

Table of Contents

An area study report on Kashtakari Sanghatana and its links and activities.....	2
A BRIEF PROFILE OF THE AREA:.....	2
A Brief History of formation of Kashtakari Sanghatana:.....	2
Aims and Objectives of the organisation.....	3
Organisational Structure.....	3
Activities of the organisation.....	3
Militant Approach:.....	4
Origin of Communist movement in the area.....	4
Friction and clashes between Kashtakari Sanghatana and CPM.....	4
Split in the leadership.....	5
Liberation Theology.....	5
Paulo Friere.....	6
Anti-Hindu activism of Pradip Prabhu.....	6
Pradip Prabhu's links with Shramik Sanghatana and Bhoomi Sena:.....	7
Alliance with Lal Nishan Party:.....	8
Kashtakari Sanghatana's Links with CEHAT.....	8
Prabhu's links with OXFAM.....	8
Prabhu's links Adivasi Gotra Mahasabha in Kerala.....	8
Links with Fr. Thomas Kocheri:.....	9
Prabhu's Links with Xavier Dias:.....	9
Pradip Prabhu's links with other social, christian action and human rights groups in the country.....	10
Sanghatana's Links with Left Extremist Organisations.....	11
Prabhu's Clout among the top bureaucrats and judges:.....	11
Academic Assignments.....	12
Training & Consultancy Assignment.....	12

Government Assignments.....	13
-----------------------------	----

An Area Study Report on Kashtakari Sanghatna, its activities and links

The second Vatican Council held from 1962 to 1965 had taken a decision approving a proposal by a strong lobby of Latin American Church activists to allow the Christian missionaries all over the world to work among the poor and marginalised sections of people and to organise and empower them to fight against their dehumanising conditions. The Christian action movement that emerged in Latin American countries following this Vatican II decision led to the formation of Liberation Theology movement by a Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez in 1968. This Christian action group movement soon spread to African and Asian countries also and some such groups started coming up in India also since early 1970s. The Kashtakari Sanghatana founded by Peter D'Mello and two of his associates namely Nicholas Cordazo @ Nicky Bhau and Sushila D'Souza in the tribal belt of Dahanu region in district Thane, Maharashtra is also one such group inspired by Liberation Theology.

A Brief profile of the area

The tribal belt of Thane district comprises mainly of Dahanu, Talasari, Jawahar, Mokhada, Vikramgad, Wada, Palghar, Shahapur and Murbad talukas. The Warlis are the dominant tribal group who constitute about 60% of the tribal population in the area. Other tribal groups present in the area include Katkaris, Konkans, Mahadeo Kolis, Vanjaris, Dhodis and Dubalis. The terrain is mostly plain with vast forest areas in the interior region. Jawahar is located at an altitude of 1670'. The Adivasis in the region are mostly poor and illiterate. Agriculture is their main occupation. The towns are connected by roads with regular state transport bus service. However, in the interior areas the communication system still remains poor. The Kashtakari Sanghatana has got substantial influence in Dahanu, Talasari and Jawahar talukas and marginal influence in Mokhada and Vikramgad talukas.

A Brief History of formation of Kashtakari Sanghatana:

Through the Kashtakari Sanghatana was founded in only 1978, the ground work for founding this organisation was started in 1976 when Peter D'Mello, a Jesuit priest, came to work under Talasari Mission, Thane, with the specific objective of building up a people's movement in the area by organising the local landless tribals and other forest dwellers to fight for their various demands and rights. In early 1976 he organised a ten-day youth festival of tribal youths at Ashagad in Dahanu taluka with the objective of making them conscious of their rights and responsibilities and prepare them for organising struggles against their exploitation. A few more youth festivals (16 in all) were conducted soon in the area primarily to prepare the local tribal youths for their new role as tribal militants and also to build up a cadre base for the proposed new organisation. The Kashtakari Sanghatana was formally launched on 23rd December, 1978 with its headquarters at Siesne village in Dahanu taluka, District Thane.

The meeting on 23-12-1978 also took the following decisions to define the basic character of the Kashtakari Sanghatana.

1. The organisation will be a left-democratic non-party formation of tribals and marginal peasants.

2. It would be a struggle-based organisation with a closed-fist holding the scales of justice as its symbol

3. The Sanghatana would endeavour to integrate its own struggles with the struggles of other urban and rural toilers

Peter D'Mello adopted the Hindu name Pradip Prabhu in 1978 and both Prabhu and Nicky left the mission establishment in 1979.

Aims and Objectives of the organisation

1. To work among the Adivasis in the tribal belt of Thane district and involve themselves in the process of their articulation, assertion and autonomy.

2. To get involved in facilitating poverty alleviation programmes and enhancing participatory development.

3. To fight for the rights of Adivasis, especially the land ownership rights of forest dwellers and their rights over minor forest produce and engendering greater political and economic autonomy of the village in administering its own affairs.

4. To promote literacy and adult education on the lines advocated by Paulo Faure, a revolutionary educationalist of Brazil

5. To empower the Adivasis to fight for their rights and demands and to pave the way for their political mobilisation to confront the established power structures and strengthening community structures of decision making to resist imposition of development plans.

6. To fight against all kinds of exploitation of tribals by rich land-lords, money-lenders and businessmen in the area.

7. To organise the Adivasis to fight against their harassment by corrupt police and forest officials and creation of mechanisms of resistance to abuse of power by the local government officials.

8. To fight for the implementation of payment of minimum wages as per the minimum wages act.

9. To promote healthcare, hygiene, etc.

Organisational Structure

The organisation does not have designated leaders and they are simply called leaders or organisers.. Presently Brian Lobo and Mrs. Shiraz Balsara w/o Pradip Prabhu manage the affairs of the Sanghatana. The sanghatana has a three-tier system of village Committees, Area Committees and the Council of representatives. The organisation collects Rs.50 per family as annual subscription from its members.

