Areas.

According to some ADEA leaders, NGOs have played a questionable role in the state-corporate bid to foist development on the Adivasis. In March 1997, for instance, the UAIL consortium “floated an NGO” called the Utkal Rural Development Society in an effort to “use social development programs to bribe the communities into compliance with the UAIL project.”

Participants noted that other NGOs saw this agitation as an “opportunity” of sorts, as one NGO, for example, “promised the government to help contain the movement in return for rescinding its decision to deregister the NGO.” Another participant raised the point that NGOs often end up trying to “derail the people’s movement by forcing them into constitutional and legal frameworks” and by “relying on the slow pace of legal avenues” to “make it seem like they are working in solidarity with the people” but “all the time using this delaying tactic to help UAIL.” For instance, under recent Constitutional amendments as stated, decision-making authority has been shifted to the Gram Sabha/village level and NGOs tried to

channel public protest aimed at the company, to this nonsense about activating and working through *Gram Sabha* process which is subject to all kind of manipulations by state-corporate people. So, like this they are controlling the force of the movement. (Focus group notes, February, 2008)

In relation to NGOs, the ADEA have learnt not to simply run to the first NGO with funds but are even more selective and discerning in terms of their assessment of such engagements. This was the case with a recent offer for 10 years of project support from an European NGO that was discontinued into the second year by the ADEA leadership given what was construed as an attempt to

make us into program managers and statisticians concerned with funding accountability and the management of our people for the NGO. They expected us to work with village development committees (VDCs) run by a small group when we are used to making all decisions as a community. What they failed to realize is that we are engaged in an *Andolan* (movement struggle) and not a donor-focused program. (Focus group notes, February, 2008)

Instead, engaging in coalitions and networks (local, trans-local, national and transnational) has taken on an increasing significance, as participants are more aware of the odds faced by local activism. Hence, there is increased urgency around stepping up engagements with other struggles/movements (trans-local politics initially) in South Orissa.

**“Our ways” learning and ADEA local social action for land, forests and water: State-caste vectors and the daily struggles of the “adhusith” (pejorative reference to Adivasi-Dalit infestation and “pestilence” or spread of impurity)**

... and where we live, they call this area *adhusith* (Adivasi-Dalit infestations/pestilence)... we are condemned to the life of *ananta paapi* (eternal sinners), as *colonkith* (dirty/black/stained), or as *ghruniya* (despised and hated). (Kondh Adivasi leader of ADEA, Interview notes, village D, January, 2007)

Such comments regarding the inferior racial-caste categorization of the Adivasi and Dalits abound as they are denigrated as being backward, ignorant and irrelevant to the “new India” (“in the way of development” or seen as anti-development and therefore expendable), although such slurs have not been uncommon even in relation to the “old India.”

The historical and current understanding of *Adivasi-Dalit* colonization and a divide and rule politics (between *Adivasi* and *Dalit* subalterns) is made evident by comments such as, “We are the *mulo nivasi* (root people) and the people who dominated us, history has taught us, came here 5000 years ago” (Kondh *Adivasi* man, Interview notes, village D, January 2007) and “... we fought the British thinking that we will be equal in independent India” (Kondh elder, Interview notes, village D, January 2007) but

Today the *sarkar* (government) is doing a great injustice (*anyayo durmiti*)... the way they have framed laws around land-holding and distribution, we the poor are being squashed and stampeded into each other’s space and are getting suffocated (*dalachatta hoi santholitho ho chonti*). This creation of inequality (*taro tomyo*) is so widespread and so true... They tell us they want to modernize, make machines and industries for themselves. To do this, they are doing forcible encroachment of our land – they are all over our hills and stones. They are coming quietly to our forests and hills and in secrecy they are making plans to dig them up and destroy them (mining reference)... they are diverting our water to the towns for their use. They are making dams and water reservoirs, where our villages are to be submerged and we have to leave the place, leave the land and become landless and homeless. We have become silent spectators (*niravre dekhuchu*) to a repeated snatching away of our resources. Whenever we have tried to assert our land rights, we have been warned by the upper castes, their politician friends and the wealthy and have faced innumerable threats and retaliations. The *ucho-barga* (dominant castes and classes) will work to divide and have us fight each other till we are reduced to dust (*talitalanth*). (Kondh Adivasi man, Interview notes, village D, January 2007)

