

From Bottled Profits to Barren Wells: Plachimada as Neoliberal Accumulation by Dispossession

Rajesh. K

Abstract: *The agitation of the Adivasi's in Plachimada, in the Palakkad district of Kerala, India, against the massive extraction of groundwater by the Coca-Cola bottling unit is known as the Plachimada struggle. It brought to the public notice the livelihood challenges faced by the marginalised resident Adivasi's, who faced scarcity, pollution, and water depletion after the operation of the plant within a short period. Devoid of cultural capital, the Adivasis are heavily dependent on the natural resources for sustenance. This paper aims to locate Plachimada as a site of the Neoliberal development model with accumulation by dispossession as a strategy. The destruction of ecology by the operation of the plant and its reflections on the lives of the communities dependent on common property resources are analysed using the ethnographic data collected between 2018 and 19 from Plachimada. The dispossession of the Adivasi's and the subsequent struggle in Plachimada has brought out a critique of development called Plachimada critique of development. This paper will attempt to explain the features of this model development vis a vis the Adivasi life to elaborate on how the Adivasi critique of Plachimada, emanated from their life experiences, would question the essential principles of the Neoliberal idea of development advanced by the state in Neoliberal times.*

Keywords: *Common Property Resources, Neoliberalism, Accumulation by Dispossession.*

Introduction

Plachimada, a village in Perumatty panchyaath in Palakkaad district of Kerala became a site for a protest Coca Cola bottling unit as the company extracted large quantities of ground water creating water scarcity and later polluting the remaining water, both surface as well as the ground water sources. The MNC was invited as part of the new development paradigm after the implementation of Neoliberal idea of development. The Adivasis of Plachimada, who belonged to one of the marginalised communities in India, described as Scheduled Tribe (S T) came to Plachimada to make a living from Coimbatore district. The ancestors of the present generation worked hard to convert the dense forest into cultivable field. They possessed land and were making a living out of it. But, over a period, they lost control over the land to land lords and became daily wagers in the paddy fields and plantations of the landlords. The miserable condition of the Adivasi's could be read in the history of land alienation of Adivasi in Kerala. In this way, the Adivasi *oors* became symbols of backwardness and it was reflected in all the indices of development. Though the State advanced much after 1957 through the much-acclaimed Kerala Model of Development, the condition of Adivasi did not improve considerably. Hence, Plachimada became a less developed region and Adivasi and the other marginalised groups as less developed group, decades after the formation of the state. The economic restructuring in Neoliberal lines in the post 1990's brought in a new developmental model pushed the Adivasi further to the fringes, as they lost the minimum control they had on the natural resources, which generated resistance in different locations, including Plachimada.

Ever since the reorganisation of the states in linguistic lines in 1957, Kerala has followed an inclusive model of development called Kerala Model of development. According to Ravi Raman the Kerala Model evolved as "a protracted journey in the face of tenacious negotiations /resistance/consensus from among both dominant and subaltern forces , with a constellation of movement initiatives that emerged from within and outside the region, culminating in the creation of the modern state of Kerala. (Raman, p. 2) Thus Kerala has achieved remarkable success in in indicators like literacy, health and educational standards.

There was a shift in this when States across the world have reconceptualised its assumptions of development practices, in the Neoliberal times. The invitation extended to the Coca Cola bottling unit by an LDF government is symptomatic

of this change in the development practice. They have resorted to the commodification of the global commons to fuel the emerging economies. The capitalist class have grabbed the opportunity to appropriate the common property resources, even at the cost of ecology to redeploy the accumulated capital to advance profit. Appropriation has been a part of the expansion of capital since the beginning of colonialism. The capitalists appropriated the means of production, including labour during the time of industrial revolution. Later, as the ecological Marxists have pointed out, they appropriated natural resources in addition to labour in the late 19th century. But the contours of appropriation altered drastically in the Neoliberal times with the capitalists encroaching into the common property resources, dismantling the life sustaining mechanisms of the poor, who are heavily dependent on them for sustenance. This has been captured by David Harvey's reconceptualization of the Marxian idea of Primitive Accumulation as Accumulation by Dispossession. He has elucidated how the accumulation process had a spiralling effect on the lives of the already poor of the globe. This is the focal point of the ongoing debates of development in Neoliberal times.

