

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Some perspectives from India

Edited by

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PEOPLE'S RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Case of Goa Bachao Abhiyan

Joanna Coelho

An important component of environmental sociology is the study of environmental movements. These movements, which comprise mobilization at the elite and mass levels, are largely a result of the perceived threat to the environment. Of late, there has been an increase in the concerns regarding the impacts and consequences of environmental degradation. This has led to the emergence of a relatively new field in sociology—environmental sociology. It is based on the study of the interdependence of the biophysical and socio-cultural domains (Burch 1987, cited in Guha 1998, p. 5).

Environmental movements: from affluence to poverty

The period since the 1960s has seen the emergence of a wide variety of social movements, which could be termed as new social movements. New movements, in contrast to older movements, are primarily social or cultural in nature and only slightly, if at all, political. These movements involve identity and transformation, and can be achieved by adopting alternative lifestyles and through the strength of individual and collective wills (Scott 1992, p. 3). Under the rubric of new social movements, environmental movements occupy a prominent place. In fact, Guha (2000, p. 7) opines that among the 'new' social movements, the environment segment alone has grown steadily.

Environmental movements in the North

The modern environmental movement began with the publication, in 1962, of the book *Silent Springs* by Rachael Carson, a biologist who had worked for years with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. She discusses the impacts of poisonous chemicals, particularly DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane), on the environment. The book has raised public awareness and led to the emergence of environmental movements in the US. For the first time, a diverse body of people, from bird watchers, wildlife managers, and public health professionals to suburban homemakers and politicians, came together to deal with a common threat. The environmental movements in the North have basically dealt with the issues pertaining to the quality of life.

Environmental movements in the South

There is a widespread belief that environmentalism is a phenomenon peculiar to affluent nation states of the North and is a product of the move towards 'post materialist' values by the populations of North America and western Europe. It is believed to be the Northern White Empire's last burden, and may be its last crusade. By equating environmentalism exclusively with affluence, scholars seem to develop an evolutionary sequence—of poor societies becoming prosperous, before they can find green movements in their midst (Guha 2000).

This view has been generated in the western community because there has been very little data from developing countries. Guha (2000) asserts that there does in fact exist a vibrant and growing environmental constituency in the Third World societies. While the participants of environmental movements in the North are the people belonging to middle and upper classes, who show a concern for nature, the same cannot be said about the developing societies. In the South, the protesters are generally the marginal population—hill peasants, tribal communities, fishermen, and other underprivileged people (Karan 1994, p. 33). Different environmental movements in our own country – Chipko Movement, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Mitti Bachao Andolan, and Koel-Karo – support this argument. That is why environmentalism of the North can be referred to as the 'environmentalism of affluence' and that in the South as the 'environmentalism propelled by poverty'.

Goa: an overview

Like any other region in India, Goa too has had its share of environmental movements. This paper focuses on the emergence and growth of the GBA (Goa Bachao Abhiyan), or the Save Goa Campaign, as a response to the perceived environmental threat to the 'beautiful land of Goa'.

Goa, covering a total area of 3701 km², is part of the West Coast region and is similar in physical features to the neighbouring regions of Karnataka and Maharashtra. The most well-known part of Goa is the coastal belt, which runs from the north to south, while the least known is the Western Ghat region, which also runs from the north to south. Though geographically similar to the neighbouring regions, socio-culturally and historically, Goa is believed to be quite different from the rest of India. This is primarily because unlike the rest of India, which was largely colonized by the British, Goa was ruled by the Portuguese for over 400 years.

As India became independent and moved onto the world stage as a major new de-colonized power in South Asia, there was no sign that anything had changed or would soon change in Goa (Newman 1989, cited in Dantes 1999, p. 22). While India became a new nation state, created and implemented its own Constitution, formed its own government, and launched its five-year plan, Goa still languished under colonial subjugation.

