

Anti-national activities of NGO “Greenpeace India”

‘Holding different beliefs than that of the government does not make one an enemy of the state’ said the Delhi High Court on Tuesday, the 20th of January, 2015 while directing the Union government to release Rs 1.87 crore of foreign funding to Greenpeace India, which had been blocked following a home ministry order in June 2014. The judge noted that there was no material on record to restrict Greenpeace India from accessing its bank account or to explain why Greenpeace International was on the government’s watch-list. Calling the government’s action arbitrary and unconstitutional, the court observed the home ministry’s actions were against the principles of natural justice. While the Greenpeace India and other such activist NGOs are celebrating this H.C. verdict as a vindication of their stand and work, the truth is the biggest casualty in this case. The government has enough evidence to prove that the Greenpeace India and many other such activist NGOs that receive foreign funds from the various western agencies have been misusing such funds to hamper India’s economic growth. It is not understood as to why such details of the misuse of funds were not placed before the judge.

The Intelligence Bureau in a communication to the government, dated June 3, 2014 had described the Greenpeace India as a threat to national economic security, citing activities ranging from conducting protests against nuclear and coal plants and funding some sympathetic research institutes to generate distorted research reports in pursuit of its destructive agenda. One such research report published by the ‘Greenpeace and Urban Emissions Conservation Action Trust’ in March 2013 claimed 100000 deaths in 2012 due to health problems arising from 111 coal-fired power plants in India. The IB had accused the Greenpeace India of using its superior network of activist groups to undertake anti-nuclear agitations and massive efforts to sabotage and stall coal-fired power plants and coal mining activity in India. Some of the industries worst-affected by the activities of NGOs like the Greenpeace India, as listed by the IB, include coal and nuclear power plants, coal and uranium mining, farm biotechnology, mega industrial projects and hydroelectric plants.

It was based on the IB report dated June 3, 2014, that the Modi government had banned the direct foreign funding to NGOs operating in India unless they fulfill stringent regulatory norms and show compliance reports. The Ministry of Home Affairs also directed the Reserve Bank of India to take prior permission of the Home Ministry’s FCRA department before clearing any foreign aid to Greenpeace India from Greenpeace International and Climate Works Foundation, the two major contributors of Greenpeace India. This directive was issued on June 13, 2014. It put on hold direct funding of this controversial NGO from abroad, with each transaction requiring to be cleared on a case to case basis by the RBI. In an attempt to tighten the noose around other NGOs, the MHA had directed that in addition to FCRA clearance, they will have to inform the RBI in detail about the nature of foreign funds received and its usage in order to streamline the foreign funding process.

According to a leaked IB report, the Greenpeace India, backed by liberal foreign funds from Greenpeace International, has been growing at a fast pace in terms of reach, impact, volunteers, campaign and media influence. It has also been found organizing mass movements against mega development projects in India, especially against energy projects like coal and nuclear power plants and is thus assessed to be a serious threat to the national economic security. It has succeeded in stalling development activity through mass mobilization in the Mahan coal block at Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh. The Greenpeace in India is also active in organizing agitations against nuclear power plants at Kudankulam, Jaitapur and Fatehabad.

The Greenpeace is assisted by US-based Centre for Media and Democracy (CMD) in scuttling India's coal-fired power plants plan. Formed in 1993 and democrat in orientation, the CMD is led by Lisa Graves, formerly Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Clinton administration. The CMD is reportedly funded by George Sores, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Tides Foundation and other far left foundations. The CMD provides the research and support through web-based resources namely sourcewatchorg and coaiswarmorg. Coaiswarm carries a detailed interactive map of 455 coal-fired power plant sites in India which provides eight-figure grid references and details of each project and implementing agency.

The Greenpeace India was registered under FCRA in 2005-06. In the first seven years since it got its registration under FCRA, it had received Rs 45 crore as foreign aid, of which 94% came from Greenpeace International and 3% from Climate Works Foundation. To limit criticism, it also takes local contributions. This model is followed by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other western donors with similar agenda. Initially the Greenpeace India focused its attention on organizing anti-nuclear protests in India. Later it started concentrating on anti-coal activism. It has been using foreign funds to build up protest movements under a coal network umbrella at all coal block and coal plant locations in India.