The post 1990 planning and execution of developmental programmes by the government in India witnessed a paradigm shift from the government regulated mechanism to market navigated method in lieu of the spirit of liberalisation. The deregulation and opening up of the markets unleashed opportunities for domestic and foreign capital to invest in profitable ventures in India. Multi-National Corporations were invited to set up units with multiple aims like enabling of capital flow, generating employment and enhancing technologies. Accepting the invite of the Left Democratic Front (L.D.F) government in Kerala, they set up a bottling plant in Plachimada in the Palakkad district of Kerala in 1999. But, within a short period of time, the Company gulped the ground water resource and the functioning of it depleted and polluted the available surface water resources. This was contrary to the promises given by the government to the people about regional development and the expectations that the people had about the project. This paper is an attempt to understand the nature of dispossession through the life experiences of the Adivasis of Plachimada by looking it through the frame of Accumulation by Dispossession of David Harvey. It aims to explain development in Neoliberal period as accumulation of resources by a few depriving the majority, especially the poor and the marginalised. The paper aims to explain how the proposed model of development disempowered the Adivasis of Plachimada.

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The Neoliberal framework of deregulation and privatisation has necessitated the emergence of a new set of assumptions. The Marxian concept of Primitive Accumulation when applied in the Neoliberal setting is reconceptualised by David Harvey as Accumulation by Dispossession. This shift in policy aided the accumulation strategies of the capitalists, which eventually encouraged land grab, forcible expulsion of peasants and mindless exploitation of natural resources. This, in effect, created a crucial structural, institutional and legal change to suit the logic of capitalist development. This strategy of development has internalised the 'predatory practices' for making quick bucks at no cost. With supporting mechanism, this reorganisation has reshaped Primitive Accumulation to Accumulation by Dispossession of David Harvey. According to Harvey:

the structural change include a wide range of processes like the commodification and privatisation of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant population, conversion of various forms of property rights - commons, collective, state etc. into exclusive private property, suppression of the rights to the common, commodification of the labour power and the suppression of alternative, indigenous forms of production; colonial, neo colonial and imperial processes of appropriation of assets, including natural resources, monetisation of exchange and taxation, particularly of land, slave trade; and usury, the national debt and ultimately credit system (Harvey, 2003).

The State will be under pressure to oblige to the demands of capital when accumulation by dispossession is set in motion. Hence, the State will acquire land and redistribute it to companies. This will have detrimental effect on peasants, in general and marginalised communities, in particular. Applying a concept like accumulation by dispossession of Harvey to look at the multiple ways of dispossession is not without challenges, though it has been applied amply to study land grabs in Neoliberal times. The critique of it indicates that substantial tension and ambiguity remain in the meaning of some ideas in the foundational texts. The term poses limitation when question raise about the balance between the global and domestic force and about the agency of capital, state and small holders. The expulsion of the peasants and marginalised communities becomes mandatory under this model of functioning. This triggers resentment like the protest by the people of Plachimada within six months after the commencement, alleging that the actions of the Company resulted in depletion and pollution of water, posing livelihood challenges before them. In spite of all this, the concept could be used

to explain how land and other resources could be enclosed, previous users are dispossessed and the role of state for the purpose of capital accumulation. Recently the concept has been used to explain green grab and water grab also.

The invitation of the Kerala state to the Coca Cola Company to set up a bottling unit was a point of departure of the policies the state held for a long time. It is ironic that this milestone in the development was rebutted within a period of six months when the *Adivasis* protested against the Company alleging pollution of water sources. People of Plachimada depended on open well for domestic as well as agricultural purposes. Plachimada was below the Kerala average in the various development indices. The government support extended to them was limited to a Lower primary school and a Primary Health Centre. They had access to limited medical facility through the availability of a physician in the Primary Health centre. The Coca Cola Company was set up in 34.64 acres of land, which includes a multi cropped paddy field, with the support of local as well as the state government. The State promised rapid development and employment opportunities at the time of the commencement of the factory, in March 2000 to win the confidence of the people. The commencement of the factory signalled a shift in the government's approach towards development, in favour of private and global investors, in a State which resisted this for a long period of time. The Company easily secured the clearances from Kerala State Pollution Control Board, and District administration by using a state industrial promotion initiative, to lure the potential investors, like Single Window mechanism, initiated by the government of Kerala. But the Company secured all the licences without fully complying with the prescribed norms. Two years after the commencement of the factory, the Pollution Control Board repeatedly asked to install reverse osmosis system, when people protested over the pollution and the issue was brought before judiciary. The promises of decent employment and regional development vanished within a short period of time. But, the operation of the Company shattered the livelihood strategies of the marginalised communities and has driven them to impoverishment.