Goa became independent virtually overnight on 19 December 1961. After attaining independence, the state began the process of integration into the Indian Union from which it had been separated for 450 years. Goa witnessed all the hiccups, adjustments, and dilemmas that accompany a region in the process of transition, transformation, and change. One of the important dilemmas that had to be dealt with pertained to Goan identity. The next section attempts to underline the prominence of identity in the socio-cultural landscape of Goa, and delineates the link between identity and environmental movements in Goa.

Goa's 'unique' identity

An identity is a set of meanings attached to the self, which serves as a reference or a standard that guides behaviour (Burke 2003, p. 225). Being separated from the mainland for more than 451 years, Goa or at least its more populous talukas developed a unique identity that was shaped and influenced to a large extent by their experience of Portuguese colonial rule.

Nehru himself acknowledged Goa's unique identity on his maiden visit to Goa in 1963. While addressing a public gathering in Goa, he maintained that '...in the course of more than four hundred years, Goa has had a separate identity and it is the course of history that has imparted it one. We have no intention of changing or suppressing that identity' (cited in Sinha 2002, p. 45). Goans have often expressed concern over this identity and any collective mobilization in Goa has, in one way or another, revolved around this identity. The environmental movements that Goa witnessed have, like any other movement, often been geared towards preserving what the environmentalists refer to as Goa's identity.

Environmentalism in Goa: towards preserving identity

Development had not been a major preoccupation of ordinary Goans for two historical reasons. Till 1961, Goa was under Portuguese rule. Portugal itself was unindustrialized compared to other European nations. Also, Portugal saw to it that Goa consumed goods without having to undergo the rigours associated with industries producing such goods, with the exception of iron-ore mining (Alvares 2002, p. 3).

With Portuguese leaving, the situation changed rapidly. Soon after Goa's independence, top priority was given to development, and a number of industries were set up. These changes had their negative impacts. It was the mining industry, primarily, that polluted, degraded, and damaged the environment. Environmentalists allege that development, instead of improving the standard of living of people in Goa, ended up deteriorating their quality of life considerably. Alarmed by these developments, there grew among the people a sense of environmental identity, which is a set of meanings attached to the self as the person interacts with the natural environment.

In response to the demands of the several sets of factors to the environmental crisis facing Goa, the government enacted laws like the Environment Protection Act, 1986, the Water Act, 1974, the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, as well as local laws like the Goa Anti-spitting and Anti-smoking Act; the Goa Non-biodegradable Garbage (Control) Act; and the Protection of Tourist Places Act. Alvares (2002, p. 4) believes that if these laws were implemented, many of Goa's environmental problems would be mitigated. But he also states that most of the time, the implementing agencies are weak, indifferent, unwilling or simply corrupt, and collude with the offenders.

He feels that it is now up to the civil society to pick up the gauntlet. He sees hope in the NGOs, which are the most vocal and effective institutions of civil society, to seek redressal of environmental wrongs. They, along with an effective judiciary, have intervened and cured some of the serious environmental ills affecting Goa. In fact, it was largely due to the efforts of the various environmental movements that Goa has witnessed a number of successful environmental movements. For instance, a giant fertilizer factory (the Zuari Agro Chemicals) was shut down because of pollution in 1974 and Thapur DuPont gave up its project to produce Nylon 66 at Ponda, Goa. These successes have given confidence to environmentalists and led to the mushrooming of environmental NGOs. There are approximately 16 environmental NGOs in Goa. Some of these include the Goa Foundation, Goa Environmental Action Group, Mhadei Bachao Andolan, and Vivekanand Environment Awareness Group. These environmental groups in Goa, along with the movements that they have spearheaded, have all been involved in preserving what they believe to be an important component of Goa's collective identity—the land we live in, the air we breathe, the cities and villages, and the wild spaces in between. The environmentalists in Goa staunchly believe that one cannot take away the identity of the people from the land that they inhabit.

The following section focuses on one such environmental group: the Save Goa Campaign, or GBA (Goa Bachao Abhiyan).

