1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to investigate how the Anti Tehri Dam Movement (ATDM) in the Uttarakhand region in north India has become a “new social movement” [Touraine 1981(1978); Offe 1985; Melucci 1989] with a complex and multi-layered character, and how its “newness” has developed in close relationship with Gandhism in contemporary India.

The ATDM is a movement against the Tehri dam, which has been constructed at Tehri (tibiri), located in the upstream of the Ganges (gaṅgā), the biggest river in India. This movement formally started in 1978, and has been one of the two most active and massive campaigns against dam constructions in India, together with the Anti Narmada Dam Movement [Khagram 2005 (2004)]. However, little research has been done on the ATDM, compared with the latter which has been widely studied [Dhawan 1990; Sumi 1990; Baviskar 1997; Dréze et al., 1997; Fisher 1997; Sangvai 2000; D’Souza 2002].

Priya [1992] conducted the first intensive fieldwork when the ATDM gained momentum and, therefore, had the advantage of conveying the vivid atmosphere of that time. Later, Pathak [2005] placed the ATDM in the context of the history of social movements in the Uttarakhand region, as Guha had done in the case of the Chipko Movement. However, Pathak insisted that the ATDM had “failed”, and as a result could
not capture the “new” development of the movement after 1992. Most recently, Mawdslay [2005] has stressed the “economic rational aspiration of the local people” in the ATDM.5

In the light of the above mentioned previous studies, the present paper discusses two major issues as follows: First, it stresses that the ATDM took the form of a “new social movement” in 1992 on the occasion of the declaration of the “Save Himalaya Movement”, though it has been a complex and multi-layered movement.6 The ATDM was not only a “local” protest in a “local” context, but also part of a broader setting with more wide-ranging significance. Second, this paper highlights the role of Gandhism in shaping the “new” form of the ATDM. By stressing the negative influence of the role of a Gandhian worker, Sunderlal Bahuguna, the leader of the movement, the above scholars overlook the positive contributions of Gandhism to the movement. For instance, it has been pointed out regarding Sunderlal Bahuguna that “his individual heroism, especially his fasts discouraged people participating in the movement”7 and “(t)he problem with the over-adulation and over dependence on one figure is, that differences of opinions, of attitude, different strategies and ways of doing things, tend to get marginalised” [Priya 1992: 48]. However, in fact, it was Bahuguna’s involvement with the movement that provided the backbone of the notion of the “Save Himalaya Movement”.

This paper discusses the detailed history of the ATDM (Section 2), examines the “new” character of the ATDM from the perspective of a “new social movement” and discusses Gandhian influences as an important basis of the “new social movement” (Section 3).

2. Development of the Anti Tehri Dam Movement8

2.1 The First Phase: Birth of the Movement (1970s)

The ATDM began formally in 1978.9 The Tehri Dam Opposing Struggle Committee (tibari bāndh virodhi sanghars samiti) was established at the dam location point, Tehri, on January 24, 1978, immediately after the dam construction began. V. D. Saklani, a freedom fighter of the Indian independence movement, was chosen as the chairperson, since he did not belong to any political party. A demonstration meeting was held at Tehri on April 10, and the construction work was suspended on April 24 due to interference by the participants of the movement. The first arrestee appeared on June 1, and the number of people arrested increased to 97 (of which 63 were women) by June 17. On August 14, a petition requesting a review of the dam construction plan was submitted by the committee to the Lok Sabha with signatures of 8,000 people.10 The committee repeatedly organised demonstrations, sit-ins (dharna), fasts (vrat) and demonstrations on foot (pad yātrā) and also conducted legal battles.11 Many women, children and students were amongst the participants from the beginning, and all the main political parties in the locality also actively took part in the movement. In February 1980, an environmental appraisal committee chaired by S. K. Roy was set up by the order of the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi.

It can be said that the ATDM at this stage was basically a movement by the local
people to defend their residential environment. In other words, the participants of the movement were limited to the local populace, and the main purpose of the movement was: (a) to review of the dam constructing plan; and (b) to compensate and rehabilitate the persons who were evicted. At this stage, the ATDM only protested against the dam which would bring great disadvantages to the locality, and the movement could not present any specific alternatives for the dam.

2.2 The Second Phase: Expansion of the Movement (1980s and Onward)

During the 1980s, the ATDM came to acquire features of a civil movement as the participants of the movement diversified beyond the boundary of the locality. This involved the following three aspects.