The State and the agents of the capital made the people to believe that the presence of foreign capital would develop the village. The red-carpet welcome to Coca-Cola by the C. P. M led government strengthened the belief that foreign capital could aid in regional development. The State explained that the revenue of the Panchayath would go up and it would empower the Panchayath to undertake more developmental projects in future. The State centred

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developmental agenda claimed that poverty would become a thing of past, once industrialisation takes on. The mothers of Plachimada imagined that their children could work in their village itself, as it would be developed in future, putting an end to their endless journey to Coimbatore garments factories for employment. They believed that this will further motivate their children to study more and climb the ladder of social mobility. The promise that the dawn of modernisation would ensure quality education, health and improved sanitation facilities in their habitat, as development will trickle down caught their imagination. The small and medium land-owning community believed that the price of land would go up, as a result of urbanisation and this would make them prosperous. In addition to that, the opportunities unleashed by urbanisation like the prospects of new commercial establishments could be used. The *Adivasis* and *Dalits* dreamt of getting regular employment in the factory which would improve their condition. The majority of the population were initially happy, under the influence of the emerging discourse of development, even though a small section was sceptical about the promises given to them (Bijoy 2006). The shift in industrial policy was justified by citing the critique of the Kerala Model of development indicating the inability of the State to generate revenue to sustain the development matrix that it had achieved. This change necessitated attracting industries and making an industry conducive atmosphere for the smooth flow of domestic and foreign capital. To facilitate this, the State was resolved to address issues of labour militancy, procurement of land, relaxation in labour norms and aggressively pushed privatisation of production and service sector. The State Industrial policies of post-1990s were prepared to make provisions for mechanisms to implement this shift in policy.

The Adivais and Dalits of Plachimada were employed as labourers in the paddy fields and coconut plantations. Despite having located in a rain shadow area, the Adivasis of Plachimada used water in the wells for domestic as well as agricultural process. Pazhanaanthal of Plachimada colony said, “We used to get enough and more water from the wells of Aaruchami Kownder. We also used to take water when he switches on motor to pump water to irrigate the coconut plantation. But after the company’s arrival, there was no water in some of the wells and the remaining water in some well was spoiled also.” Kaniyamma’s narration of the premature death of his grandson as “The doctors said that the boy had no kidney” indicate the commencement of genetic mutation in the plant site. The everyday tyranny of their existence was described by Amaravathy of Plachimada colony as “the food we cooked emitted foul smell within two hours and the porridge had lost all the flavour it had earlier... we couldn’t give this food

to children when they go to school...They stopped taking food to school.” The reports published by the N.G.O *Jananeethi* has cited this as a reason for the ill health of the children of the locality. Thankavelu, son of Mayilamma said “we suffered a lot...the contact with the water resulted in loosing hair and itching in different parts of the body” The administration was hesitant to listen to them initially, but the medical reports later testified that prolonged contact with polluted water has caused these dermatological problems. The youngsters in a focus group discussion were annoyed when they spoke about the vain promises of decent job promised to them. They narrated how the police resorted to brutal lathicharge when they participated in the agitation. The Company employed local goons to physically handle the youngsters. Muthulakshmi complained that the agents of the Company had beaten her husband and threatened to demolish their house. Veluchami described the double oppression as, “due to the scarcity of water, farmers stopped taking two crops in an year. Thus, the days of jobs diminished. No body from our family was employed in the factory also”. The dwindling of the days of work had added to the misery of their existence.

Neither the Company nor the State could deliver any of the promises like employment opportunities, increase in the income of the people and the rapid development of the region. Contrary to this, a common property resource like water was depleted and polluted within a short period of time. The health standards of the people declined and the women have to walk kilometres to get a pitcher of water. The model of development, advanced by the State proved to be disastrous not only for the already marginalised communities but for the farming community of the locality also. Plachimada proved that market driven developmental programmes, aimed at enhancing the G.D.P will be counterproductive and will obliterate the lives of the poor. The unimaginable social and environmental cost raises questions about the sustainability of this model. The Coca Cola Company operated only for five years in Plachimada. Within that short period, itself, it gulped the ground water and made the people feel water stress in the neighbourhood. The operation of the Company not only reduced the existing employment opportunities but did not also create any substantial avenues for the people of the locality. The experiences narrated by them depict the hollowness of the development model.