Goa Bachao Abhiyan

GBA is a people's campaign organized by concerned individual citizens, citizen groups, and NGOs, all of whom came together to collectively oppose the Regional Plan 2011 and ensured that it was revoked. The Campaign's website claims it to be a 'non-politically affiliated and virtual collective body that represents every Goan and non-Goan alike, who believe in the development and preservation of their social, cultural, and economic fabric'. It is an umbrella body to which 16 diverse organizations have pledged their support. As mentioned earlier, though yet a fledgling organization, it has had a tremendous impact on the psyche of Goa, so much so that even the nomenclature of new environmental movements is similar to the GBA.

Members

Though the GBA, according to Dr Oscar Rebello, the Convener, is a people's movement, like any other movement, it is hierarchically structured. Shridhar Kamat and Sabina Martins are co-conveners. The GBA comprises a core group of 15 members, with Patricia Pinto as secretary and Anand Madgavkar as treasurer. When the organization deals with an issue at hand, then the list of core members goes up to 30. As mentioned earlier, the GBA is also inherently associated with various other NGOs.

Education, age, political ideology, and residence are found to be the best indicators of environmental quality, while higher education, youth, liberalism, and urbanism are associated with environmental concern (Van Liere and Dunlap 1979, p. 181). Younger people are more concerned with the environmental issues than the older people. These differences in age-environmental concern relationship can be explained using Manheim's (1952) theory of generations, which suggests that important historical events occurring in adolescence and young adulthood phases of the lifecycle can permanently affect a cohort throughout its existence. Malkis and Grasmick (1977, p. 25) suggest that the exposure of the current 18–30 year old people to the 'youth movement' of the 1960s and 1970s could account for their greater concern towards environmental problems. Manheim's theory would lead us to expect that continued exposure to alarming information on environment deterioration (via news, media, environmental education course, and so on) has left an indelible imprint on many young people during the decade (Van Liere and Dunlap 1979, p. 183). This assessment would lead to the formation of an ecologically sound generation, whose commitment to environmental reform would not break as it moves into adulthood.

This argument given by Malkis and Grasmick (1977) holds good for the GBA as well. Most of the members of the GBA, especially those belonging to its member organizations, have, in one way or the other, participated in the youth movement that Goa witnessed in the 1960s and 1970s. For example, Sabina Martins is an active member of a women's organization, while Bailancho Saad was part of the movement concerning blanket concessions for students in the 1960s and 1970s. She says that it was only when she, as a member of the PGSU (Post Graduate Students Union), visited the interiors of Goa that she got sensitized to social issues.

It has also been suggested that involvement in environmental issues is also related to social class. Two theories can be given to substantiate this argument. One is Maslow's (1970) theory of hierarchy of needs, which

assumes that concern for environmental quality is something of a luxury that can be indulged in only after more basic material needs (food, shelter, and economic security) are met. Morrison, Hornback, and Warner (1972) present a related argument using the theory of Relative Deprivation. They argue that members of the lower class experience only poor physical conditions and hence are less aware that they live and work in a poor, polluted environment. Conversely, the middle and upper classes are more likely to have experienced a pleasant residential and recreational environment and are more concerned about the deterioration of the physical environment. Thus, Morrison, Hornback, and Warner (1972) argue that it is the presence of relative deprivation as compared to absolute deprivation that leads to environmental concern. All the core group members of the GBA belong to the middle and upper classes. The middle and upper classes are financially stable and politically and socially more active segments of society, and hence, their concern with environmental issues is only an extension of their overall social concern. Thus, it is not surprising that members of these groups are concerned about the environment.

Of course, it cannot be generalized and said that it is only the upper classes that are more sensitized towards the environmental movements. Buttel and Flinn (1978, p. 481) argue that because the lower and working classes typically reside in highly polluted areas, work in poor environmental conditions, and have poor recreational activities, they should be expected to express concern about poor environmental conditions. They, thus, hypothesize that the lower and working classes are much more concerned about environmental problems than the middle and upper classes. The GBA, for instance, is not just limited to the elite. It is said to be a people's movement, and its strength is derived from the mobilization of masses. Whatever the issue of the GBA, be it the regional plan agitation, the anti SEZ (special economic zone) movement or the mining agitation, it is the local people, the ones affected, who are involved in the agitation propelled by the GBA.