Activities of the organisation

The Kashtakari Sanghatana which started its activities in the area from 1978 projected itself as a leftist organisation which wanted to protect the local Adivasis from exploitation and harassment by rich landlords, money-lenders and government officials and ensure a dignified life to the Adivasis. The Sanghatana leaders soon started a campaign among the local Adivasis advocating the need for their unity in building up a resistance movement against their exploitation by rich landlords, money-lenders

and govt. officials. They also educated the Adivasis about their traditional rights over the forest land and minor forest produce and the illegality of their eviction from the forest land. Morchas on these issues were also taken out periodically to concerned government offices. The Sanghatana leaders also used to conduct awareness campaigns among them through study classes in the night on issues like their citizenship rights, their right to lead a dignified life, need to maintain hygiene, ill-effects of liquor addiction and the importance of children's education. During such study classes it was always emphasised by Sanghatana leaders like Pradip Prabhu that the Adivasis always had a separate ethnic identity with their own separate gods, religious customs, etc. and the need to maintain the same and cautioning them against getting misguided by the VHP propaganda of claiming them as a part of Hinduism. Special study classes were held to promote adult education on the lines propagated by Paulo Friere, a revolutionary educationist of Brazil. Other than tribals, its mobilisation also included workers in unorganised sectors like construction, salt-pans and brick kilns.

Militant Approach

Ever since its inception, the Kashtakari Sanghatana leaders have been inciting the local Advasis in the area to take a hostile stance against the forest officials dubbing them as intruders into the Advasis' domain and usurping their ancestral property. They have also been encouraging them to encroach upon more and more forest land which was owned by their ancestors and hence rightfully belonged to them and to put up stiff resistance, if necessary by force, against any attempt by forest authorities to evict them. Because of this stance advocated by Prabhu, there had been many clashes between supporters of Kashtakari Sanghatana and the forest officials in the region in the past.

Prabhu also used to tell his Adivasis supporters to treat the State Police and all other government officials as their class enemies as they were all working as agents of the rich land lords and money lenders. He also used to advise them to go always in groups if any of them was called to the Police Station or any other government office and to be assertive in dealing with the concerned officials.

The Kashtakari Sanghatana also used to conduct "Peoples Court" in the villages to give instant justice to Adivasis who were victims of cheating by shopkeepers, money lenders, etc. The accused were not only fined by such courts but forced to apologise to the victims. This had a positive impact on the shopkeepers' attitude to the Adivasis and it also helped the Sanghatana to expand its influence in the area.

Origin of Communist movement in the area

The Dahanu-Jawhar tribal belt in the district Thane has been a communist stronghold since 1945 because of the good work done first by communist leader Shamrao Parulekar and later by his wife Smt. Godavari Parulekar after his untimely death. The Adivasis in the area who were extremely poor and illiterate were living like slaves in a most unhygienic conditions with most of them in perpetual bondage to rich landlords and money-lenders in the area. Shamrao and Godavari Parulekar who were moved by the plight of local Adivasis lived amongst them, sharing their sufferings, organised them under the banner of communist party and fought for improving their lot. In 1964 when the communist party split into CPI and CPM, Godavari Parulekar along with her supporters sided with the CPM and since then the area remains a citadel of the CPM. Late Godavari Parulekar with her long and dedicated work in the area still commands a lot of love and respect among the local Advasis.

Friction and clashes between Kashtakari Sanghatana and CPM

The Kashtakari Sanghatana's claim about it being a leftist organisation was never taken seriously by the local CPM leaders because of the missionary background of its leaders. They even suspected it of being a church organisation propped up by the CIA to weaken the hold of the CPM on the local Adivasis and also to facilitate the conversion activities of the Christian missionaries in the area. The vigorous campaign launched by the dedicated and highly qualified Kashtakari Sanghatana leaders among the local Adivasis taking up their various issues and grievances and the defection of some CPM supporters to Kashtakari Sanghatana was naturally resented by the CPM and the intimidatory tactics used by the CPM to check the growth of Kashtakari Sanghatana led to mounting tension and outbreak of prolonged violence in the area from 1979.

The CPM and Sanghatana workers agreed to a truce when the Lok Sabha elections were declared in January 1980. In this election, the Kashtakari Sanghatana which still wanted to befriend the CPM extended its support to the CPM to the utter amazement of all observers. From the point of view of CPM it was just an opportunistic alliance to get some additional votes. But for the Kashtakari Sanghatana, it was a big opportunity to get the recognition as a leftist force which will give them more acceptability among the local Adivasis.

The alliance between the two groups continued in the assembly elections held in May 1980 and LS Kom, the CPM candidate for the Jawhar assembly constituency was elected with the support of the Kashtakari Sanghatana. But after the elections the relations between the two groups deteriorated again following the defection of more CPM cadres to the Kashtakari Sanghatana. Fresh incidents of violence began to take place between the two sides with greater fury. The police had to open fire to disperse the supporters of the two warring groups at Khoripada in Dahanu on 9-10-1983 in which one CPM worker was killed. A list of cases registered in connection with the clashes between the supporters of CPM and Kashtakari Sanghatana from Jan, 1979 to Dec, 1983 is enclosed.

Split in the leadership

The office of Kashtakari Sanghatana which was earlier located at Siesne village in Dahanu was shifted to Dahanu town in 1983. In 1984 Pradip Prabhu married his long time girlfriend and Sanghatana activist Shirag Balsara, a Parsi, who had earlier worked as a reporter for "Eve's Weekly" and later as a lecturer at Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai. However serious differences cropped up soon between Shirag Balsara and Kashtakari Sanghatana leaders Nicky Bhau and Susheela D'Souza who resented the authoritative style of functioning of Shirag. In 1984 Nicky Bhau and Susheela quit the Kashtakari Sanghatana, got married and went to Assam and Meghalaya to work with some local Christian action groups and also to make an analytical study about the impact of Assam agitation led by Prafulla Kumar Mohanta on the local population. After establishing contacts with Prafulla Kumar Mohanta and completing a six month study about the Assam agitation, Nicky Bhau along with his wife Susheela came back to Mumbai to take a two-year teaching assignment at the Tata Institute of Social Science. Presently he is associated with the Maharashtra Fishermen's Forum and Fishermen's cooperative in the Bandra-Goregaon belt. Susheela is associated with the NGOs Stree Shakti Sanghatana and Maharashtra Fishermen's Forum. Nicky Cordozo has also been taking a leading role in putting up resistance against the state government's approval for developing Gorai area in Mumbai as a special entertainment zone.

The departure of Nicky Bhau and Susheela in no way affected the growth of Kashtakari Sanghatana in Dahanu- Jawhar tribal belt as many other activist friends of Prabhu came from Mumbai and other places and worked with Prabhu in strengthening the Kashtakari Sanghatana after the serial clashes between the CPM and Kashtakari Sanghatana during the 1979-1983 period. The intensity of the

confrontation between the two sides gradually showed a declining trend except for a few months in 1986 and again in 1989. After 1989 there has not been any planned violence between the two organisations and the situation in the area seems to have stabilised with the CPM gradually giving up its earlier belligerent attitude towards the Sanghatana.