We have bullocks and ploughs and then the government introduced tractors but we could not buy these in the first place, even if anyone wanted to. Then they introduced fertilizers and pesticides and poisoned our cultivable land and water. They introduced soap, shampoos, Surf (detergent) and spices and changed our habits, food habits too. Then they tried to take away our land and forests... They have cut down all the trees from their mountains and forests and now they want to take our forest. We had trees from our forefather in our forest. They took them away and planted useless trees. Our forefathers never needed to dig holes and plant trees. We never gave trees fertilizer. But they came and spoilt the trees.... now that they don't have the waters of Rushikulya river at Chatrapur, they want to take the Nanding too. Water from Nanding will irrigate their fertile land and they will enhance their wealth. (Interview notes, village T, February, 2008)

These eloquent and succinct articulations of *Adivasi-Dalit* exploitation and developmentalist political-economic and cultural penetration, provide a glimpse into a caste, class and state politics of divide and rule (pitting subalterns, *Adivasi* and *Dalit* in this case, against each other in the struggle for resources, while diverting and capturing land, forest and water for urban-industrial development elsewhere), not to mention the introduction of agricultural and consumption practices which undermine *Adivasi* ways. Analysis of data sets reveals the details of a systematic process of *Adivasi-Dalit* divide and rule tactics by the state-business-caste nexus as pointed out by *Adivasi-Dalit* ADEA villagers including (to point to a few examples): (i) state provision of food relief (this is a drought prone area) in accordance with caste v. tribe status, whereby caste villages are ignored in such distributions, (ii) propagandist politics of Constitutional protections around forest, land and water suggesting that the *Adivasi* are the only owners of these resources (*jungle, jal, jammeen hamara* – forest, water and land are ours/*Adivasi*), (iii) a caste politics which differentiates between *Adivasi* as being Hindu and “of higher status” (despite ample evidence of caste prejudices being leveled at *Adivasis* as well, not to mention their predominantly animist beliefs) than *Dalits* who are most likely Christian converts (oft times converting to escape “untouchability” and caste prejudice and avail of missionary material supports) and traitors to the Hindu *rashtra* (country), (iv) ensuring the reproduction of a system of *Dalit* landlessness through preferential and discriminatory applications of land/forest laws and legal processes and implementation (e.g. only charging *Dalits* exorbitant “fees” – illegal extraction or rent seeking – for land *patta* (title) applications, and (v) double standards and ill treatment at government Public Distribution System outlets (PDS or state food security provisions) for subsidized food and daily essentials.

Learning from these historical and contemporary state-caste material and cultural colonizations of *Adivasis* and *Dalits* in the region, the ADEA has responded with several efforts on multiple political-economic and cultural fronts, including promoting collective learning around the need for subaltern unity in the face of these divisive tactics. An ADEA representative emphasizes this point (Interview notes, village D, January 2007):



*Ekta Abhijan* (ADEA) stands on a root called unity (*ekta*) and the promotion of unity will always be the primary requirement – a unity of minds, hearts and feelings of togetherness. The artificially created sense of difference, divisions and *jati-goshti* (caste-class feelings) need to be destroyed. Our *dhwoja* (flag) is unity (*ekta*) and we have to fly it high (*oraiba*). The flag that ADEA flies is of the people who have lost their land and their forests and who are losing their very roots.

In response to the political-economic incursions, the Convenor of the ADEA states:

We are forest dwellers, poor people, peasants and fisherfolk and we are in all aspects of our life styles different from them. Let us get involved in campaigns to save our forest, land and water which sustain us. Let us occupy land... because I now know that the government will never think about us seriously even if we depend completely on agriculture for our livelihood. If companies like Tata and Vedanta ask the government for land, it is ever ready to oblige them at throwaway prices... this is how the government is planning and acting against our interest. (Focus group notes, February, 2008)

However, elders are quick to point out that land and forest occupation must also be done in accordance with “*our ways*” (the importance of learning to address these incursions in a manner consistent with *Adivasi* culture – ways that are being challenged by the “new agriculture” for instance, and modern legalities and corresponding constructions of individual ownership and the commodification of nature):

Earlier all these forests and the land area belonged to all the people who lived in the area. In the past, in the time of our grandparents, we had one common graveyard, we had a common system of sharing (or *bheda* in the Saora language, in relation to sharing of fruits, benefits, forest products, meat, and land/forest usage) and we had a collective contribution system to support each other. Land was not assigned to any particular person or family – it was a common claim that goes back to our ancestors. We were together in joys and sorrows.