The acquisition of the land in Plachimada did not create any protest, but the peril of ‘enclosure’ was felt by the *Adivasis* when the Company erected a huge compound wall, converting it into an access restricted area. The impact of it on

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the livelihood strategy is evident in the following statement of Aamina, a native of Plachimada colony, when she said, “Earlier we used to rear goat in this area. Now a huge wall has been constructed. Even if we get in, the security personals threaten us with dire consequences. Now, where shall we go to rear our goats?” (Aamina, a native of Plachimada). Initially, livestock rearing was impacted as they couldn’t take their goats and cow to the access restricted premise. This mammoth compound wall dissociated the Company from the local people. The wall had dire consequences on the livelihood of those who plucked herbal medicines from the area to be sold in the market. The story of a pond converted to a junkyard by the Company illustrates the mindless exploitation ridden activities of the Company. Hamzaveni told the researcher that, “There was a pond here...where we used to take bath. But it has been filled and they expelled us from here. Now we walk miles to get a pitcher of water.” (Hamzaveni, a native of Plachimada). When the women of Plachimada walk three miles in the morning to get water, the enclosure and subsequent destruction of the water sources shows how life has been impacted by the actions of the Company. Harvey reasoned that the Neoliberal model with the aim of privatising the public assets to generate profit will result in the opening up of new land for commodity production, the depletion of the global commons, and the separation of the aboriginals from their land and the institution of the new legal framework to enable accumulation by dispossession. (Harvey, 2003) This process of ‘Neo enclosure’ (De Angelis, 2001) cornered the *Dalits* and *Adivasis* of Plachimada into a small area where they could no longer carry out their livelihood strategies. The process of enclosure not only implies the separation of the rural poor from their means of production, but it also produces a profound squandering of natural resources that affect the current and future generations (Araghi, 2010).

The Company constructed some of its buildings, after filling the paddy fields. The *Adivasis* of Plachimada were employed as casual labourers by the contractors, while constructing the buildings. The violations of the existing norms, in the construction of the factory were ignored by the authorities. After setting up the plant, the Company imported labourers from different parts of the country. They employed only two people from the premises. The remaining work was given on contractual basis. The contractors, who were the local leaders of various political parties, employed a few *Adivasi* women from the locality. The promise of ‘decent’ employment were not kept as the contractual workers were not entitled any privileges and had to work long hours for low wages. Those who raised questions were met with iron hands. The disillusionment of the people in

Plachimada is clear in the words of Ambika when she said that, "...the dream of our children working in Plachimada itself...either in the Cola Company or in the Companies that were expected to come after Cola were not materialised. Our children had to continue going to cotton mills in Coimbatore and our misery had been doubled also."(Ambika, a native of Plachimada colony). The state agencies, instead of providing assistance to the citizens, adopted measures to silence the workers. As Harvey pointed out, "force, fraud, oppression and looting are openly displayed without any attempt at concealment" (Harvey, 2003). The people who demanded higher wages were either sacked or threatened by the contractors. The attempt to form a trade union was foiled and a Company sponsored trade union was formed. The mainstream political parties were deeply involved in this process. The state, in this way, facilitated the plunder of natural resources and left it to the Company to commodify and later to upgrade and speculate. This resulted in the appropriation of water which impoverished the *Adivasis*. The commodification of water in Plachimada also resulted in the escalating depletion of the global environmental common. This is evident in the rapid depletion of water within six months after the commencement of the factory. According to Roy (2001), "privatisation eventually results in the transfer of productive public assets from the state to private companies. The productive assets including earth, forest, water and air and these are the ...assets the state holds in trust for the people it represents...To snatch these away and sell them as stock to private companies is a process of barbaric dispossession on a scale that has no parallel in history" (Roy, 2001). The Company in its attempt to convert natural capital into economic capital was unmindful of the ecological disaster it created. Studies have revealed that the Cola Company wastes two litres of water for making one litre of aerated drink. In addition to this, the waste water was left to the paddy fields. For them, the reduction of the environmental cost would increase production cost and reduce profit. In Plachimada too, the Company installed reverse osmosis system only after the intervention of the Supreme Court. But the biosphere was polluted by that time. It has to be assumed that the Company is indulging in all these practices with the full knowledge of the impending catastrophe.