First, the movement attempted to include the residents of the downstream region, who had been conceived as the main beneficiaries of the dam, into the movement by emphasising the risk of flood if the dam collapsed.12

Second, many opinion leaders such as journalists and specialists of diverse fields from various parts of India became involved in the movement. For instance, two technical books were published with a strong support of N. D. Jayal, the director of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Culture), an NGO based in Delhi, and these books publicized the Tehri dam problem. The first [INTACH 1987] was a collection of critical articles against the dam construction written by seismologists and geologists whose views were based on their own investigation around the dam location point. The second [Paranjpye 1988] was a cost-benefit analysis of the dam, pointing out that the costs were higher than the benefits. Also, such people as Vandana Shiva, a globally famous environmentalist, Madhu Kishwar, an Indian feminist, Swami Chidananda, a saint, raised objections to the dam [Kishwar 1995; Chidananda n. d. (1978); Friends of Chipko n. d.]. Awareness of the Tehri dam problem in the country grew rapidly through their remarks and opinions.

Third, the ATDM began to unite with other anti dam protests, such as the Anti Narmada Dam Movement.13 The solidarity with the Anti Narmada Dam Movement became an important factor in the acquisition of a new framework for the ATDM, namely the “Save Himalaya Movement” in 1992, which I will describe later.

The ATDM in this period marked one more important turning point: a change in leadership. The former leader, Saklani, fell ill in 1989, and by his request, Sunderlal Bahuguna (1927–), one of the main figures in the Gandhian movement in contemporary India and a famous leader of the Chipko movement, was appointed as the new leader.14 His presence and involvement became an important factor in the development and transformation of the movement.

It should be mentioned here that a general mood against the construction of dams in India had grown synchronously with the expansion of the ATDM in this period.

While dams had been regarded as a “temple of modern India” (Nehru), and aggressively constructed under the policy of economic development after independence, the number
of constructions of large-scale dams decreased considerably after the 1980s. There are, at least, three reasons for this, according to Singh [1997] and Khagram [2005 (2004)]. Firstly, the problems of large-scale dams (for example, low level of cost-benefit ratio, adverse influence upon the environment, problem of evacuation, and so on) came to be widely known. Secondly, many anti dam movements started to join forces with each other. Thirdly, notions of environmental protection and preservation of human rights (especially of tribes) came to have much more power in the process of policy making in India.

The ATDM, together with the Anti Narmada Dam Movement, served as accelerators for this tide of “anti dam” tendencies, and merged with the worldwide “anti dam” tide [McCully 1996].

2.3 The Third Phase: Rise of the Movement (1991-92) and the “Gandhian Network”

A large-scale earthquake (M6.6) occurred in northwest Uttarakhand on October 20, 1991 causing massive damages. After this earthquake, the claim (which the movement used to insist upon) that the Tehri dam in the earthquake-prone zone was not guaranteed to withstand a large earthquake, was vigorously picked up by the media, and the ATDM showed an unprecedented upsurge. Criticism against the dam heated up at the local level as well, due to the inappropriate compensation for the evictees, the suspicions of corruption in and corner-cutting construction by the Tehri Hydro Development Corporation, and the prospect of shortage of funds after the collapse of the Soviet Union which had been the main contributor to the project.

A relief meeting took place at Tehri on October 29, and then, on December 14, more than 5,000 people participated in a demonstration meeting held at the town. A sit-in (dharna) at the dam site was started with many participants coming from various parts of India and abroad. It continued uninterrupted for 75 days, even during nights of cold winter in the hill area, until February 27, 1992.

According to Priya [1992], who documented a detailed report of this sit-in, 17 persons among the main 36 participants were Gandhians who belonged to Gandhian āśram. They actively engaged in the backstage work such as supplying water, cooking, washing or cleaning in and around the tent for the sit-in. It is not an exaggeration to say that the 75 days sit-in could not have materialised without their support. The power of the “Gandhian network” was behind the rise of the ATDM. During the period of this sit-in (from December 14, 1991 to February 28, 1992) the dam construction work was completely stalled.

The enthusiasm for the movement did not cool down, even after the arrest of Sunderlal Bahuguna and others on midnight of February 27, 1992. Bahuguna started a fast (vrat) in jail on the same day. After his release ten days later, Bahuguna and others pitched a tent again beside the truck road, which led to the dam site where Bahuguna continued his fast. His fast became the centre of public attention as articles were written about it, for example:
“Every night I put the newspaper to bed, praying that the next morning I do not wake up to find my friend Sunderlal Bahuguna is dead” [Nandy 1997 (1992): 9]. There were discussions even at the Lok Sabha about his fast, alongside negotiations with the Prime Minister Narasimha Rao that took place, mediated by a Member of Parliament, George Fernandez. As a result, it was decided that the construction would be interrupted and the problems be reappraised, and Bahuguna dissolved this fast on the 45th day, April 12. A national newspaper, Hindustan Times (English version), dated April 13 featured this news on the top page, and other newspapers also took up the news of the end of Bahuguna’s fasting on a large scale.16 The dam construction work was thus discontinued for two and a half years, until December 1994.