Origin and development of the movement

Though the movement started only in 2006, the movement has traversed many paths and has been quite successful. It has captured the imagination of the collective consciousness to such an extent that Dr Rebello was nominated for the CNN-IBN Award for 'Indian of the Year 2007', in the public service category. For such a fledgling organization, its journey has been remarkable.

Background to the movement

Patricia Pinto, Secretary of the GBA, traces the roots of the movement to the opposition to the Regional Plan 2011. The background can be traced further back. Dean D'Cruz, a prominent architect, who won a number of awards, informs that somewhere during 2000, the attention of some environmentalists was drawn to issues relating to changes in land use in Panjim. The development in technology, like Google Earth, now made it easier for concerned citizens to know the status of land use and land conversion.

In 2006, the large-scale hill cutting at Baga, a prominent coastal area in Goa, was brought to the notice of Dean D'Cruz. On studying the issue further, he realized that there was a huge difference in the Draft Plan released in 2005, and the final version was made public in October 2006 (details of the Regional Plan 2001 will be dealt with a little later). While the background was already being laid, with a number of groups and individuals getting concerned about the regional plan, what proved to be a catalyst for the movement, according to Praveen Sabnis, an architect builder and GBA member, was an incident that took place on 18 November 2006. On the morning of that day, Patricia Pinto, PMCA (People's Movement for Civic Action), got a phone call informing her that the Corporation of the City of Panjim had started cutting down six heritage trees. On rushing to the site along with Advocate Satish Sonak, she saw that the mayor, government officials as well as some powerful local politicians were overseeing the entire exercise. Determined to save the tree as well as feeling helpless at being alone, she got reminded of the Chipko Movement, and went and hugged the tree. A crowd gathered and the media captured the event. The two were arrested on grounds of obstruction to government duty and taken to the police station.

This incident triggered a huge reaction. Dr Rebello, who until then was not involved in the environmental movement, was incensed at this incident. Furious over how 'the law could be broken so easily and at the arrogance of power', he joined the movement and from then, it took on a life of its own. Praveen Sabnis is of the opinion that when a photograph pertaining to this incident appeared in newspapers, the image angered and shamed the educated middle class, which enjoys the benefits of the land, and made it to shed its inaction.

The movement is born

On the evening of the same day, a meeting, organized by media persons, was held at a school. At the meeting, Pinto and other environmentalists

addressed the gathering and made the people aware of the new regional plan. On 3 December 2006, the 'Save Goa Campaign' proposal was placed before people gathered for a press briefing called at Don Bosco School hall, Panaji. Dr Rebello was chosen as the convener, with Patricia Pinto as secretary and Anand Madgavkar as treasurer. One joint convener each for North and South Goa was nominated. The core group of members spearheading the movement later met to chart the course of action.

From 9 December that year, the press took up the cause of the 'Save Goa Campaign'. On 18 December, the Campaign, at a public rally at the historic Azad Maidan, Panaji, addressed by people from different walks of life, called for the de-notification of the Regional Plan 2011. It was a single-point agenda of the GBA. The rally was attended by 7000–13000 people (differing estimates), and 6648 signatures were received on the Memorandum to the Goa government, prepared by the GBA, calling for the de-notification of the Plan. There was also an exhibition displaying graphics and maps of the Regional Plan 2011 and Google Earth satellite images of the same sites. The rally was covered by local and national press and the electronic media.

From then on, there were a number of rallies and awareness programmes organized in different talukas by the GBA. Exhibitions displaying the maps and other details of the Regional Plan 2011, showing a comparison between the Final Draft Plan and the notified version, were arranged at various places. Among the various meetings organized, one public meeting was organized by the GBA at the site of one hillside ravaged on the Zuari riverfront by builders at Bambolim village in Tiswadi taluka. The villagers participated enthusiastically and used the platform to voice their opinion fearlessly in spite of the presence of a large contingent of the Goa Police.