Liberation Theology

Pradip Prabhu's activism in support of the marginalised sections of people is inspired by a radical Christian action movement called Liberation Theology which originated in Latin American countries in the late sixties. It was formally founded by a Peruvian priest Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez in 1968. The decision of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) to allow the Church activists to involve themselves in radical movements by organising rural poor had paved the way for the emergence of Christian action groups in Latin American Countries. As per this new concept, the Church leaders should take more active role in identifying with their target sections of marginalised people and organise them to fight for their rights and grievances. The Liberation Theology activists blended the catholic techniques with marxist economic philosophy to give a new direction for their movement in favour of the poor. By 1970 many radical Christian action groups had emerged in Latin American countries like Peru, Columbia and Argentina. Soon such action groups started emerging in some of the African and Asian countries also including India. The Liberation Theologians all over the world have been using the revolutionary teaching method of Brazilian educationist Paulo Friere to promote literacy among the poor and illiterate. This method of teaching helped them to bring about an awareness among the people about their social environment and empowered them to confront the oppressive system. Pradip Prabhu was highly influenced by Paulo Friere's teachings and he had taken the radical book "Pedagogy of the oppressed" as his guide for promoting literacy and militancy among his Adivasi followers in Dahanu Region.

Paulo Friere

Paulo Friere was a radical catholic leader and an eminent educationist of Brazil who is well known in the literacy circles all over the world for his contribution in promoting adult education and struggles for social justice. He believed that literacy has a potential role in empowering the marginalised groups to engage in political action aimed at resisting the inequalities in the society. Friere was born into a middle class catholic family at Recife, Brazil on 19th Sept 1921. He started his career as a school teacher who also took active interest in church movements. Later while working as a social activist among the slum dwellers of Recife, he increasingly focused his attention on adult literacy. In 1959, he submitted a well researched doctoral thesis on his experiences in teaching which was so well received that he soon rose to become the head of the Brazilian National Literacy Programme. In 1964, after a military coup Friere was imprisoned and exiled to Bolivia and then to Chile. While working with the Institute of Agrarian Reform in Chile, he wrote his most radical book "Pedagogy of the oppressed". This book preached a philosophy that taught the oppressed classes the political and economic contradictions in the society which created the existing exploitative system and empowered them to challenge and fight against the oppressive system. By 1972 Friere was already acclaimed as the authentic voice of the third world. He soon became a visiting professor at Harvard University and later a special consultant to the world council of churches in Geneva. With the return of democracy to Brazil in the 1980s he was able to return to his homeland where he was closely associated with the Worker's Party. He died at Sao Paulo, Brazil on 1-5-1997.

Anti-Hindu activism of Pradip Prabhu

In the initial stage of the Kashtakari Sanghatana, its support base consisted mainly of Adivasis converted to Christianity. Most of the Sanghatana's tribal leaders were also Christians. Gradually however Prabhu and his associates were able to bring more Hindu Adivasis into the Sanghatana's fold. Though the Sanghatana leaders were not found indulging in conversion activities, Prabhu's anti-Hindu bias was explicitly evident during the study classes Prabhu used to conduct for the Adivasis in the region as part of the organisation's adult education programme. He used to tell them that the Adivasis were never a part of Hindu religion as they had their own distinct culture and religious identity which was quite different from that of the majority Hindu religion. He also used to caution them against getting influenced by the propaganda of some Hindu/VHP activists working in the area and all their claims about Adivasis as a part of Hindu community. He further used to tell them that the upper caste Hindus who came from outside treated the Adivasis as the descendents of "asuras" and they usurped the land of Adivasis and Dalits and kept them in a slave-like condition for last many centuries. The purpose of such indoctrination was obviously to generate an anti-Hindu feeling amongst them.

The 'Mahanubhav Panth' is a Vaishnav sect which has its origin in Gujarat. About 1500 Adivasi families in some of the villages in Dahanu taluka located near Maharashtra-Gujarat border are followers of this sect. The members of this sect are also called Malkaris because of the tulsī bead necklace (Vaishnav mala) that they wear. The followers of this sect are strictly vegetarian and don't consume alcohol. They don't even take food or water from the households of non-vegetarians. There had been many attacks on Malkaris by the supporters of Pradip Prabhu since 1998. According to Pradip Prabhu, his organisation was opposing the Malkaris as they have insulted the ancient Gods and cultural traditions of the tribals by adopting new Gods, worshipping pattern and religious customs, besides injecting the poison of casteism and untouchability among the tribals in the area. The real reason for his animosity towards Malkaris appears to be that Malkaris being the members of a very conservative Vaishnav sect, cannot easily be converted to Christianity which goes against his ultimate goal.

Some Hindu organisations in USA like the California Parents for Equalisation of Educational Materials (CAPEEM) had recently sought some changes in the wrong depiction of Hinduism in the sixth grade textbooks which was under review by the California State Board of Education. In the textbook, the indigenous people were shown as the original inhabitants of India and the Hindus as Aryan invaders from outside. Taking strong objections to the proposed changes in the sixth grade text books in California, Pradip Prabhu, as convenor of National Front for Tribal Self Rule, had written a letter to Dr. Thomas Adams, Executive Director to the Curriculum Commission, State Board of Education, California stating that the proposed changes would effectively deny the legitimacy and rights of real indigenous people of India, the Adivasis, who have been suppressed and discriminated against for centuries by those claiming of 'Aryan' Heritage. In the letter he also accused the Hindu organisations of committing ethnocide by their efforts to co-opt Adivasis into their agenda for a Hindu state and cultural assimilation through coercion. He further asserts in the letter that Adivasis are not Hindus and that they have their own identity and culture which is quite different from that of the so-called mainstream Hinduism. The extent of Prabhu's anti-Hindu bias is evident from this letter. A Copy of the letter is enclosed.