The study of Hazards Center (2006) New Delhi identified the presence of heavy concentration of cadmium, chromium and lead in the water samples. They found that the water sources are contaminated and revealed that, even if a human does not consume the contaminated water, the hazardous chemicals will enter the human body through food chains and will be biomagnified, which will become more precarious in the long run. The report has highlighted all the hardships that

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the community had to endure. Some of the wells dried up and in some others, water became hard and unpotable. The men and women, who used to work under the heat of the sun, reported fatigue and inability to engage in hard labour. Miscarriage and weight loss of children became frequent. The mothers had to walk kilometres in the morning to get water. The threat posed by the destruction of the biosphere and its impact on health is evident in the statement of Kanniyamma when she said, “My granddaughter gave birth to two kids. After a few months, one died and the doctors told us that the boy had no kidney”. (Kanniyamma, native of Vijayanagar colony). Her two grandchildren met with premature death and as per the medical report, one child had no kidney at the time of birth itself. Physicians suspected that prolonged contact with polluted water could be the reason for it. Ever since the governments have adopted liberalisation as a key strategy, the companies are competing to reduce cost and further profits. These developmental assumptions of liberalisation have aggravated the dispossession of the marginalised people.

The children either stopped or became irregular in schools as education is not a priority when the survival of the family itself is questioned. The medical aid available to them in the village came to an end when the only physician in the village was hired by Coca-Cola to look after their employees. The *Adivasis* life which was heavily dependent on common property resources was devastated within a short period of time as the ecosystem services like the provision for food was disrupted. The sudden change in the quality of water and its impact on nutrient cycling further impoverished the *Adivasis* and *Dalits*.

The pollution and depletion of water drastically altered the cultural sphere of their existence. The continuous police barricade in the village-imposed restrictions on the community. They had to obtain prior sanction for festivals, which was quite difficult to obtain at that time. Sakthivel said, “Police will ask a lot of questions about festivals and compel us to give answers in writing...If it is not given, permission will be denied.”(Sakthivel, a native of Plachimada colony). The marshy lands of Plachimada dried up and the number of working days in the paddy fields dwindled. A lot of reports including *Jananeethi* demanded the closure of the Company and demanded that the Company pay compensation for the damage caused to ecology. But the Company ignored all the reports and continued its operations, shattering the livelihood strategies of the *Adivasis* and *Dalits* which reflected the patronage of the state and utter neglect of the citizens.

The sense of security villagers had was disrupted as the Company employed local goons to threaten the *Adivasis* and *Dalits* to desist from the ongoing strike. The children of the protesters were attacked in their home itself, when mothers were away in search of water. Muthulakshmi said, “They had beaten my husband without any reason.... They attacked my house by pelting stones at night to frighten us...But we continued our fight against the company”. (Muthulakshmi, a native of Plachimada) Brutal police force was unleashed to suppress the struggle. The State instead of protecting the *Adivasis* and *Dalits* remained a passive spectator, unleashing brute force to crush the struggle. In his study Harvey notes how the State with its monopoly of violence and definitions of legality plays a crucial role in subjugating the citizens (Harvey, 2003). The cases filed against the *Adivasis* were aimed at deterring them from participating in the struggle, whereas the cases filed as per the provisions of SC/ST Atrocities prevention Act for assaulting the *Adivasis* were mediated by the local politicians. The course of law when influenced by political power and economic might will make it inaccessible for the marginalised communities. Even though the Company was closed in 2005 due to the agitation of the *Adivasis* and *Dalits* and the High Power Committee under the Chairmanship of Sri K. Jayakumar ratified all the allegations raised by the agitators and on its recommendation a tribunal was set up to claim compensation from the Coca-Cola, the power of the *Adivasis* and *Dalits* were reduced in favour of the capitalists by the tacit play of the State and it further augmented the process of the accumulation by dispossession. Although the *Adivasis* and *Dalits* of Plachimada were not physically displaced, their livelihood strategies were completely dismantled, as the entire ecosystem services came to an end.

The *Adivasis* protested against the Company by organising demonstration in front of the Panchayath office under the leadership of Mayilamma. Within a short period of time, environmental activists extended support to the agitation. On Earth Day in 2002 the *Adivasis* started non-stop sit-in before the Company demanding its immediate closure. The struggle initiated by the *Adivasis* grew into a movement as it could attract the attention of civil society groups and environmental activists. The *Adivasi* Struggle gained momentum and it became a movement against dispossession. The Company used all means to crush the agitation. The life of *Adivasis* has been turned in to a saga of suffering, as the food prepared with the polluted water decayed soon and the continued use of the water resulted in rashes all over the body. Diarrhoea and hair fall became common in the *Adivasi* habitats and children complained of irritable bowels and burning