A coal strategy conference was held in Istanbul from July 18 to 20 in 2012, to discuss about international funding to encourage people-centric protests against coal-fired power plants (CFPPs) in countries like India. Sponsored by US-based Climate Works Foundation (CWF) and the World Resource Institute (WRI), the conference identified 999 CFPPs in the world. At this conference, the Greenpeace activists from India were directed to encourage people-centric protests to stop all new coal blocks/plants in India and retire the existing ones. In a paper presented at the conference, India was named as the prime target of coal-fired power plant (CFPP) action plan. The paper said that out of the 999 proposed CFPPs in the world, 455 were in India, 114 in China and 71 in Turkey. Among the project developers, India's National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) was ranked first with 47 projects while China's Guodian with 17 projects was ranked second. As follow up action, in the last two-three years the Greenpeace has initiated protests in five villages falling under Mahan coal block allotted to Essar and Hindalco in Madhya Pradesh. As a publicity stunt, on January 23, 2014, 100 Greenpeace activists masquerading as building cleaning agents scaled the Essar headquarters in Mumbai in tiger costumes, carrying banners proclaiming "We kill forests, Essar". In the same year, Greenpeace activists in London also had held protest demonstration in front of Essar Powers office at Berkeley Square in London.

Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board on January 13, 2014 ordered that all operations of Mahan-1 (600 MW CFPP) be stopped forthwith as a large quantity of fly ash, an effluent discharged during the combustion of coal was flowing from Essar Energy's Mahan-1 plant in Singrauli into the Garha stream and surrounding areas. It also instructed Essar India to take corrective steps by installing continuous ambient air monitoring station, a sewage treatment plant and tree plantation to stop polluting the bio-diversity of the area and then approach them for clearance. It is a well-known strategy of the NGO action groups to infiltrate their nominees into important and crucial bodies like Pollution Control Board, Environment Impact Assessment Committee, etc, to influence such committees and get favourable reports on their petitions. The verdict given in this case is suspected to be based on one such manipulated decision.

The Greenpeace has also launched protest programmes against four ultra mega power projects at Krishnapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, Girye in Maharashtra, Sundergarh in Odisha and Sasan in Madhya Pradesh. The Greenpeace was also found associated with Lokmukti Sanghatana's protests against Hinalco's coal block at Talabira in Sambalpur district of Odisha. It has further plans to expand its activities to Mundra in Gujarat, Korba and Raigad in Chhattisgarh, Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh and to set up activist bases at Delhi and Bhopal for high visibility media and web-based propaganda. The Greenpeace India is allied to US-based organizations like sierra Club and 350.org in its attempt to eliminate fossil fuel in India's energy mix and replace it with solar energy.

Lately, the Greenpeace India was found expanding its activism to fresh areas like organizing protests against use of genetically modified organisms (GMO) in improving agricultural outputs in India, e-waste generated by India's IT sector, against import of palm oil from Indonesia and organizing construction workers in urban areas to oppose mega development projects in India. (<http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/1201267/greenpeace-ib-report.txt>)

Greenpeace India's campaign against GMO

The Greenpeace India remains totally opposed to the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill and has started an on-line campaign against it by displaying areal visuals of 'gigantic crop circles' to educate the masses about the destructive possibilities from such experiments. Six foreign NGOs based in rich and developed western countries are in the forefront in blocking Genetically Modified Food (GMO) items being introduced in India, as per the documents available with the Sunday Guardian. These entities are the Greenpeace, Climate Works, Ford Foundation, Cordaid, Netherland-based Havos and Canada-based IDRC. Ironically, these agencies have no problem in allowing the use of GMO in cash-rich western countries. Their main objection to the use of GMO technology is that the GM seeds are injurious to public health in the long run and may pave the way for dreaded diseases like cancer. However, there has not been any evidence to support this assertion. In fact, in the total cropped area in the world today, 32% maize, 74% soybean and 81% cotton are produced by using the GMO technology. The US, the world's largest economy have been ingesting GM food for the last 15 years without any noticeable side effects. There was a freeze on field trials of BT cotton and BT brinjal in India in 2010. However, Indian biotechnologists working in 17 companies in Gujarat were able to develop their own varieties of BT cotton a few years back and the new strains have been embraced by cotton farmers across the country with resounding success. India, which was a net importer of cotton in 2001-02 has now become the second largest exporter of cotton in the world,

next only to China. The cotton yields in India have risen by 168% in the last seven years, while the farmers have increased acreage by 29%, despite all criticism against BT cotton by the anti-GMO lobby. (<http://www.sunday-guardian.com/news/foreign-entities-not-letting-india-become-food-self-sufficient>)

As happened in the case of BT cotton yield, we can achieve substantial increase in the yield of different food grains by adopting the GMO technology. However, the anti-GM technology NGOs with their large network of supporters and agents in India have so far been able to block the extension of GMO technology to the food grain sector in India. The international NGOs opposing the GMO technology even plant stories in India to warn and scare the people about the harmful effects of GM farm products. One such report said that hundreds of cattle and sheep died in Warangal in Andhra Pradesh after ingesting BT cotton leaves. However, investigation into the incident revealed that these reports, cooked up by certain civil society groups were totally baseless and were intended to create a scare among the people against the GM food. (<http://www.i-sis.org.uk/MDSGBTTC.php>). Another report said that there were hundreds of recalls of genetically modified food over the past decade. This was also found to be incorrect as there was zero recall of GM food.