In an attempt to mobilize people on the basis of primordial identities like ethnicity, language, and region, on 16 January 2007, the 41st anniversary of the historic 'opinion poll' to safeguard Goa's independent identity, a public meeting was organized at Lohia Maidan by the GBA. The meeting attracted about 7000–8000 people. The Goa government capitulated and decided to de-notify the Regional Plan 2011, but with prospective effect. The GBA rejected what they saw as a sop and demanded the de-notification to be implemented with retrospective effect. Finally, on 26 January 2007, the government announced its acceptance of the people's demand to de-notify the Regional Plan 2011.

Thus, in a relatively short period of time, the GBA has achieved what was in many ways unthinkable. The Regional Plan 2011 was backed by

powerful lobbies. It was realized by the GBA that the regional plan was simply a fallout of the land deals that had already taken place. The Plan was only a means of legitimizing the illegally acquired land. The quick success of the movement left even the core members of the GBA surprised. Dr Rebello is amazed by the manner in which the movement snowballed and had a multiplier effect. The timing of the movement was also crucial to its success. The government did not want to be caught on the wrong foot, since 2007 was the election year.

In spite of its popularity and success, the GBA is not a registered organization. The reason for this could be found in the nature and purpose of the organization. Patricia Pinto feels that as it is an umbrella organization of various recognized organizations that are working towards the same cause, there is no need to register another organization.

Dr Rebello attributes this success to another reason. Indian environmentalism now incorporates a variety of philosophical approaches and multifarious points of view. From within, the movement is criss-crossed with contradictions and from the outside, it often appears to be ideologically homogenous (Krishna 1996). The GBA was formed with people of different ideologies and backgrounds, who had one thing in common, opposition to the regional plan and destruction of land. Keeping this diverse group together, when not in times of crisis, is a challenge. While there is no shortage of members when there is an issue at hand, there are just about 20 regular members, who meet once a month. Hence, at present, Dr Rebello does not see the GBA registering itself.

As the primary *raison d'être* of the GBA was the Regional Plan 2011, the next section of the chapter will analyse its various contours. The section also discusses other issues that the GBA is involved in, namely the anti-SEZ agitation and opposition to mining.

The regional plan and Goa

History of planning in Goa

In order to develop Goa in a planned manner after its independence, the Town and Country Planning Department was set up in December 1964. The main aim of establishing the department was basically to prepare the regional plan for Goa and master plans for the rapidly growing coastal towns (Alvares 2002). In 1974, the Goa Assembly approved and passed the Goa,

Daman and Diu Town and Country Planning Act. Under the Act, the Chief Town Planner is required to draw up and prepare a regional plan for Goa.

What exactly is the regional plan? Ritu Prasad, a GBA member, highlights and clarifies the various aspects of the plan. The regional plan is a policy document represented in land use planning. The plan is to be prepared from data collected from studies done in varied fields like social, economic, and demographic. It is part of a democratic process and needs to be done with public consultation.

Based on an overall policy, broad land use is demarcated on a surface utilization plan, based on which distribution-level plans, comprehensive development plans, and outline development plans are to be prepared. The plan must broadly demarcate areas for different human activities, including agriculture, forestry, industry, and urban and rural settlements. It must also provide land for recreation, botanical and zoological gardens, natural reserves, and so on. In certain parts of the state, areas would be set aside for industrial purposes or town planning schemes. Also, no changes are permitted to be made in a 10-year period.

First regional plan

The regional plan of Goa was notified for public comment in 1982. After the public participation exercise, which many environmentalists claim to be unaware of, the plan became a law and was notified in the gazette in 1986. As per the Act, from the date of notification, no development activities should violate the land use demarcated in the plan.

But Alvares (2002, p. 271) says that in 1986, when the plan was notified, a new set of economic interests set its eyes on Goa. Finding that the plan had set aside all the beach areas for developing orchards or green areas, pressure was brought in, especially by the tourist lobby, and amendments were made in the plan to suit the interest of the lobby.