Pradip Prabhu's links with Shramik Sanghatana and Bhoomi Sena:

Pradip Prabhu had established very close and friendly relations with Shramik Sanghatana of Dhule and Bhoomi Sena of Palghar(Thane) even before he founded the Kashtakari Sanghatana. Both the Shramik Sanghatana and Bhoomi Sena were active in 1970s and 80s organising the landless tribal peasants to reclaim Adivasi land that had been alienated through fraudulent methods. The primary

method used by the two organisations to recover illegally alienated land was through mobilisation of Adivasis to forcibly harvest the standing crops on such land. The Shramik Sanghatana and Bhoomi Sena didn't have formal office bearers. Tarun Mandals (Youth Committees) are the basic permanent units of both the organisations. Pradip Prabhu had made a thorough study of the said two movements before he launched the Kashtakari Sanghatana in the tribal belt of Thane in 1978. Even after the formation of the Kashtakari Sanghatana, he had taken Sanghatana activists to Dhule and Palghar to familiarise them with the working pattern of Shramik Sanghatana and Bhoomi Sena. The Kashtakari Sanghatana, like the other two organisations, also didn't have formal office bearers. From the facts mentioned above, it is obvious that a lot of planning has gone into Prabhu's venture of launching a new organisation called the Kashtakari Sanghatana which has been fighting for the land ownership rights of forest-dwellers from its very inception. Shramik Sanghatana is reportedly not very active now where as the Bhoomi Sena has now become an appendage of Kashtakari Sanghatana.

Alliance with Lal Nishan Party:

The Kashtakari Sanghatana is having an alliance with Lal Nishan Party since 1984. The alliance however doesn't have any significance as Lal Nishan Party, an independent leftist organisation, doesn't have any base in Thane district. The Sarva Shramik Sangh, the trade union wing of Lal Nishan Party has some support base in the area mainly among the PWD workers.

Pradip Prabhu is a close friend of Bharat Patankar, founder of Lal Nishan Party and his American wife, writer and Dalit activist Ms. Gail Omvedt. Bharat Patankar, a sympathiser of naxalite movement, has been working in Sangli district since last 30 years as an activist leading movements of workers, farmers, agriculture labourers and dam evictees. He is the founding member of Vidrohi Sanskritic Calwal (pro-naxal) and Shramik Mukti Dal (1980).

Ms. Gail Omvedt was born in Minneapolis, USA and holds an MA and Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley. She has been living in India since 1978 and is settled in the village of Kasegaon in southern Maharashtra. She was granted Indian citizenship in 1983. She is a freelance writer and a Dalit activist. She has authored a number of books on the status of Dalits in India which are quite inflammatory and controversial as her writings have the potential to provoke caste tension in the country.

Kashtakari Sanghatana's Links with CEHAT

The Kashtakari Sanghatana is closely linked with the Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT) in implementing community health worker projects in Kasa and Saiwan in Dahanu taluka, District Thane. The CEHAT has its offices at Vakola in Mumbai and Kothrud in Pune. It is a research Centre of Anusandhan Trust. The CEHAT is involved in research, action, service and advocacy on health and allied themes meant for the well being of the disadvantaged masses and strengthening people's health movements. It is implementing its community health worker (Arogya Sathi) programme in Dahanu region in collaboration with the Kashtakari Sanghatana. The Arogya Sathi program has the support of the health and also tribal development department of the Maharashtra government. The Maharashtra Government is also paying honorarium to these health workers. The programme is implemented in only those areas where Kashtakari Sanghatana has got a presence.

For the Implementation of this project the Kashtakari Sanghatana is getting financial assistance from AID-BAY AREA and AID PITTSBURGH.

Prabhu's links with OXFAM

Pradip Prabhu is known to have close links with OXFAM, a Christian funding agency based in UK. OXFAM in association with some local social action groups used to conduct training camps for Adivasis in some of the tribal-dominated areas in Gujarat on issues like their exploitation by rich land lords and moneylenders, their right to education and health-care, their citizenship rights and hygiene. Pradip Prabhu and other Kashtakari Sanghatana activists used to conduct training classes for the participants in such camps. Kashtakari Sanghatana's collaboration with OXFAM (India) is based on following objectives.

1. To promote Gram Swaraj Programme to facilitate decentralised governance
2. To promote Food Security and Sustainable Livelihood Programme to secure livelihoods of poor and vulnerable groups
3. To promote Basic Rights Programme to ensure rights entitlement

Prabhu's Links with militant tribal activist CK Janu, Chairperson of Adivasi Gotra Mahasabha of Kerala and his support to the tribals' agitation in Kerala.

Pradip Prabhu has played a key role in moulding and launching C. K. Janu as a militant tribal activist in Kerala. CK Janu was born in the tribal hamlet of Vellamunda in Wayanad district of Kerala. She started working as a domestic servant at the local school teacher's house at the age of seven and became a daily wager at the age of 18. Later she was associated with the CPM for a few years. During the said period, she came into contact with Pradip Prabhu and under his influence she left CPM in 1987 and became a tribal activist. She founded the Adivasi Gotra Mahasabha, a militant tribal outfit in 2001 and started working for the forest rights of Adivasis in Kerala with the help of some former naxalite leaders. Raising the demand for distribution of forest land to the Adivasis in the state she had led a 48 - day agitation in front of the State Secretariat in Trivandrum in 2001 which ended on October 16, 2001 with the signing of a 7-point agreement with the state government. As per this agreement, every tribal family in the state was to be given one to five acres of forest land by December 2002. Agitated by the failure of the government in meeting the said deadline, hundreds of Adivasis under the leadership of C.K. Janu marched to Muthanga in Wayanad Sanctuary on February 17, 2003 and forcibly occupied the forest land and declared self rule in the area. They also started preventing entry of non-tribals and forest officials into the area and also took some forest employees as hostages. On Feb. 19, 2003 the state government deployed heavy police force and evicted all Adivasi encroachments from the area after a pitched battle between the two sides. One tribal activist and one police constable were killed in the confrontation and police firing.

Pradip Prabhu and his close associate Dr. B. D. Sharma had organised a two-day conference at Kozhikode in Kerala on 25-26 July, 2003 to protest against the state violence and atrocities perpetrated against the struggling Adivasis at Muthanga. A resolution in this regard called the Kozhikode Declaration was also adopted by the conference unanimously. A number of NGO and pro-naxal activists from different parts of the country had attended the said conference. (A copy of the Kozhikode Declaration is enclosed)

Apart from the issue of forest land rights, C. K. Janu is also fighting for the demand for setting up Forest Panchayats in all tribal areas in Kerala with authority for such elected bodies to govern and administer forests in their specified areas, which is a pet project of Pradip Prabhu.

Links with Fr. Thomas Kocheri

Fr. Thomas Kocheri, a Liberation Theology activist and close associate of Pradip Prabhu, is presently the President of National Fish Workers Forum and Chairman of World Fish Workers Forum.