Incidentally, two local NGOs active in blocking GM food, namely Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA) and India For Safe Foods (IFSF) are located in the company of four anti-nuclear power NGOs at the same address, a two-room flat at A- 124/6, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi. The four anti-nuclear power NGOs are PEACE, CNDP, INSAF and JSSS. The donor agencies giving foreign funds to these organizations were found to be the same international organizations which were bankrolling the anti-GMO movement. Senior advocate and AAP leader Prashant Bhushan had filed a PIL against GMO in the Supreme Court of India in 2005. It may be noted that the same Prashant Bhushan had filed a PIL against coal block allocation in the Supreme Court, which resulted in the cancellation of all coal blocks allotted in India since 1993. (<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/six-delhi-ngos-in-ib-watchlist-say-thank-you-for-noticing-us/>)

Campaign against e-waste

The Greenpeace India had started a campaign in 2007 against e-waste generated by IT firms in India. However, its efforts to create any negative impact on the IT firms by forcing them to divert some of their resources towards recycling and reprocessing and thereby erode their earnings, proved to be ineffective. In 2014, they have revived their movement against e-waste in India. It is to be noted that they are targeting only Indian IT firms and not multinationals like 'Dell'.

Greenpeace India's advertisement in Hindu news daily against Kudankulam nuclear power plant.

The Greenpeace India had placed a full-page advertisement in 'The Hindu' on August 15, 2012 to create panic among the people by implying the inevitability of the melt-down of the Kudankulam nuclear power plant. In March 2013, the Greenpeace India's Urban Emissions and Conservation Action Trust had published a questionable technical report which claimed 100000 deaths due to health problems arising from 111 coal-fired power plants in India.

Greenpeace-sponsored documentary film against coal mining

Sponsored and supported by Greenpeace India, a documentary film titled "Coal Curse" was produced and directed by Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and was released in April 2013, as part of Greenpeace's campaign against coal mining. The film explores the economy of coal in contemporary India with the situation in Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh as a case study. It examines the micro level consequences of coal mining in Singrauli region in MP, like the irreparable devastation of livelihoods of local tribals, and tries to prove the point that the mad rush to extract coal is not the best answer to secure India's energy needs. (<http://www.greenpeace.org/india/en/Press/Paranjoy-Guha-Thakurta-and-Greenpeace-launch-documentary-film-Coal-Curse/>)

Misinformation campaign by Greenpeace India

The Greenpeace India was also found using some of their friendly research institutions to generate alarming reports about the risks posed to the people by some of the development projects like big dams and thermal and nuclear power plants. One such study report had tried to spread panic among the people of Maharashtra by stating that water from many of the dams in the state has been sold to power companies leaving no water for them to irrigate their land or even to drink. Another Greenpeace-sponsored study claimed that water diversion to thermal power plants reduced irrigation potential by 40% in Wardha and 17% in Wainganga and thus worsened the agrarian crisis in Vidarbha in Maharashtra. (<http://www.greenpeace.org/india/en/Press/Water-diversion-to-thermal-power-plants-will-reduce-irrigation-potential-and-worsen-agrarian-crisis-in-Vidarbha-Greenpeace/>)

The Greenpeace India has also plan to expand its campaign to oppose the Indian import of Indonesian palm oil on the ground that growing palm oil demand from India has resulted in large scale destruction of forests in Indonesia.

Greenpeace activist off-loaded from flight to London

Greenpeace activist Priya Pillai was stopped by the immigration officials at Delhi airport on 11th January 2015 and off-loaded from a flight to London where she was scheduled to make a presentation before the British MPs regarding the human rights violations of tribals in Mahan region of Madhya Pradesh. However, despite the government's action in blocking her London trip, she managed to address an All Party Parliamentary Group at the British Parliament in London through video-conferencing on January 14, 2015. In her speech, she elaborately described the valiant struggle being waged by the tribal community in the Mahan region in MP against the moves by the corporate giants Essar and Hindalco for destroying the Sal forests in the