On March 20, 1992, an “accident” occurred, which led to a serious damage for the ATDM. The bus which transported villagers who were on their way back home after participating in a demonstration held at Tehri on that day fell from a cliff, and more than 16 persons were killed. The driver of the bus, who was not a regular employee, escaped from the bus just before the fall and covered his tracks afterwards. People repeatedly requested the authorities to conduct a detailed investigation into the “accident”, but the truth of the matter was never revealed. This tragic incident is still regarded, among the local people, as a conspiracy by a group in favour of the dam construction. People perceived the gravity of “risks” involved in participating in the ATDM demonstrations from this incident, and a considerable number of people left the movement.

2.4 The Fourth Phase: Declaration of the “Save Himalaya Movement” (1992)

On May 15, 1992, the third and last day of the demonstration meeting at Tehri, the declaration of the “Save Himalaya Movement (himālāya bachāo andolan)” was proclaimed.17 The substance of the declaration was condensed in the following slogan: “Pull up water (dāhār aṁcā pānī)! Trees on the hill slope (dhal par dālā)! Generate electricity from the flow of rivers (bijli banāwā khālā khālā)!” It had the following visions [Bahuguna 1992b]: (a) The project should be converted into the “Run of River Schemes”, the environmental-friendly small scale project alternative to the large dam for the generation of power by using the flow of rivers; (b) the planting of trees on the denuded slopes of the Himalayas, which had been suffering long term deforestation, must be promoted; and (c) most importantly, promotion of tree cropping (agro-forestry) has to be done.

It cannot be overemphasised, of course, that the ATDM instantly changed radically into quite a different movement as a whole just by this declaration of the “Save Himalaya Movement”. However, as the constructivists’ studies on social movements have already shown [Benford and Snow 2000], during the process of mobilising of resources including the media, how to set up the framework of the movement often controlled the ups and downs of the movement.18 The ATDM acquired quite a new framework by the declaration of the “Save Himalaya Movement”. The significance of the declaration can be summarised
into the following three points:

Firstly, the “Save Himalaya Movement” was an environmental movement which pointed out the environmental problems in the Himalayan region. Its aim was to improve the environmental situation of the entire Himalayan region. The Tehri dam issue was regarded as one of the key environmental problems of the Himalayas.19

Secondly, the “Save Himalaya Movement” was a movement proposing alternative policies. As a movement, it formally gave an alternative to the dam for the first time: the “Run of River Schemes”. While the ATDM used to be criticised as “anti-development”, it now presented a concrete alternative plan for the dam.

Thirdly, the “Save Himalaya Movement” had the effect of questioning the way of life of the participants themselves. This can be seen as an aspect of the “new social movement”. It was a value-oriented “new social movement” because it entailed a process of self-transformation, checking one’s mode of conduct while pursuing the common value of saving the Himalayas. This point will be discussed and tackled again in detail later.

2.5 The Fifth Phase: Present Situation of the Movement and the “Brand Function of Gandhism”

After 1992, Sunderlal Bahuguna’s fasts, with the help of the power of the media, functioned as a major force pressurising the politicians at the national level, as the politicians could not refuse the renowned Gandhian’s claims, and the movement regained intensity yet again.

In December 1994, as the construction work of the dam resumed, Bahuguna and others walled off the road to the dam site again. They were arrested and imprisoned in May 1995, and Bahuguna started an indefinite fast. Many participants of the movement were injured by the severe lathis charge of the police personnel at Tehri. Bahuguna continued his fast even after his release from jail, and the movement intensified. This time, the workers of the dam construction who had been gathered from various parts of India also participated. On the morning of June 9, at 3 a.m., the camp of the sit-in was suddenly surrounded by 200 police officers. Bahuguna was caught wearing only his underwear, and his hands and legs were held by two policemen as he was dragged into an ambulance. In the intense heat of the dry season, without being supplied with even drinking water, Bahuguna was forcibly brought to a hospital in New Delhi by a helicopter from the airstrip at Dehradun. The government of Uttar Pradesh justified this by saying that Bahuguna had to be transported because his health condition might have been critical. However, the doctor could not find any problem with his body, so he was allowed to return to Tehri, and he continued fasting. Bahuguna broke his fast on the 49th day on June 27, as the Prime Minister Narasimha Rao announced a statement concerning the total review of the Tehri project. Hindustan Times, again, reported the news of Bahuguna breaking his fast on the top page (“Bahuguna Breaks Fast” [Hindustan Times, New Delhi, June 28, 1995]).