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sensation in the eyes. The misery and discontent of the *Adivasis* led them to wage a fight against the Company. The rationale of the agitation was explained by late Veloor Swaminathan as, “It is a new experience for us that water has become a market commodity. It is alien to our habits. To sell bottled water is unjust and anti-nature” (Vasudevan, 2005). This conviction drove them to agitation. They lodged a petition to the Panchayath, District and the State administrations. Yet the narrative of the life experience of the *Adivasis* and their complaints were rejected and all the agencies supported the Company following the line of global managerial reasoning. The contradiction between the promises given to the people with the real experiences is evident in the words of late Mylamma, the leader of the struggle when she said:

They came to our village with glittering offers; that our people would get ample job opportunities in the plant; the overall development of the village would be taken care of...On the contrary, six months went by, slowly we started facing the reverse effects. Our precious water resources had been stolen. (Vasudevan, 2005).

Initially, the landowning class declined to support the *Adivasis* and *Dalits*. The situation further deteriorated within a period of one and half years, as the water table went down significantly; the available water became polluted and the slurry deposited as fertiliser reduced the productivity of the fields. The slurry deposited as fertiliser in the paddy fields destroyed the farming community. Later it was identified that the slurry contained lead and cadmium in it which have brought down the fertility of the soil reducing productivity. This further reduced the employment opportunities in the paddy fields. By this time, people from all sections of the society came in support of the historic struggle. The depletion of water and the pollution of the paddy fields and the loss of employment resulted in the dispossession of the *Adivasis* and *Dalits*. In spite of the staunch opposition of the State agencies and mainstream political parties, the movement succeeded in closing the Company in 2005.

Kanniyamma said “...we were poor, but now, we have lost everything. Our children are perpetually sick, every day we have to take them to hospitals, they have stopped going to school. Men are unwilling to marry girls from our *oors* as they fear that children will have no kidney...” (Kanniyamma from Vijayanagar colony of Plachimada). The angst in the words of Kanniyamma echoes the miserable condition of dispossession experienced by the *Adivasis* of Plachimada.

The immobile dislocation of the *Adivasis* and *Dalits* of Plachimada leading to dispossession was similar to the experience of the indigenous communities living on the banks of Huanuni River in Bolivia. Dispossession in Plachimada did not make any change in the property rights (Caceres, 2015). But the access to water was obliterated and the people are robbed off their ecosystem services. The activities of the Company aimed to reduce the private cost eventually placed the burden on society by increasing the social cost. This unsustainable model of development, as experienced in Plachimada, undermining the environmental impacts created untold miseries to people and the ecology. Even though the expansion of capital affecting the environment is not a new phenomenon, the pressure exerted by the Neoliberal era has created a much more profound and systematic effect on the ecosystem. The transfer the negative impacts and externalities from private to public domain make this model unattractive and unsustainable. Ultimately the state itself has to bear the social and the environmental cost of this model, as experienced in Plachimada, demonstrates the inherent weakness of this model. Accumulation by dispossession tends to privatise the economic benefits derived from enclosures and to externalise to society most of its negative environmental practices (Wallerstein, 1987). Thus, the successful resistance of the *Adivasis* should be an eye opener while rethinking the prevailing mode of development. The *Adivasis* of Plachimada resisted like the anti-dam movements in India and Latin America, the struggle of the Ogoni people against the degradation of their land by Shell Oil, the resistance to *ejido* reforms as Zapatista rebellion, peasant movements against bio piracy and genetically modified food, the struggle to preserve the access of the indigenous communities to the forest and the fight against special economic zones. The successful resistance of the people of Plachimada against the pollution and depletion of water has augmented the question of the barbaric dispossession of the *Adivasis* and *Dalits* in the name of development.

Thirty million people (Fernandes, 1998) have been displaced in India by dam projects only in the first five decades of planned development after independence and the process is in the rise since the inception of the Neoliberal model of development. The *Adivasi* critique of Plachimada, citing how life has been affected by dispossession necessitates the search for an alternative to the prevailing mode of development. As Harvey explained neo-liberals - will never produce a harmonious state in which everyone is better off. It will instead produce even greater levels of inequality, as indeed has been the global trend over the last thirty years of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2007). Therefore, future research should concentrate on a

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sustained critical engagement with the Neoliberal model of development to understand the varied ways in which hegemony gets constructed, tacitly in day today discourses. Simultaneously research in future must seek ways to strengthen the *Adivasis* and *Dalits* to nullify the dangers of acculturation, so that the cultural, social and political fabric of the indigenous communities could be protected to make the world remain plural. This might aid to make development inclusive, equitable and sustainable in future.

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