But since the government’s revenue demarcation of land and forests, what belonged to all of us suddenly got divided into two *moujas*/areas of claim and people have started saying, “this is mine and this is mine.” They (the *Adivasis* of the neighbouring village) are now not allowing us to even set foot in their *mouja* and they are saying that you should not cut our trees or bamboo for your use. And we are doing the same. This is not our way. (Interview notes, village D, January, 2007)

Another village elder sheds light on the significance of the forest-ways of the *Adivasi* and their continued significance despite the alleged promises of modernity:

Who wants to go to the city to join the Oriyas and do business and open shops and be *shahari* (city/moderns) if they give you a chance or to do labour like donkeys to get one meal? Even if they teach us, we do not want to go to the cities – these are not the ways of the *Adivasi*. We cannot leave our

forests (*ame jangale chari paribo nahi*). The forest is our second home (after the huts). There is no distance between our homes and the forest. You just come out and you have everything you need.... My friends and brothers, we are from the forest. That is why we use the small sticks of the *karanja* tree to brush our teeth - not tooth brushes. Our relationship with the forest is like a finger nail is to flesh (*nakho koo mangsho*) - we cannot be separated. The past is the present and the present is the past and they are the future, past and present. We are as we are, we are as we have been and we will be as we are and have been. That is why we are *Adivasi*. (Interview notes, village D, January 2007)

The ADEA movement villages have taken on several initiatives to address state-caste led daily intrusions into *Adivasi-Dalit* lives and livelihoods over the past decade, actions that have been all the more urgent given the encircling pressures of mining, forestry, plantation and dam related incursions as has become painfully clear from trans-local activisms pertaining to Kashipur and similar state-corporate ventures of development dispossession of *Adivasi* and *Dalit* communities. The ADEA leaders see these forms of social action as preemptive and proactive moves to assert ADEA community control over land, forest, water, and culture. These include: (i) a systematic process of collective land and forest occupation through millet and fruit orchard cultivation (over 7000 acres or more have been "encroached" based on the last count) into land/forest zones that offer maximum potential for re-classifications and *pattas* to *Adivasis* and *Dalits*, i.e., these areas are in dispute and villages have made claims through the revenue courts in a process of "collective mapping, growing, eating, and claiming" (for a discussion of this process, see Kapoor & Prasant, 2002); (ii) promotion and consolidation of grain banks and a network of seed-banks promoting local seed varieties while opposing use of fertilizers and pesticides or GM seeds; (iii) continued and stepped-up use of the *Adivasi* collective labour system where entire villages work family and collective plots together; (iv) rejuvenation of the notion of ownership as stewardship for the community as opposed to personal possession as in the case of fruit trees, for example; (v) a systematic move to take over the PDS outlets (from mid-upper caste resource captures) in the 9 panchayat regions of the movement villages (currently 6 PDS outlets are being managed by *Adivasi-Dalit* women's groups); (vi) collective (regional and/or multi-regional) political pressure tactics in support of addressing movement concerns in each village or region; (vii) the securing of hutment area *pattas* for over 60% of the villages and random evictions are now no longer possible in these areas (prior to this, it was not unusual for people to go to work in the fields and come back to a village that had been bulldozed to make way for a cashew plantation); (viii) organized pressure to enable infrastructure development through mobilization of the state for local agriculture (wells, paved roads, check dams, canal systems, water-catchments etc.); and (ix) putting up ADEA region candidates for elections to local government positions to ensure control over state funds and projects in the area (*Gram Sabha* and *Panchayat* offices and *Zilla* level).

Additionally and in relation to movement building, the research process has been used by the ADEA to determine where (locations) different groups belonging to the ADEA (gendered, caste-*Adivasi*, different *Adivasis*, age-based) congregate to discuss movement issues pertaining to *ekta* (unity), land, forests, water, livelihood, state-*Adivasi* relations, caste relations and other matters of movement concern. This knowledge is being used by the movement to encourage such discussions and analysis in the interests of a maturing movement consciousness necessary for solidifying the prospects for movement pressure tactics and accomplishments. For instance, sites of political learning and discussion include: *toddy ghat* (local pub for men), butcher stall (for men), earthen pot fire place (for Saora *Adivasi* men), wine cooking ghat, lice-picking place/verandah, bathing stream and well site (for women). The *Adivasi-Dalit* people's research sharing journal documenting research conversations (*Arkatha* or "our talk") serves to encourage popular dissemination of the research reflections and is used at some of these sites in reading circles (Observation notes, February, 2006).