However, the review of the project was not conducted even after one year. Therefore,
Bahuguna started “a repentance fast (prāyaścitt vrat)” for the sin of “being committed to a false agreement”, on April 13, 1996. This fast was continued for 74 days under the instruction of a doctor of nature cure. Bahuguna only took bael, lemon and honey everyday and observed the regular schedule including treatments of hot fomentation of the abdomen, mud pack, enema with cold water, cold bath and so on during the fast. On the 74th day, Bahuguna came all the way to the Raj Ghat (the place where Gandhii was cremated) in New Delhi, in order to publicise the Tehri dam issue, and thereafter broke his fast after talking with the Prime Minister Deve Gauda at the place. This news was also covered in the main newspapers with photographs.

Bahuguna performed long-term fasts in 1997 and 2001, and on each occasion, the ATDM grew. A Gandhian’s fast became fair news for the media, and functioned to put pressure on the Indian politicians. This “brand function of Gandhism” played an important role in the development of the movement.

Since the latter half of 1990s, the Hindu nationalists started to oppose the Tehri dam. A VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) leader, Ashok Singhal committed a fast to oppose the dam in March 2001. The main claim of the Hindu nationalists was that the contamination of the Ganges was equal to the contamination of Hinduism. However, this move did not take root in the locality, and the policy of the pro-dam BJP government was not changed even by pressure from the VHP. From the viewpoint of the ATDM, the involvement of the Hindu nationalists into the movement only brought about negative effects because the movement was severely criticised for joining the extremists [Ramachandran 2001; Mawdslay 2005].

From 1996 to 2000, demonstration marches, called “early-morning circuit (prabhāt pheri)”, took place at Tehri from 5 to 6 o’clock every day. Fifty to sixty people participated in the march as they chanted their slogans. However, in the 2000s, the movement seemed to become sluggish. From 2000 to 2001, the administrative function of Tehri was transferred to New Tehri, and many residents left the town [Ishizaka 2005]. In September 2003, the Supreme Court ordered that the Tehri dam was legal, and the movement lost almost all the legal battles against the construction of the Tehri dam. All diversion tunnels were closed in November 2005, and the surrounding areas of Tehri were completely submerged under water. However, it would be hasty to assert that there is no possibility of reviving the movement, since almost all the main participants have not yet adjusted to their new living environments. Once the people acclimatise to their new surrounding conditions, the movement might regain momentum, for example, if triggered by incidents such as the large earthquake that took place in 1992.

Bahuguna himself analysed the causes of decline of the movement as follows. Firstly, the local people yielded to the power of fear and greed, which were the major two weapons of the government. People were provided with compensation money, and threatened with the example of the “killing” of 16 ordinary people, who had just participated in the demonstration meeting, in the bus accident in 1992. Secondly, the movement could not
The Anti Tehri Dam Movement as a New Social Movement and Gandhism

make itself heard above the “democratic” preferential for the vested interests around Delhi, the main consumer of the Tehri water.

It seems that the main reason why the movement had declined was the failure in organising or institutionalising a stronghold of the movement. The base of the ATDM had been Bahuguna’s small hut which was situated at the side of one end of the entrance bridge to Tehri town. However, there were no full-time staff at the hut, and this hut was submerged under water earlier than any other places in the town when the two of the four diversion tunnels were closed in 2001.

However, three significant results of the movement can be pointed out. (1) The construction work of the dam had been stopped for a long time. (2) Several environmental appraisal committees were set up and various aspects of the dam construction and environment of the area were examined. (3) As has already been mentioned, this movement, together with the Anti Narmada Dam Movement, gave rise to the “anti dam” movements in India. In connection with the last point, the idea of “run of river scheme” has now become popular in the region, so that even the Chief Minister of Uttaranchal, N. D. Tewari, who had been a most ardent promoter of the Tehri dam project, announced in August 2004 that “the Rs. 6,000-crore Tehri project would be the last hydel-power and irrigation project of its kind in the Himalayan state. Only run of the river projects will now be set up in the state (“No More Dams like Tehri: Tewari” [The Times of India, New Delhi, August 6, 2004]).

In addition, although the ATDM or “Save Himalaya Movement” failed to institutionalise a strong central organisation, it succeeded in putting itself among several loose but stable networks. There are three levels in such networks. The first level is at the personal level. Opinion leaders such as Vandana Shiva, Madhu Kishwar and Bharat Dogra continue to support the movement even now.

The second level is the countrywide networks of movements. One of the fruition of such a network was the birth of “Save Kali Movement (kali bachao andolan)”26. This movement began in 2003 at the Kali basin of Karnataka in south India by the initiative of P. Hegde (1957–), who had once visited Sunderlal Bahuguna’s āśram and learned about the philosophy and strategy of the Chipko movement, and initiated the “Appiko (appiko = to hug) movement” in 1983 [James 2005]. This “Save Kali Movement” was undoubtedly influenced by the “Save Himalaya Movement”.