Around the time when Pradip Prabhu launched the Kashtakari Sanghatana in Dahanu region, Fr. Thomas Kocheri, a Catholic priest of Kerala also launched an organisation called 'Swatantra Malsya Thozhilali Union' (Independent Fish Workers Union) in Kerala to organise the fishermen in the state and fight for their various demands. When this militant fish workers union launched an agitation at Anchenco near Trivandrum in Kerala in 1980 against the operation of mechanised vessels in the area, Pradip Prabhu was also present at Anchenco in support of the fishermen's agitation led by Fr. Thomas Kocheri. Later Fr. Thomas Kocheri rose to become the President of National Fish Workers Forum and Chairman of World Fishermen's Forum. Fr. Thomas Kocheri and Pradip Prabhu had jointly led many agitations like the agitation against the proposed Vadhavan port near Dahanu in Thane district, ONGC operations off the Bombay coast and against the Umargaon Port in Gujarat. The fishermen's agitation led by Fr. Thomas Kocheri and Pradip Prabhu resulted in the scuttling of Vadhavan Port project in Thane district on the ground of the so called damage it could cause to the fragile environment in the area and the likely displacement of thousands of fishermen in Dahanu area affecting their livelihood.

Prabhu's Links with Xavier Dias:

Pradip Prabhu is a very close friend of Xavier Dias, an anti-uranium mining activist based in Jharkhand. Xavier Dias is associated with a number of anti-uranium mining and human rights organisations in Jharkhand and Meghalaya region like the Mines, Minerals and People (MMP), Jharkhand Organisation Against Radiation (JOAR), Mine Monitoring Centre, Ranchi, Jaduguda Organisation against Radiation, Jharkhand Mines Area Coordination Committee and Jharkhandis Organisation for Human Rights. He has been conducting a vigorous campaign among the tribals in the area against the Uranium mining for last 25 years and has successfully prevented the Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) from conducting any mining activity in Meghalaya. In February 1987 Prabhu had sent a letter to Xavier Dias requesting him to send protest telegrams to the Chief Minister of Maharashtra over the killing of a woman activist of the Kashtakari Sanghatana in Police firing at Jawhar on February 10, 1987 following a confrontation between Kashtakari Sanghatana activists and forest officials. The Kashtakari Sanghatana had reportedly sent such letters to 40 such activists based at different parts of India. It shows the wide networking of Kashtakari Sanghatana even in eighties.

Pradip Prabhu's links with other social, christian action and human rights groups in the country

Pradip Prabhu has got close links with all major social action and human right groups in India. He is the founder/co-founder of the following organisations

1. Founder, Kashtakari Sanghatana (1978)
2. Founder, National front for Tribal Self Rule (1993)
3. Founder, Campaign for Survival and Dignity (2002)
4. Co-founder, Orissa Adibasi Manch (1993)

5. Co-founder, Narmada Bachao Andolan (1985) (along with B. D. Sharma and Medha Patkar)
6. Co-founder, Bharat Jana Andolan (1992) (along with B. D. Sharma and Medha Patkar)
7. Co-founder, National Alliance for People's Movements (1992) (along with B. D. Sharma and Medha Patkar)
8. Co-founder, Adivasi Ekta Parishad (1995)
9. Co-founder Shoshit Jana Andolan, Maharashtra (1985)

He is also closely associated with so many other organisations/Institutions. Some of these organisations are as under:

1. Indian Social Institute (Delhi and Bangalore)
2. North-Eastern Social Research Centre, Guwahati
3. Indian People's Tribunal
4. Human Rights Law Network, Mumbai
5. People's Union for Civil Liberty (PUCL)
6. Alternative Law Forum, Bangalore
7. Environment Support Group, Bangalore
8. Centre for Social Justice, Ahmedabad
9. Committee for protection of Democratic Rights, Mumbai
10. Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL) Washington DC, USA
11. Ekta Parishad, Madhya Pradesh
12. Bombay Urban Industrial League, Bandra
13. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), New Delhi
14. Commonwealth Policy Study Unit (CPSU), UK
15. Commonwealth Association of Indigenous People, UK
16. Forest Peoples Programme, UK
17. Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal People, New Delhi
18. Naga People's Forum, Kohima
19. Indian Association of People's Lawyers, New Delhi
20. International Senior Lawyers' Project, USA
21. Bindrai Institute for Research Study and Action, Ranchi
22. Mines Minerals and People, Jharkand
23. Jan Jungle, Jameen Andolan, Rajasthan
24. Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sanghatan, Rajasthan
25. Society for Rural, Urban and Tribal Initiative (SRUTI)

Sanghatan's Links with Left Extremist Organisations

Pradip Prabhu, founder of Kashtakari Sanghatana, has already admitted through some of its publicity materials that apart from some left and democratic parties like Lal Nishan Party and Janata Dal, his organisation has also been maintaining close links with front organisations of some of the Marxist Leninist Groups. Ever since the formation of Kashtakari Sanghatana, Pradip Prabhu was maintaining friendly relations with the leaders of different CPI-ML groups. Earlier his friends in CPI-ML groups included Late T. Nagi Reddy of A. P. and former top naxalite leader K. Venu of Kerala. Presently he is reported to have close links with many CPI-Maoist Leaders like Ganapati and Varavara Rao and CPI-ML leaders like K. N. Ramchandran and Sanjay Singhvi. Ad. K.G.Kannabhiran, a prominent leader of People's Union for Civil Liberty (PUCL), who was one of the leaders deputed by the CPI-ML (PW) to conduct peace talks with the government of A. P. in 2004, is a very close friend of Pradip Prabhu.

Pradip Prabhu is one of the top liberation theology leaders in India. Like Prabhu there are many Liberation Theology leaders in the country either heading or associated with different social actions groups like Thomas Kocheri of World Fishermen's Forum and Xavier Dias of Mines, Minerals and People. All of them are closely associated with different naxalite groups in the country. In fact the CPI (Maoist), CPI-ML (Kanu Sanyal), CPI-ML (Janashakti) and CPI-ML (New Democracy) have already accepted liberation theology as an international marxist movement and have absorbed many of the Liberation Theology activists as their cadres. All these left extremist outfits are also linked with CPM Maoist group of Nepal.