Together, these *critical, strategic, tactical* and *informational* learnings along with "*our ways learning*" have strengthened the ADEA movement's ability to analyze, partially predict and then position itself in order to secure some of its objectives around food sovereignty, land and forests and to curb the possibility of mining destruction and dispossession of *Adivasis*. Knowledge gained through social action informs "pre-emptive" discussions (inoculation exercises through popular education in the movement villages and beyond); political knowledge-building (movement consciousness) in the movement constituency; and tighter organizational and tactical understanding in relation to social action that is planned (e.g. development of systematic land "encroachments") or spontaneous (e.g. joint actions instigated by critical incidents such as forest invasions by bamboo mafias working with or for the timber industry or the large scale theft of Minor Forest Products). Accelerating this process has become an urgent priority in the face of current neoliberal challenges being posed by the corporatized-state and its mining expansionism and agro-industrial developmental ambitions. In the final analysis, the *Adivasi* say:

We are demanding a place for ourselves - we are questioning the government and asking them to help us develop our land using our ways. ADEA's idea is that our livelihood should be protected and our traditional occupations and relationship to the land and forest be protected in the form of community control over land and forest in our areas and this is our understanding of our Constitutional rights too.... If they can help the *shaharis* (moderns/urban city peoples) destroy the forests, then they can and should help us to protect it and listen to our story too." (Kondh leader, Interview notes, January, 2007)

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS AND SOME CONCEPTUAL-ANALYTICAL  
POSTSCRIPTS: DEVELOPMENT DISPOSSESSION AND ADIVASI LEARNING  
IN ADIVASI SUBALTERN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS (SSMS)

Drawing directly from the experiences and interpretations of ADEA social action and this research partnership with the ADEA exploring learning in *Adivasi* social movements, it is possible to briefly elaborate on some conceptual and analytical considerations pertaining to SSMS and learning in *Adivasi* SSMS, while respecting the self-definition and integrity of these movements in the global South. In terms of the possible constellation of social movements, SSMS need to be understood as distinct formations in relation to modernist/post-modernist movement categorizations (Carroll, 1997) such as Old Social Movements (OSMs) (referring to labour struggles in industrial/post-industrial society in relation to capital and labour's quest for capturing the state) (Holst, 2002), New Social Movements (NSMs) (referring to identity struggles around race and gender for instance or human rights and urban middle class environmentalist civil society groups with an interest in influencing/reforming the state) or Global Social Movements (GSMs) (referring to "globalized" and transnational strains of NSMs – global civil society, for instance) (Hall, 2000). The distinction needs to be drawn in the interests of preventing the modernist/post-modernist colonization of definitions and projects of radicalism, change and associated notions of critique, not to mention recognition of the plurality of social action and possible presents and futures. This distinction needs to be drawn so that SSMS are not simply erased or ignored as agents of political worth since they do not appear to cohere with the teleology of dominant movement conceptions (modern forms) or worse still, are subsumed (colonized/disappeared and with that, an anti/critical colonial politics is theoretically submerged) within the allegedly more significant (radical?) politics of OSM (socialist) and NSM (civil-societarian reformism) movement formations.

While there are several plausible distinctions that might help to separate SSMS from these other movements (see Kapoor, 2008), a key distinction has to do with their possible location in what Chatterjee (2001, p.165) refers to as "political society" as opposed to civil society. For Chatterjee, in the Indian post-colonial context, civil society means "those characteristic institutions of modern associational life originating in Western societies, which are based on equality, autonomy, freedom of entry and exit, contract, deliberative decision-making..." (p. 172), "civil society as bourgeois society... and the mark of non-Western modernity as an always incomplete project of modernization" (p. 172),

set up by the nationalist elites in the era of colonial modernity (though often as part of the anti-colonial struggle)... these institutions embody the desire of this elite to replicate... the substance of Western modernity... a desire for a new ethical life conforming to the virtues of the Enlightenment and bourgeois freedom and whose known cultural forms are those of Western Christianity. (p. 174)

Political society, on the other hand (Chatterjee, p. 177) refers to population groups which make collective demands on the state founded on a violation of the law – they are not proper citizens but populations who survive by sidestepping the law – and the state and civil society deal with these people not as bodies of citizens belonging to a lawfully constituted civil society but as “populations” deserving welfare. While civil society was the most significant site of transformation in the colonial era, in the post-colonial period it is political society that is the most significant site of transformation according to Chatterjee, who states that in “the latest phase of the globalization of capital, we will be witnessing an emerging opposition between civil society and political society” (p. 178). This is a case in point when attempting to understand the place and growing contemporary significance of *Adivasi*/other SSMs in India and the South. As civil societarian activism insists on defining justice and possibility as a project of “inclusion and equity” within modernity while the neoliberal state-market forces insist on a politics of dispossession of *Adivasis* “in the way of development,” *Adivasi* will persist with an anti-colonial (resting on critiques of modernity and its historical trajectory of impositions on difference and pluralism) politics of political-economic and spiritual place and cultural recognition aimed at state-corporate development dispossession (material marginalizations) and state-caste cultural relegations (race-caste, urban-forest/rural prejudice). Unlike in the case of NSM (civil society) politics or neoliberal market-state politics, SSM formations arguably have a tentative area of political intersection with OSM formations as capital exploits labour and engages in primitive accumulation vis-à-vis other modes of production (*Adivasi*) resulting in acts of dispossession, thereby creating the prospects for partial cross-pollinations between anti-hegemonic (*Adivasi*) and counter-hegemonic (labour) social action.