The third level is worldwide. For instance, Mr. J. P. Raturi, a participant of the ATDM, joined an international conference entitled “International Meeting of Affected People by Dams: Water for Life, Not for Death” held on March 14, 1997 in Brazil and lectured on the Tehri Dam problem. The nationalities of sixty people who subscribed their names to a petition for a suspension of the Tehri Dam construction were various: Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Paraguay, Thailand, France, Norway, Sweden and USA [Kaur 1997]. The supporters of the movement are now indeed expanding globally.
2.6 The Anti Tehri Dam Movement as a Complex and Multi-layered Movement

The history of the ATDM has been discussed above in five major phases. However, the actual process of development of the movement, of course, witnessed numerous complications and contradictions.

For example, even in the first phase of the local residents' campaign, it was both a "interception-type" movement, which aimed at the suspension of the project itself, and a "demand-type" movement [Nishio 1975], which called for an increase in compensation by presupposing the construction of the dam [Priya 1992: 4; Mawdsley 2005: 1]. This ambivalence brought about a guilt consciousness among the local people who accepted the compensation. People started to think that those who received the compensation should lose the right to participate in the movement.27 Similarly, as regards the multi-layeredness of the movement, the characteristics of the local protest movement of the first phase, for instance, remained in the latter phases.

However, the next section of this paper will pay particular attention to the aspect of the ATDM as a “new social movement” among its various facets. The movement was not only of the locality, by the locality, for the locality. It was not a “closed” movement. It was “open” to outsiders, and moreover a “new” movement.

3. The “Newness” in the Anti Tehri Dam Movement and Gandhism

3.1 “Save Himalaya Movement” as a “New Social Movement”

In this section, the “newness” of the “Save Himalaya Movement” will be considered based on four features of the “new social movement” [Offe 1985].

Firstly, the subjects of the “new social movement” are various. They are not limited to “labourers” or “inhabitants” or “victims”. While the ATDM started as a liberation movement of the local people, it included various sympathisers from India and abroad in the movement in the 1980s. Furthermore, the “Save Himalaya Movement” put the basis of the movement on the value of “Save Himalaya”, not on the interests of the inhabitants. It aimed at the joint struggle among the people who shared the value.

Secondly, the “new social movement” focused on the issues of life space instead of production space. The main focus of the “Save Himalaya Movement” was lifestyle. For instance, the movement strived for the promotion of solar cookers and bicycles, and proposed that public subsidy should be granted for setting up rain water reservoirs or tanks [Bahuguna 1997: 168-170].

Thirdly, the “new social movement” is a value-oriented movement. The “Save Himalaya Movement” was a movement that proposed viable alternatives to material civilisation by the people who came together with the common view that “(p)olicies based upon the material civilization, instead of healing up the seriously wounded Himalaya, have accelerated the pace of exploitation of its water, forest and mineral resources [Bahuguna 1992b: 31]”.

Fourthly, the “new social movement” emphasises the mode of conduct. In the “Save Himalaya Movement”, the indispensability of active efforts towards afforestation and tree cropping and the importance of reviewing one’s own lifestyle, which would not be an excessive burden to the Himalayan environment, were recognised. Only protesting about the dam construction was useless. How to live one’s daily life became the main issue in the movement. The “Save Himalaya Movement” was a process of self transformation because people were made to question themselves about how they would contribute to save the Himalayas, what ought to be done and what could be done for that purpose.

To summarise, the “Save Himalaya Movement” was not an “old” style movement aiming at the acquisition of rights or liberation based on the given attributes of the inhabitants etc., but a “new social movement” which reviewed people’s own lifestyles based on the common value of “Save Himalaya”.

However, there is one important difference between the “new social movements” in general in the Western countries and the “Save Himalaya Movement”. The notion of “new social movement” appeared in the analyses of modern society, and it was said to be a type of social movement that corresponds with the “post-industrial” [Touraine 1971 (1969)] or “post capitalist” [Habermas 1981] society. The argument seems to be that the type of social movement transforms in accordance with social change at the macro level. However, local society of Uttarakhand, located in the periphery of India, which is the stage of the “Save Himalaya Movement”, cannot be called a “post-industrial” or “post capitalist” society. The economy of the Uttarakhand is predominantly based on agriculture and other activities related to the agricultural sector, and the contribution of “money-order economy”, that is to say, dependence on remittance by migrants, is also considerable [Pathak 1997]. Therefore, it can be said that the “new” features in the “Save Himalaya Movement” were used as effective tools against the “technocratic” [Touraine 1981 (1978)] project, namely the construction of the Tehri dam, for the society of Uttarakhand that itself has not experienced industrial or capitalist transformation. In that process, the role of a “key person”, who sensed the power of the “new social movements” in and around India, and who tried to utilise it for the movement, was very important. In the case of the ATDM, that “key person” was a Gandhian, Sunderlal Bahuguna.

