

Nuclear Resistance Movements: Case Study of India

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Abstract : The paper illustrates dynamics of nuclear resistance movements in India and how peoples' power rises in response to subversion of justice and suppression of human rights. The need for democratizing nuclear policy runs implicit through the demands of the people protesting against nuclear programmes. The paper analyses the rationale behind developing nuclear energy according to the mainstream development model adopted by the state. Whether the prevalent nuclear discourse includes people's ambitions and addresses local concerns or not is discussed. Primarily, the nuclear movements across India comprise of two types of actors i.e. the local population as well as the urban interlocutors. The first type of actor is the local population comprising of the people who are residing in the vicinity of the nuclear site and are affected by its construction, presence and operation. They have very immediate concerns against nuclear energy projects but also have an ideological stand against producing nuclear energy. The other types of actors are the urban interlocutors, who are the intellectuals and nuclear activists who have a principled stand against nuclear energy and help to aggregate the aims and goals of the movement on various platforms. The paper focuses on the nuclear resistance movements at five sites in India- Koodankulam (Tamil Nadu), Jaitapur (Maharashtra), Haripur (West Bengal), Mithivirdi (Gujrat) and Gorakhpur (Haryana). The origin, development, role of major actors and mass media coverage of all these movements are discussed in depth. Major observations from the Indian case include: first, nuclear policy discussions in India are confined to elite circles; secondly, concepts like national security and national interest are used to suppress dissent against mainstream policies; and thirdly, India's energy policies focus on economic concerns while ignoring the human implications of such policies. In conclusion, the paper observes that the anti-nuclear movements question not just the feasibility of nuclear power but also its exclusionary nature when it comes to people's participation in policy making, endangering the ecology, violation of human rights, etc. The character of these protests is non-violent with an aim to produce more inclusive policy debates and democratic dialogues.

Keywords : anti-nuclear movements, Koodankulam nuclear power plant, non-violent resistance, nuclear resistance movements, social movements

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