It is learnt that Pradip Prabhu was mainly instrumental in building up friendly and working relations between Liberation Theology activists and some of the prominent naxalite groups in India. Prabhu has also emerged as an ideologue of the naxalite movement in the country. For instance, Prabhu's campaign demanding 'Forest Panchayat' and Self Rule for tribal areas in the country with all administrative powers for forest dwellers have now been adopted by CPI (Maoist) as their main goal. The peace talks between the Andhra Pradesh Government and the CPI (Maoist) in 2004 broke down reportedly when the State Government could not make any commitment on the issue of land rights for forest dwellers as demanded by the Maoist leaders because of the stringent provisions of Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

Prabhu's Clout among the top bureaucrats and judges:

Pradip Prabhu who founded the Kashtakari Sanghatana in 1978 enjoyed a lot of clout among some of the bureaucrats in Delhi and also among some of the senior judges of High Courts and Supreme Court.

In 1984, on a complaint sent by Pradip Prabhu to the Supreme Court about the continued attacks and other atrocities by CPM cadres on Adivasi supporters of Kashtakari Sanghatana in Dahanu and inaction of the Police, the Chief Justice of Supreme Court had directed the District and Sessions Court, Thane, to conduct an enquiry into such incidents and submit a detailed report. The District and Session Judge, Thane, had accordingly conducted a thorough enquiry into the allegations raised by the Sanghatana and submitted an elaborate report in 1984 indicting the CPM for unleashing a reign of terror on Kashtakari Sanghatana supporters in Dahanu, Dist. Thane in Maharashtra.

Prabhu used to give lectures on Tribals and their problems at L.B.S. National Academy of Administration for IAS probationers as a guest lecturer since early 1980s. He has always been very close to all Directors and most of the faculty members of Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) since last three decades as also with many senior IAS officers and other bureaucrats in the country.

In 1987, as per the decision taken by the Union Government, the LBSNAA, Mussoorie started a ten-day attachment course for IAS and IFS probationers with voluntary organisations as part of their winter study tour starting with 1987 batch. The Kashtakari Sanghatana was one of organisations selected for this training programme for IAS probationers. The declared objective of the programme was to enable the IAS/IFS probationers to gain some first hand experience about the living conditions of marginalised sections of people like Adivasis and to have a better perception of the problems involved in the rural development.

The Kashtakari Sanghatana is a militant tribal organisation and its activists were involved in about 300 criminal cases registered in various police stations in the Dahanu-Jawhar tribal belt of Thane. There were also many allegations against Kashtakari Sanghatana leader Pradip Prabhu raised mainly by Sangh Parivar and CPM activists in the area alleging about his involvement in proselytisation activities and his possible links with CIA, etc. There were also reports about his preaching militancy to tribals and abetting them to fight for their forest land rights and other demands through violent means. Prabhu is also notorious for his arrogant behaviour in his dealings with the forest and other government officials. The selection of such an NGO for the said 10-day attachment course for IAS/IFS probationers as part of their winter-tour training programme was reportedly not liked by many government officials in the area including the then district collector. However, the fact that nobody could make any alteration in the proposed programme shows the clout Pradip Prabhu enjoyed in Delhi. This annual NGO attachment course of IAS/IFS probationers continued upto 2005.

According to reliable information, Pradip Prabhu was instrumental in introducing this new course for IAS/IFS probationers in 1987 in the name of enabling the new probationers to familiarise with the living conditions of marginalised sections of people and the problems involved in the rural development work. However, the real objective of Pradip Prabhu and his supporters in initiating this new course for the IAS probationers was to build up a friendly lobby among the IAS/IFS officers who could be of some use to the various future schemes and programmes of the action group network in the country.

Pradip Prabhu was/is associated with the following assignments with various government and private institutions in the country which further proves the extent of the influence he wields within the corridors of power in the country.

Academic Assignments

Since 1983 – Working as Occasional Lecturer for IAS Probationers at LBSNAA, Mussoorie

Since 1983 – Working as Occasional Lecturer at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)

Since 1992 – Working as Resource Person for Training of Senior IFS Officers At TISS

Since 1992 - Resource Person for Senior IAS Officers Training at TISS

2003 – Appointed as Member of International Editorial Team - Indian Journal of Social Work (TISS)

2003 – Appointed as Member Research Studies Steering Committee ‘Implementation of PESA’ (UNDP/GOI)

2005 – Appointed as Member – Editorial Collective – Status of Adivasis in India

2005 – Appointed Senior Fellow, National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad

Training & Consultancy Assignments

2001 - Appointed as Consultant/Trainer for Management Development of Social Welfare Officers (Govt. of TN)

2002 - Appointed as Consultant Trainer for Organisational Development for Heads of Education Dept. (Govt. of TN)

2002 - Appointed as Consultant for Good Governance Training of Government & District Level Officials (Govt. of Nagaland)

2003 - Appointed as Consultant/Trainer for Organisational Development of Heads of Health Dept. (Govt. of TN)

2004 - Appointed as Consultant in Change Management and Institutional Transformation for the New Water Management Change Program titled “Democratisation of Water Management” in Tamil Nadu.

Government Assignments

1986 – Appointed as Nodal Agent - Council for Advancement of Peoples Action & Rural Technology (CAPART, GOI)

1987 – His NGO Kashtakari Sanghatana was selected for Attachment Course for Indian Administrative Service Probationers

2002 – Appointed as Member of National Expert Group on Tribal Land Alienation and Restoration (GOI)

2002 – Appointed as Director of Empowerment of the Rural Poor for Better Health Program –Thane (WHO)

2004 – Appointed as Member of National Advisory Committee (NIRD-GOI) to prepare Guidelines for Implementation of PESA.

2004 – Appointed as Member of National Advisory Committee (NIRD-GOI) on Community Rights to Minor Forest Produce.

2004 - Appointed - Member of Committee of External Evaluators on Implementation of UNICEF Sponsored Communitization of Public Utilities Act, 2002 (Govt. of Nagaland)

2005 – Appointed as Member of Standing Committee on Inter Sectoral Issues Relating to Tribal Development constituted by Prime Minister.

2005 – Appointed as Member of Technical Resource Group – Ministry of Tribal Affairs (GOI) for drafting Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill 2005

2006 - Appointed as Member, Working Group on Forests for the Environment and Forest sector for the 11th Five Year Plan set up on 21-3-2006.