Given the possibility of a different social location in political society for SSMs, it would not be a stretch to recognize that in terms of learning in social action, the types of learning, their epistemic basis, the purposes for their activation and so on, would also differ to an extent. As proposed elsewhere (Kapoor, 2008), both, from an analytical point of view (research) and one that relates to contributing toward movement praxis (learning in social action), a possible interactive (i.e., the proposed dimensions are not discrete) schemata for understanding learning in *Adivasi* SSMs might include: (a) macro-political-economic and socio-cultural dimensions (e.g. *Adivasis* assess, analyze and massage their understanding of the political-economic and socio-cultural implications of state-corporate led development-dispossession and its implications for their lives and possible courses of action open to them), (b) micro-political and intra-communal dimensions (e.g. *Adivasis* critically evaluate the schisms in the movement such as questions pertaining to *Adivasi-Dalit* relations and state-caste interests in exploiting these socio-cultural fault lines), (c) specific learning and knowledge processes within movements (e.g., assessing and using inside-outside

knowledge engagements or determining where movement learning takes place and who is engaged in a given space or the kinds of knowledge being employed) – this paper, for instance, elaborates on the *critical, strategic, tactical, informational, and "our ways" learning* that takes place in ADEA trans-local and local social action and (d) consciously studying and simultaneously contributing towards the catalytic validity of research and related movement praxis (e.g., research as a process of creating movement introspection and identity as "*our ways learning*" discussions demonstrate).

In conclusion, this article has traced the kinds of learning engendered through *Adivasi* trans-local and local SSM action addressing state-corporate developmental collusions, state-caste interests and the resulting dispossession of *Adivasis* from land, forest and ways of life given the contemporary economic liberalization drive to exploit resources in the rural hinterlands in India. It has also been suggested that *Adivasi* SSM formations are distinct from (without implying that these are "static formations" frozen in time, space or politics that have ceased to learn) other modernist conceptions of movements and that this distinction needs to be drawn in the interests of duly recognizing the politics (and corresponding learning in SSM action) of these anti-colonial political formations that have a history which predates contemporary movement formations, old or new.

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#### NOTES

1. This expression is borrowed from Blaser, M., Feit, H., & McRae, G. (Eds.), (2004). *In the way of development: Indigenous peoples, life projects and globalization*. London: Zed.
2. The author acknowledges the assistance of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada for this research into "Learning in *Adivasi* (original dweller) social movements" in India through a Standard Research Grant (2006-2009).
3. In the *Adivasi* context, some defining elements of a social movement include: (a) movement as a process of articulation of concerns; (b) movement as defined by the maturity and growing unity of an organized presence (movement organization) that engages a critical mass of people with like-concerns; and (c) movement as organized action directed at oppositional social structural and institutional forces that "give cause" for such movements in the first instance.
4. This term comes from Antonio Gramsci's use of "subaltern" and "subaltern consciousness" (1971, p. 55, pp. 325-326) in relation to the Italian peasantry and is being used here to refer to *Adivasis*, low caste/Dalit agricultural labourers, sharecroppers, smallholder peasants, artisans, shepherds and migrant landless labour working in mines and plantations. The term also alludes to the dialectical relations of superordination and subordination that define social relations in hierarchical social formations (Ludden, 2005, p. 215), while keeping in mind Guha's (1982, pp. 5-8) observation that there are ambiguities inherent in the concept when applied to the Indian context.

5. For instance, the displacement of 33 million development refugees from their homes (due to dams, mining and other projects) is referenced as a “social cost” (a euphemism) by the Indian government (Rajagopal, 2004, p. 195).
6. Hence the tendency to discredit and subsequently emasculate and conflate most subaltern movements with an impotent post-modern individualist politics of the particular (self-absorbed) or worse still, as regressive calls for primitivism thereby exposing the Marxist under-belly of racial/cultural chauvinisms.

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