Within 10 years after the regional plan was notified, the government was forced to concede that it had been modified more than a thousand times to suit different parties, with the result that much of the development that had taken place after 1986 was actually in violation of the land uses originally statutorily notified (Alvares 2002, p. 271).

Regional Plan 2011

The GBA alleges that there is a huge gap between what the regional plan is supposed to do and what it has actually done. Before considering what is wrong with the Regional Plan 2011, the stated objectives of the Regional Plan 2011, as understood by the GBA are highlighted.

The Regional Plan 2011 is meant to be the vision for the holistic development of Goa, keeping in mind the larger public interest. Private interest is not allowed to intervene in the process. It is supposed to encourage sustainable ecological growth while maintaining natural resources that sustain life in all its forms. It does not entertain private application for change. It is supposed to facilitate integrated rural and urban development in a consultative process with the local bodies in context of the 73rd and 74th amendment to the Constitution of India.

What is wrong with the Regional Plan 2011?

The GBA enumerates the drawbacks of the Regional Plan 2011.

- Though the regional plan is supposed to be framed in accordance with the wishes of people, through the 73rd and 74th amendments, it is the Town and Country Planning Board, and government bodies and government nominees that ratify it. This, in turn, hampers a proper system of checks and balances.
- The draft of the regional plan was released in November 2005, and the final version of the Regional Plan 2011 was made public in October 2006. From the time of the draft plan to its final version, an additional 75 million square metres of land has been converted to settlement.
- The GBA alleges that the plan has no clear vision and has been made largely for private interest. It randomly picks large tracts of land on picturesque sites for settlement. The secretary of the GBA further explains that the regional plan is supposed to be a broad-based one for the entire Goa. This broad plan is then to be taken up at the level of the various villages, which, in turn, deals with specifics pertaining to small land use area. But from 2000, the Town and Country Planning Department of the government has been entertaining requests from private small land users. This practice was stopped in 2004 by Kiran Dhingra, the then Chief Secretary of Goa.
- In a supporting study document, forest areas have been recommended to be increased by 40%. In this plan, the cover has reduced to less than 30%.

- While agriculture has been identified as an area of natural concern in the five-year plans, Goa Regional Plan 2011 works against it by reducing the field area even further.
- Various proposed new settlements are not identified in the plan. The new settlement is primarily for big-time builders. While it is mandatory to show land utilization, proposed mining sites are not shown.
- Many beach areas are shown as settlement areas. Coastlines, mangroves, lakes, forests, and so on are shown as settlement areas. *Comunidade* land was also shown as settlement. *Comunidade* codes existed before the Portuguese. These lands belong to the villagers and can only be leased for agriculture.

Thus, the GBA concluded that the government was breaking the very laws it had enacted. Thus, Prasad feels that in such a situation, only a people's movement can be effective. After the regional plan was scrapped on 26 January 2007, a Task Force was set up by the state government to prepare the Goa Regional Plan 2021. A number of members of the GBA are part of the Task Force. The Task Force has been assigned the responsibility of providing a roadmap for the new regional plan. As of now, it is in the process of considering views of different sectors like the corporate sector, NGOs, and government. After mapping, it will undertake a pilot study in six villages. Apart from the regional plan, the GBA is also involved in other related issues like anti-SEZ and mining. As anti-SEZ campaigns have been held in other parts of India as well, it would be interesting to note how Goa has responded to this issue.

Anti-SEZ agitation

With a view to overcome the shortcomings experienced on account of the multiplicity of controls and clearances; absence of world-class infrastructure; and an unstable fiscal regime, with a focus on attracting larger foreign investments in India, the SEZs Policy was announced in April 2000. This policy intended to use SEZs for economic growth, supported by quality infrastructure and complemented with an attractive fiscal package, both at the centre and the state levels, with the minimum possible regulations.

The SEZ Act, 2005, supported by SEZ Rules, came into effect on 10 February 2006. The main objectives of the SEZ Act are as follows.