In 1986, the BSES (Bombay Suburban Electric Supply) decided to set up a 500 MW coal-based thermal power plant at Dahanu in District Thane, Maharashtra. The project was sanctioned by the GOI in 1989. The proposal to set up the thermal power plant at Dahanu was fiercely opposed by Pradip Prabhu and his supporters on the ground of possible environmental pollution. It was under Prabhu's initiative that the Dahanu Taluka Environment Welfare Association (DTEWA) was founded by some local environmental activists in Dahanu in 1989 mainly to oppose the proposed thermal power plant and also other industrial units that may come up in Dahanu area in future. The activists led by Pradip Prabhu and Nargis Irani, Secretary of the DTEWA, mobilised the local farmers and horticulturists and conducted a vigorous campaign against the power project. Simultaneously they also resorted to legal action to stall the project raising the bogey of environmental pollution and destruction of marine life in the area due to the discharge of warm water from the plant. The writ petition filed by Ms.Nargis Irani, Secretary,DTEWA was however dismissed by the Mumbai High Court and later by the Supreme Court of India. Despite this set-back, the local environmental activists continued with their campaign against the Dahanu power project, advocating the need for preserving the ecologically fragile Dahanu area as a green zone by preventing all further developmental projects in the area. The sustained campaign by this lobby ultimately forced the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) to issue a notification known as Dahanu Notification on 20th. June,1991 declaring Dahanu as an ecologically fragile area and imposing severe restrictions on setting up of industries in Dahanu area. The Dahanu Notification also required the state government to prepare a master plan for the region within a period of one year clearly demarcating all existing green zones, tribal areas,etc.and disallowing any change in the existing land use and instructing the state government to create a buffer zone of 25 kms around the outer periphery of Dahanu taluka which was also sought to be kept free of industries. When the state government did not abide by the instructions and restrictions imposed by the Dahanu Notification, the local environment group filed a writ petition before the Supreme Court of India (writ petition no.231 of 1994,Bittu Sahgal v Union of India) seeking necessary direction from the Court to the state government for the strict implementation of the Dahanu Notification. The petition also brought the limitations imposed by the Coastal Regulatory Zone Notification (CRZ),1991 to the Court's attention. The Supreme Court ordered the Government of Maharashtra to comply with the two Notifications without fail. The SC also appointed the National Environment Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to determine whether the Regional Plan submitted by the state government conforms to the Dahanu Notification and to make further recommendations to protect the eco-fragile environment of Dahanu.

The NEERI in its report submitted on 19th. October,1996 concluded that the Regional Plan violated the two federal notifications and described it as ecologically unviable. On October 31,1996, the Supreme Court ordered the state government to implement the recommendations of the NEERI report. It also directed the central government to constitute an authority under the Environment Protection Act,1986 and to confer on this authority all necessary powers to protect the ecologically fragile Dahanu Taluka. The SC further ordered that the Authority to be known as the Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority (DTEPA) shall be headed by a retired judge of High Court and include environment and planning experts. Accordingly an eleven-member committee called the Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority (DTEPA) was constituted by the GOI on 19th.December,1996 with retired H.C. Judge Chandrashekhar Dharmadhikari as its Chairman.

The local environmental activists who continued with their campaign against the Dahanu thermal power station under the banner of Dahanu Taluka Environment Welfare Association (DTEWA) soon approached the DTEPA seeking urgent measures to reduce the pollution caused by the thermal power station, including the installation of a flue gas de-sulphurisation system (FGD). The DTEPA accepted their demand in May, 1999 and directed the BSES which operated the power plant to take all necessary measures including the FGD system to reduce pollution caused by the power plant. In 2003, under the initiative of Pradip Prabhu yet another organisation called the Dahanu Parisar Bachao Samiti was founded by a section of local farmers and horticulturists with the sole objective of opposing the pollution-causing coal-based power plant in Dahanu and demanding clean energy production using cleaner energy like gas. The local environmental activists continue to terrorise the thermal power plant authorities even now by raising allegations of causing air pollution, destruction of marine life and bringing down the yield from chiku orchards.

In February, 1997 the government of Maharashtra had signed a MOU with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O) of Australia, a subsidiary of P&O Group, London, for construction of an international deep-sea port at Vadhavan near Dahanu in district Thane, Maharashtra. If completed, it would have been the biggest deep water port in India. Pradip Prabhu and his supporters vehemently opposed this project on the ground of possible environmental damage to the ecologically fragile Dahanu area and the adverse effect it will have on the livelihood of the local fishermen community. Under the banner of Dahanu Taluka Environment Welfare Association, the People's Alliance for Implementation of Law and National Fish Workers Forum, they carried out a vigorous campaign against the proposed port in Vadhavan at local, national and also at international level. At the local level, besides mobilising the support of farmers and fishermen community, the anti-port activists also managed to win the support of all political parties for their movement against the port. The campaign against the port also received strong support from international agencies like the UK branch of World Wide Fund (WWF) for Nature and Rufford Foundation. The WWF-UK mobilised the support of many British MPs for the anti-port stir and several Labour Party MPs and representatives of international NGOs had participated in a protest demonstration it had organised in front of the Indian High Commissioner's office in London in 1997 against the Vadhavan port. The WWF-UK also took up the issue of environmental consequences of the proposed port with the UK Department of Trade and Industry and with the P&O Hqs in London. The World Development Movement (UK) used the P&O-Vadhavan case in support of its campaign against Multilateral Agreement on Investment. As part of the international campaign a call-for-action was also posted on the Global Response Action web-site calling upon its readers to send protest letters to the Prime Minister of India and the Chairman of the P&O expressing their objection to the proposed Vadhavan port in India. The WWF-UK had also sought to use an international instrument of public law like the 1976 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises to stall the port project. However the efforts of WWF-UK did not yield the desired result as the UK Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) was reluctant to interfere in the matter and act against the P&O because of doubts over the applicability of the OECD Guidelines in India.

With the failure of international agencies in coming to their help, the anti-port activists finally decided to take up the issue with the newly formed Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority (DTEPA). The Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), GOI had forwarded the proposal for developing a new port at Vadhavan to the DTEPA. After going through all the merits and the environmental consequences of the case, the DTEPA gave its final verdict on the issue on 19th. November, 1998, concluding that the construction of the proposed mega port at Vadhavan would be impermissible and therefore illegal. Shortly after the announcement of this verdict by the DTEPA, the P&O India also announced its decision not to go ahead with the proposed port project in Dahanu.