3.2 The Anti Tehri Dam Movement and Gandhism

This section discusses the influence of Gandhism in contemporary India in the context of the ATDM and points out the strong influence of a Gandhian worker, Sunderlal Bahuguna, in the process of creation of the framework of the “Save Himalaya Movement”.

The role played by Gandhism in the development of the ATDM can be summarised by the following three points: (1) The “Gandhian network” of Sunderlal Bahuguna and others became an important resource of the movement, particularly at the time of the long-term sit-in (dharna); (2) The fasts of Sunderlal Bahuguna created the chances of revival of
Sunderlal Bahuguna began to grapple with the environmental problems during the time of his leadership in the Chipko movement and started getting in touch with various environmental ideas and activities in India and abroad. In that process, he cultivated the so called “Sarvodayist environmental thinking”, an environmental philosophy based on the Gandhian notion of sarvodaya (the welfare of all). Bahuguna constructed a Gandhian environmental philosophy by energetically picking up on the trend of “new social movements” on environmental issues.

The following points illustrate direct links between Bahuguna’s Gandhian environmental thought and the ideals of the “Save Himalaya Movement”.

First of all, the “Save Himalaya Movement” is a movement against the exploitation of natural resources in the Himalayan region by outsiders, and aims at the self-help of the Himalayan society. However, in order to show that it is not just a selfish movement by the people living in the locality, it not only stresses that the conservation of the Himalayan environment is necessary for the people living outside the region as well, but also seeks to persuade people, including the residents of the Himalayan region, to adopt lifestyles that will not put excessive pressure on the environment and to choose self sufficient modes of living. This style of simultaneous pursuit of “independence” of a region and one’s “autonomy” is a distinguishing feature of the Gandhian notion of svaraj. Bahuguna emphasised the importance of the latter (“autonomy”) in particular, in expressing the necessity of the way of life of “austerity (sādgt, simplicity and sanyam, restraint)” [Bahuguna 1997: 167].

It is also notable that the “Himalayan foot march (himalaya pad yatra)” of Sunderlal Bahuguna was an important factor through which the “Save Himalaya Movement” grappled with the environmental problems of the whole Himalayan region. Bahuguna carried out the 4,870km “Himalayan foot march” from the west end to the east end of the Himalayas from 1981 to 1983, in order to find out the environmental conditions of the Himalayas and to plead for the importance of protecting the environment directly with the common people. He investigated the conditions of the environment in each region, held meetings with politicians, bureaucrats, scientists, students and local inhabitants at various places, and submitted reports on the environmental condition of each region to the local governments [Bahuguna 1981a; 1981b; 1981c; 1982a; 1982b; 1983]. It can be said that Bahuguna acquired the status of a specialist on environmental problems of the Himalayan region by this foot march. The “Save Himalaya Movement” owed a lot to Bahuguna speaking out about the Himalayan environment as a whole.

Furthermore, there was a strong impact of Sunderlal Bahuguna on the proposal of alternatives, the “Run of River Schemes” and the tree cropping in the “Save Himalaya Movement”. In fact, the need for tree cropping in the Himalayas was a long-cherished
opinion of Bahuguna. He vehemently advocated that trees which provided the 5F, that is Food (especially nuts, edible seeds, oil seeds, seasonal fruits and honey), Fodder, Fuel, Fertilizer and Fibre, ought to be planted [Bahuguna 1983: 20].

Thus, the influence of Sunderlal Bahuguna was vital for the ATDM to acquire the “new” framework of the “Save Himalaya Movement”.

However, the ideals of the “Save Himalaya Movement”, based on Sunderlal Bahuguna’s Gandhism, have not been sufficiently shared among the people of Uttarakhand. It is necessary to see the future development of the movement to confirm how this “new” framework of the “Save Himalaya Movement”, which was formed by the help of a “key person”, Sunderlal Bahuguna, will be utilised effectively by the movement.

4. Conclusion

This paper discussed how the ATDM in the Uttarakhand region is a complex and multi-layered movement that took the shape of a “new social movement” during the process of its development. It also looked at how its “newness” has been imbued in close relation with Gandhism.

While the Anti Tehri Dam Movement began in the late 1970s as a local resistance movement against the dam, it evolved into a civil movement in the 1980s as the participants of the movement diversified beyond the boundary of the locality. In the early 1990s, the movement experienced a great upsurge with the help of the “Gandhian network” in India. In 1992, after the declaration of the “Save Himalaya Movement”, it became an environmental movement, and started proposing comprehensive alternative environmental policies for the region. Moreover, the framework of “Save Himalaya Movement” indicated the value-oriented character of a “new social movement”. After 1992, fasts of a Gandhian worker, Sunderlal Bahuguna led to the increasing rise of the Anti Tehri Dam Movement due to the “brand function of Gandhism” in contemporary India. The struggle continued at the local level and never died down. It is too hasty to assert that there is no possibility of reviving the movement, though it has entered a latent period after 2000.