- Generation of additional economic activity
- Promotion of exports of goods and services
- Promotion of investment from domestic and foreign sources
- Creation of employment opportunities
- Development of infrastructure facilities

As was the case in other parts of the country, in Goa, too, people actively opposed the SEZs. Following the success of the GBA meeting on 3 December 2006, on 6 March 2007, a group, SEZ Watch, was formed. Supported by the Council for Social Justice and Peace, Jagrut Goem, SEZwatch, and GBA, people came together under the banner of SEZ Virodhi Manch to 'collectively ensure that the people's will, unambiguously expressed through gram sabha resolutions against SEZs in various villages, is respected and implemented by the state government'. Though the GBA did not lead the anti-SEZ movement, as there were other prominent groups of citizens who were already involved, some of its members did actively participate in the movement. Praveen Sabnis, for instance, actively campaigned against SEZs in various villages. The anti-SEZ Campaign began in early December 2007 and peaked during mid-January 2008. Almost the entire state, including members of the political establishment, villagers, the church, and the media were united in their demand for scrapping the SEZs.

Further, the state government was forced to cancel all approved SEZs and recommend denotification of the rest by the central government. Goa had approved seven SEZs, of which three were notified. With the success of issues pertaining to both the Regional Plan 2011 and SEZ, the GBA now focuses on mining.

Mining has been problematic right from the time of its inception. The mining operations are mostly carried out in the *ghat* and forested areas. These operations have seriously undermined the integrity of the Goans, disrupted groundwater aquifers and tables, destroyed paddy fields, disturbed wildlife, and degraded the habitats of ordinary Goans (Alvarez 2002, p. 236).

Thus, by taking up major issues like mining, SEZ, and land use in a short span of less than two years, the GBA has become a force to reckon with. In fact, as the convener, Dr Rebello, succinctly puts it, 'The greatest success of the GBA is that it has managed to create awareness towards environmental sensitivity in the minds of the masses'. Following the success of the GBA, an even larger number of people are actively participating in movements geared towards environmental protection.

GBA and identity

Like any other environmental movement in Goa, the GBA also gives prominence to issues pertaining to Goan identity. Goan identity is an ambiguous category. With fluctuating patterns of in-migration and out-migration, the bases of this identity are highly debated. 'Who is a Goan, who is a non-Goan' is a highly contentious issue. This dichotomy pertaining to identity has manifested itself in the movement led by the GBA.

There is clarity of thought on the question of identity among the core members of the GBA. The organization does not make a distinction between a Goan and a non-Goan. In fact, as Pinto points out, a number of GBA members are so-called non-Goans. She explains that there is no law that says that non-Goans cannot buy land. But the problem arises when people with a lot of money subvert the law and harm the land. Dr Rebello says that the Goan identity is evolving and is not held in a time warp. This Goan identity versus migrant makes no sense. The migrant is a Goan by choice. As Goans have accepted globalization and economic liberalization, they have to now accept an evolving Goan identity by incorporating some components of the identity of the land, like low crime rate. In fact, Pinto asserts that the issue is not that of Goan and non-Goan, but rather that of Goan anti-Goan. There are a number of Goans who are anti-Goans in attitude and behaviour.

The one unifying factor binding the otherwise disparate group is the love for the land and the desire to protect Goa's identity. Dr Rebello even goes as far as to say that the GBA is not just an environmental movement. The fundamental issue is the brazenness with which people break the law and how this hampers the preservation of Goa's identity.

But while the core group emphasizes that Goan identity is holistic, the members who participate in this movement, especially the non-resident Goans who participate in the online discussions on the GBA website, see the identity of Goa as intrinsically linked with being Goan/non-Goan. But Dr Rebello dismisses the views of the non-resident Goans, as he feels that as they are not in India, they are not in a position to give their opinion on this issue.

Some people are of the opinion that in the process of nurturing this relationship between identity and land, development suffers. One of the more prominent issues challenging the state is the number of Goans migrating outside Goa, even abroad, for education and employment. Unemployment is one of the major problems for the youth. This section of the population feels that the environmental movement has backfired. It has contributed towards

increasing the woes of Goans because of its 'anti-development' stand. By working to revoke the Regional Plan 2011 and SEZ, some feel that the GBA has unwittingly left people, especially the youth, with no other choice but to migrate.