The anti-port agitation of Prabhu and his supporters in Dahanu was strongly backed by organisations like the Bombay Dock Workers Union, the All India Port and Dock Workers Federation, National Alliance of People's Movements, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Loksahi Hakk Sanghatana of Mumbai, Kashtakari Sanghatana of Dahanu and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Dahanu Chapter. The INTACH is a nation-wide membership organisation established in 1984 with the avowed objective of protecting and conserving India's vast natural and cultural heritage. The initial corpus of the INTACH was raised with a Rs.5-crore grant made available by the GOI. The INTACH built its headquarters at 71, Lodi Estate, New Delhi with the financial support received from the INTACH(UK) Trust and the GOI. It also receives funds from several central ministries like Education, HRD, Environment and Forests, Tourism and Culture. Many Corporate Houses and international agencies like the UNESCO, Gulbenkian Foundation, Portugal, the Helen Hamlin Trust, UK and MIT, USA also provide funds to INTACH for conservation and related activities. The INTACH has 117 chapters in India. The Dahanu chapter was established in 1992. The INTACH Dahanu Chapter had commissioned an independent study report on the Dahanu port project which was funded by the Rufford Foundation and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) UK. It is a mystery as to how an organisation like the INTACH which receives funds from various government agencies and ministries could support a movement against the construction of a mega port in the country which was cleared by the GOI.

In September, 1998, the government of Gujarat awarded a contract for construction of a Rs.1200- crore port at Maroli village in Umargaon taluka close to Gujarat-Maharashtra border to an Indo-US consortium comprising of Unocal, an American-owned oil and gas conglomerate based in California and Natelco, the Mumbai-based National Telecom of India Ltd. The villagers of Umargaon, brain-washed and misled by some local environmentalists resorted to a Dahanu-type agitation at Umargaon also opposing the construction of the proposed port at Maroli. Guided by the anti-development environmental activists, the villagers organised themselves under different banners like Kinara Bachao Sangharsh Samiti (KBSS), Bandar Hatao Samiti (BHS) and Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti and started a combined and massive resistance movement against the port alleging that the construction of the proposed port will lead to destruction of marine life and loss of livelihood for fisherfolk, fall in agricultural yield and loss of livelihood for farmers and devastation of environment. The militant villagers did not allow the developers to carry out any survey work in the project site. Even the survey work carried out in the deep sea was disrupted by the activists who chased away the survey team in speed boats. On April 7, 2000 a survey team engaged in survey work at Maroli with heavy police protection was attacked by the agitating villagers resulting in a police lathi-charge. Several villagers were injured in the incident and 48 activists were arrested. On April 8th. morning Lt.Col.(Rtd) Pratap Save, President of KBSS was also arrested by the police. On 8th. night he was admitted to a local hospital following his complaint of severe body pain and was later shifted to Hinduja hospital in Mumbai. He passed away on April 20th. after a brain surgery. The activists alleged that Pratap Save died of injuries caused by the police beatings and used his death as a propaganda tool to intensify the anti-port agitation. In May, 2000 the Unocal announced its withdrawal from the Maroli port project and due to the continued anti-port agitation by the local villagers the project work was suspended.

Sympathising with the anti-port struggle of the villagers of Omargaon, the Indian People's Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights had appointed a two-member Tribunal headed by Justice S.M.Daud, a retired judge of Bombay High Court, to conduct an independent enquiry into the controversy over the proposed Maroli port. The Tribunal in its report submitted in April, 2000 confirmed the fears and misgivings of the local villagers about the proposed port and concluded that the construction of the port was not in the interest of the local residents. A fact-finding team of the Loksahi

Hakk Sanghatana of Mumbai also found merit in the allegations raised by the villagers of Umargaon against the proposed port. Besides the local resistance groups, the anti-port struggle of the villagers of Umargaon was also backed by various other organisations like the National Alliance of People's Movements, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Shoshit Jan Andolan, Kashtakari Sanghana, Samajwadi Jan Parishad, National Fish Workers Forum, Gorai Bachao Samiti and Greenpeace India. Pradip Prabhu of Kashtakari Sanghatana had played a dominant role in overall planning and execution of the anti-port stir in Umargaon. He was ably assisted by Fr.Thomas Kochery, another liberation theology activist hailing from Kerala.

Pradip Prabhu had played a major role in organising people's resistance movements against the Dahanu Thermal Power Station, the proposed Vadhavan port in Dahanu and also the proposed Maroli port in Gujarat. The Dahanu Taluka Environment Welfare Association (DTEWA), the Dahanu Parisar Bachao Samiti and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Dahanu Chapter were all established under the initiative of Pradip Prabhu. Pradip Prabhu's phenomenal influence among some top congress-I leaders, bureaucrats and legal luminaries was responsible for the Dahanu Notification issued by the MoEF in 1991 and setting up of the Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority in 1996. During the NDA regime, the then Union Petroleum Minister had tried his level best to get the DTEPA abolished. The MoEF had even approached the Supreme Court in 2002 to remove the DTEPA, but without success. The National Alliance of People's Movements, Narmada Bachao Andolan, National Fish Workers Forum, Gorai Bachao Samiti, Shoshit Jan Andolan and Loksahi Hakk Sanghatana which supported the anti-port struggles in Dahanu and Umargaon are all closely linked with the Kashtakari Sanghatana founded by Pradip Prabhu. In short, Pradip prabhu was the architect and the master brain behind the anti-port struggles in Dahanu and Umargaon. However there is hardly any mention of Prabhu's name in the various articles, special study reports and books on these struggles published by the net-working NGOs. All credit for the success of these struggles have been given to local environmental activists like Nargis Irani and Kitayun Rustom of Dahanu and late Pratap Save of Umargaon. Obviously Pradip Prabhu prefers to be a silent activist who shuns publicity for some strange and mysterious reasons.

Pradip Prabhu was one of the 36 invitees who attended the Round-table on Policing and Public Order organised jointly by Administrative Reforms Commission and Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) held at New Delhi on June 10, 2006 to suggest their views on strengthening the administrative machinery to maintain public order.

Pradip Prabhu has been a staunch supporter of strengthening the Panchayat Raj system and decentralisation of power for allowing the full participation of the people at grass-roots level in the administrative process and choosing their own priorities. He has also been championing the cause of self-rule for all indigenous communities in India and setting up of "Forest Panchayats" for all forest dwellers with full administrative powers and right over all natural resources and minor forest produce. He had founded the National Front for Tribal Self Rule and led a nation-wide movement to get Bhuria Committee report, recommending self-rule for indigenous people, accepted by the government and enacting the necessary legislation through an amendment to Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act in 1996. He had also successfully led another nation-wide movement called 'Campaign for Survival and Dignity' and got the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill passed in the Parliament in December 2006.

Prabhu had also played a major role in drafting and passage of the Right to Information Bill and Employment Guarantee Scheme by the Parliament.