The “Save Himalaya Movement” has four basic characteristics of a “new social movement”: a variety of subjects (not limited to labourers or local people), raising issues of life space (not of production space), value-orientation and emphasis on the mode of conduct. There was a strong influence of a “key person”, Sunderlal Bahuguna, a Gandhian, as a catalyst for the advent of this “new social movement” in Uttarakhand society which is neither post-industrial nor post capitalist.
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Notes

1) I refer to as “Gandhian” in this paper “the social activist who lives a simple and ascetic community life in the Gandhian āśram, and works for the realisation of M. K. Gandhi (1869–1948)”s notion of svarāj (independence/ home rule/ self realisation)”. Among famous Gandhians were Vinoba Bhave (1895–1982) and J. P. Narayan (1902–1979).

2) The Tehri dam is a large-scale dam (the height of the dam will be 260.5m, which will become the sixth highest in the world) with various functions such as power generation (2400MW), irrigation (mainly for western Uttar Pradesh), supply of drinking water (for Delhi etc.) and flood control. The dam is still under construction (it started in 1978) by the Tehri Hydro Development Corporation. The main points in the debates on the project are as follows: (a) Technical problems such as the risk of collapse of the dam or the danger of a reservoir-induced earthquake; (b) Social problems, for example, the issue of evacuation and compensation, and the claim that the local society gains no merit from the dam, etc.; (c) Economic problems, especially on the cost-benefit analysis of the project, and the corruption within the construction company; (d) Environmental problems such as water contamination and deforestation; (e) Cultural problems evolving around the submergence of historical buildings and so on; and (f) Security problems, for instance, the danger of building a large dam near a national border.

3) From an interview with Prof. Shekhar Pathak on September 13, 2004 at Nainital, Uttarakhand. Among the social movements in Uttarakhand were: the compulsory non-paid labour (begār) abolition movement, the Indian independence movement, the forest protection movements which led to the Chipko movement, the prohibition movements, the anti-mining movements and the Uttarakhand (independence) movement [Pathak 1985, 1991, 1997; Guha 1999 (1989); Mawdsley 1998, 2005].

4) The Chipko movement was a forest protection movement in Uttarakhand, which began in 1973. The local people “hugged (cipko) the trees” in order to prevent the commercial cutting of trees.
5) See also Mawdsley [1998] for her view on the Chipko movement.
6) The ATDM, of course, started as an economically rational demand of the local people, as Mawdsley stresses. It is also true that it has a background of a long history of social movements in the region, as Pathak claims.
7) From an interview with Prof. Shekhar Pathak on September 13, 2004 at Nainital, Uttararakhand.
8) The description of this section is mainly based on Priya [1992]; Shiva and Jalees [2003]; Yadav [2003]; Pathak [2005]; Tehri Hydro Development Corporation Ltd. [2006].
9) Voices against the dam plan were already raised since the 1960s at Tehri.
10) However, this petition was invalidated because of the dissolution of parliament in August 1979.
11) The complaint to the Supreme Court in 1985 was dismissed in 1990. The second one in 1992 was also refused in 2003, and the Tehri dam construction was given legal assurance.
12) It was said that “(i)n case of Tehri dam failure the quantum of devastation will be unimaginable. The reservoir will be emptied in 22 minutes, within 63 minutes Rishikesh will be under 260 metre water, in next 20 minutes Hardwar under 232 metre water and after flooding Bijnor, Meerut, and Hapur, Bulandshar will be under 8.5 metre water within 12 hours” [Bahuguna 1995: 11]. In this connection, the “bicycle march (sāykīl yātrā)” from Gogasagar, the estuary of the Ganges, to Gangotri, the source of the river, was held in 1991.
13) Claude Alvares, a journalist who argued against the Narmada dams, took an active part in popularising the Tehri dam problems [Alvares 1997 (1985)]. Medha Patkar, a leader of the Anti Narmada Movement, was even arrested for participating in the Anti Tehri Dam Movement on May 5, 1995.
14) Sunderlal Bahuguna was only one of the major personalities in the ATDM until 1989, and had lived in his āśram in Silyara village, which was located at the outskirts of the submergence zone. However, he moved to Tehri town by the request of Saklani, and declared in December 1989 that he would become a new leader of the ATDM.
15) Nine people (including Bahuguna and his family members) from Bahuguna’s āśram in Silyara, two from the Uttarkashi āśram, one from the Lakshmi āśram at Kausani, four from the other āśrams in the Uttararakhand and one from the āśram in Maharashtra, central India. In addition, dozens of students came from Silyara and Lakshmi āśrams [Priya 1992].
17) The “Save Himalaya Movement” was named after the “Save Narmada Movement (narmadā bachāo andolan)”.
18) For instance, the Anti Niitsuki Dam Movement in Japan succeeded in stopping the dam project after it acquired the framework of the “Forest is a Lover of Sea’ Movement” [Obitani 2004].
19) From interviews with Mr. Sunderlal Bahuguna on December 23, 2004 at Tehri, and with Mr. Rawat (assumed name), who was a general participant of the movement, on February 7, 2005 at New Tehri.