But the GBA refutes this charge of it being 'anti-development'. Architect D'Cruz opines that as Goans themselves have sold the land, this process cannot be stopped. However, development must be planned and not reckless. Pinto adds, 'What we are striving to achieve is sustainable development.'

Sustainable development: bridging the identity-development dilemma

The conflict between development and environmental conservation always remains unresolved. In the early years, the environment and development were seen as two sides of the same coin, but in practice, this meant that the environment was the limiting factor (Krishna 1996). Subsequently, the concept of ecological development evolved, ultimately giving rise to the concept of sustainable development, which states, 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED 1990, cited in Krishna 1996). This concept of sustainable development has been projected as the new development paradigm that bridges the conflict between environmental concerns and conventional economics.

The use and development of land are related in fundamental ways to environmental change. It follows that policies, which influence land use, can themselves become, either directly or indirectly, important instruments of environmental policy (Owens 1994, p. 431). In fact, the fact that land-use planning can contribute to sustainable development has elicited great interest in all levels of the government. The planning system, and the preparation of development plans in particular, can contribute to the objectives of ensuring that development and growth are sustainable (Department of the Environment 1992, cited in Owens 1994, p. 441). It is precisely this principle that seems to be the *mantra* of the GBA as well. The GBA has three aims: to revoke the Regional Plan 2011, to formulate a new regional plan, and to implement the 73rd and 74th amendments while formulating the new regional plan. The two amendments emphasize that the wishes of the people should be taken into consideration while framing any policy.

The GBA, thus envisages that development should benefit the local people who will be affected. Nature can never be managed well unless the people closest to it are involved in its management (Guha 1996). Thus, through the gram sabha, every proposition of the regional plan should seek the suggestions and consent of the population that will be affected. The present task force, which has been assigned the work of providing a roadmap for the new regional plan, will chart a course for the concerned village gram sabhas for discussion and will later hold a pilot study in six villages.

Thus, Dr Rebello argues that the GBA is not against development and construction. As he explains, anyone can build, but one must build keeping in mind the character of the village and the needs of the local populace. One must build in such a way that the culture and identity of the people are not tampered with. The organization also argues against the narrow definition of development that is employed by the planners. Development should not be limited to only buildings. It is a holistic concept that should encompass material, cultural, and social development.

Ritu Prasad also refutes the charge that the GBA opposes employment. She feels that the problem lies with the education system. As Pinto explains, 'What we need is to improve our education system. Good professional colleges will automatically attract related industries'. With the situation being as it is, Prasad foresees that jobs will be available in Goa, but qualified locals will be difficult to find. Therefore, there will be a need to hire people with specific skills.

Pinto as well as Architect Sabnis counter the claims of the SEZ lobby that the SEZ will generate employment. As Pinto explains, as per the SEZ rules, large tracts of land are being bought for a low price and sold to the highest bidder. The developer will not know which industrial estate will be set up. Hence, he cannot predict the number and type of jobs. Sabnis further questions whether these jobs would benefit the villagers, and whether the panchayat would offer training to the villagers. Sabnis believes that these issues should be given prime importance before any decision regarding land sale and land use is taken.

Thus, the GBA is not against development per se. However, it wants that careful consideration be given to every aspect of development, before any policy decision is taken or implemented.

Conclusion

In a relatively short period of three decades since the emergence of environmentalism as an organized movement in contemporary India, the movement has matured from protesting against environmental damage to questioning the very character and course of the development (Krishna 1996). This chapter explains the role of the GBA in the interplay between identity and environment. This dilemma can be overcome by following the concept of sustainable development. However, sustainable development per se cannot be a panacea to all environmental ills. As Owens (1994, p. 439) says, 'There are contradictions in applying the concept of sustainable development in land-use policy'. But this requires detailed study.

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