21) Examples of the slogans were, “Save the Ganga, save the Himalayas! (gangā bachāo, himālaya bachāo!) Save the Himalayas, save the country! (himālaya bachāo, desh bachāo!)”, “Do not stop the flow of the Ganga! (gangā ko avirāl bahnedo!) Do not terminate the purity of the Ganga! (gangā ko nirmal bahenedo!)”.

22) From interview with Mr. Sunderlal Bahuguna on August 4, 2004 at Tehri.

23) At the time of forest protection Chipko movement, the āśram of Bahuguna was used as “Chipko Information Centre”. There were full-time staff (members of the āśram who also had other jobs such as being school teachers at the āśram) and several pamphlets and booklets were edited and published at the Centre.

24) The construction work had been stopped during the following periods: from April 24 to June 1, 1978, from December 1989 to January 1990, from December 14, 1991 to February 27, 1992, from May 1992 to December 1994 and from April 14 to May 9, 1995.

25) The governmental appraisal committees were as follows: (1) S. K. Roy Environmental Appraisal Committee which was appointed in February 1980 and submitted the final report in October 1986, (2) D. R. Bhumbra Environmental Appraisal Committee which was appointed in 1987 and submitted the final report in February 1990, (3) V. K. Gaur Appraisal Committee which was appointed especially for investigating the seismological aspects in September 1996 and submitted the final report in 1998, (4) C. H. Hanumantha Rao Appraisal Committee which was appointed especially for the rehabilitation policy in September 1996 and submitted the final report in November 1997, and (5) M. M. Joshi Appraisal Committee which was appointed especially for investigating the seismological aspects in April 2001 and submitted the final report in December 2002. Out of all of these, the first four committees recommended reviewing the project, and only the last one guaranteed the project.

26) This is a movement against the water pollution of the Kali River caused by the effluent from a paper mill factory, the deforestation and the decrease of river water flow due to the construction of dams along the river. The movement also aims at proposing the integrated environmental policy for the Kali basin.

27) From an interview with Prof. Shekhar Pathak on September 13, 2004 at Nainital, Uttarakhand.

28) On the characteristic of social movements in contemporary India, Singh [2001] argues that “without being modern, India seems to be quick to produce the cultural conditions of the early emergence of post-modernity and post-modernist struggle in society. Its contemporary struggles are not so much about seeking material gains such as the ownership
of land or a share in industrial productions, as about the redefinition of norms and values; acquisition of cultural goods and collective symbols; political rights and social justice; and a contest for seeking a public space to act and to be recognised as actors" [Singh 2001: 16].

29) It was Kanazawa [2000] who described Bahuguna as a “key person” in the Chipko movement. “Key person” is a term used by a sociologist, Kazuko Tsurumi. It refers to a person who plays an important role in the transformation of daily life in a local context, in contrast to an “elite” or “leader” which signifies a certain involvement with political power.

30) For instance, Bahuguna had already read E. F. Schumacher’s famous Small is Beautiful (1973) in 1974, and repeatedly stressed the importance of the messages in it. Actually, Schumacher himself learned a lot from Gandhi and Gandhians (especially, from J. C. Kumararappa) in the process of constructing his environmental thought [Weber 2004: 218-231]. Therefore, this can be said to be an example of “reimportation of Gandhian thought”.

31) In India, Bahuguna frequently exchanges information with some Gandhians such as S. Jagannathan of south India and Baba Amte of central India by using the “Gandhian network”.

32) For “new social movements” in India, see, for example, Omvedt [1993]; Singh [2001].

33) “Svarāj” is “sva (one’s own) and rāj (rule)”, which means “independence/ home rule/ self realisation”. As a Gandhian term, the two aspects are closely interlinked, namely, (a) “independence” from other’s oppression, and (b) “autonomy” as good conduct (sudhārō, sadācār), which restrains one’s desire and helps one to pursue the truth [cf. Parel 1997].


35) Bahuguna explains about 5F of trees as follows: “(S)ome such species are walnut, chestnut, almond, wild apricot for edible oil; bird cherry for honey and seasonal fruits; oak, bohemia, grevia and others for fodder; and mulberry, ringal and hill-bamboo for fibre” [Bahuguna 1992a: 14-15].

36) Pathak [2005] emphasises that much should be learnt from the experiences of the ATDM, since the ideals of the movement have not become outdated, even after the so-called “failure” of the movement.

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