

**Badrama Abhayaranya Vikas Parishad
(BAVP)**

**Discussion Paper
on**

**People's Movement in Badrama Sanctuary
For
Conservation & Livelihood**

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Profile of Badrama Sanctuary:

Badrama Wildlife Sanctuary of Bamra Forest Division in Sambalpur district has been constituted vide Notification No. 8F (W)-90/87-23393/FFAH dated 17.12.1987 of the Govt of Orissa. This sanctuary covers an area of 304.03 Sq Kms including core area of 31.28 Sq Kms.

Villages inside the Sanctuary

Name of GP	Village
Badrama	1. Odsing 2. Laijhar 3. Tileimal 4. Biswalpali 5. Badrama 6. Kutub 7. Rengumunda 8. Badibahal 9. Gantab 10. Chirgunikhhol 11. Cheptamb 12. Kureibahal 13. Dumermunda 14. Kharmunda 15. Tansara
Kulundi	16. Kudamkhhol 17. Bandhabahal 18. Saleipali 19. Gadpati 20. Nunvet
Sarda	21. Tileimal 22. Saleipali 23. Podadihi 24. Budelkani 25. Pathuria 26. Sarda
Sada	27. Patrajhar 28. Beluam 29. Bhutel 30. Argen 31. Raida
Chakliabahal	32. Deodhar 33. Khuntiam

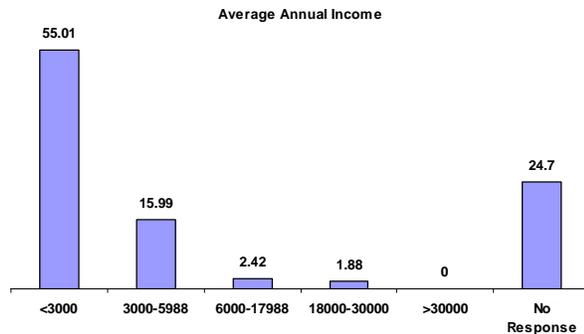
Context:

- **Policy Framework:** As in other Protected Areas in Orissa, people in Badrama Sanctuary are living a life of deprivation owing to the exploitative exclusionary conservation practices employed by the state. Restrictive sanctuary laws in general and Supreme Court ban on NTFP collection from Protected Areas in particular have brought untold hardship to the people in Badrama.



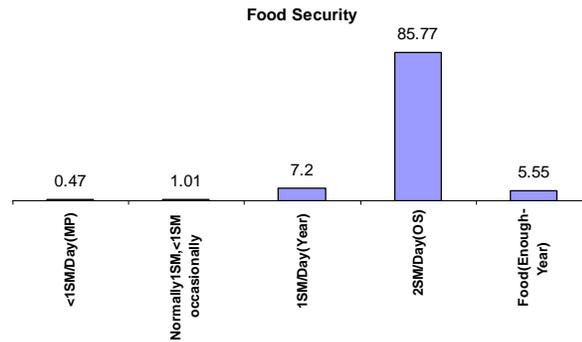
- **Development Programs:** The record of implementation of development programs like NREGS and poverty alleviation programs like BPL has been very dismal.

- **Basic Facilities; Health, Education:** Education and Health facilities are virtually non-existent in the area. People have to walk long distance (30km) for treatment. Entry regulations have also time and again caused problem to the people in distress.



- **Livelihood Context:** Livelihood security has always been a major issue for a large number of the forest dependent people living in the sanctuary. People in this area mainly depend upon Minor Forest Produce and Subsistence cultivation as their major source of livelihood and to a small extent on Animal Husbandry. Restriction imposed by the conservation regime on the rights, reduced access and control over forest resources, non-implementation of development and poverty alleviation programs, and absence of basic facilities like health and education have driven people to a state of abject poverty and deprivation.

➤ A larger mass of people (71percent) lives on an average annual income of less than Rs6000. As high as 94.45percent of people are reportedly living with food scarcity throughout the year. A reduced livelihood base, owing to restrictions on the opportunities, coupled with lack of any other wage or employment opportunities has forced people, mainly the youth to migrate to far off places like Surat in search of livelihood.



➤ **Growing Extremism in the area:** Recent years have seen a growth in Maoist activities in the otherwise peaceful area.

Badrama Abhavaranya Vikas Parishad: Journey so far:

Formation of the Parishad:

In order to respond to the problems relating to livelihood security, forest and wildlife protection, people from the villages inside the Badrama Sanctuary organized to form a united forum. A consultation was held with the people from 27 villages in the month of June at Badrama where issues like Livelihood security of people, Wildlife protection and Forest protection were discussed and people were asked to organize collective action to address these issues. This was followed by village level meetings wherein discussions were held by the people on the emerging process and finally all these deliberations took shape of a people's organization formed on 25th June 2006 and was named Badrama Vikas Parishad. In the beginning a board was formed with representations from 27villages spread across five GPs coming under the sanctuary. The broad objectives set by the parishad are to ensure,

1. Livelihood Security of the people living inside the sanctuary.
2. Wildlife Protection
3. Forest Protection

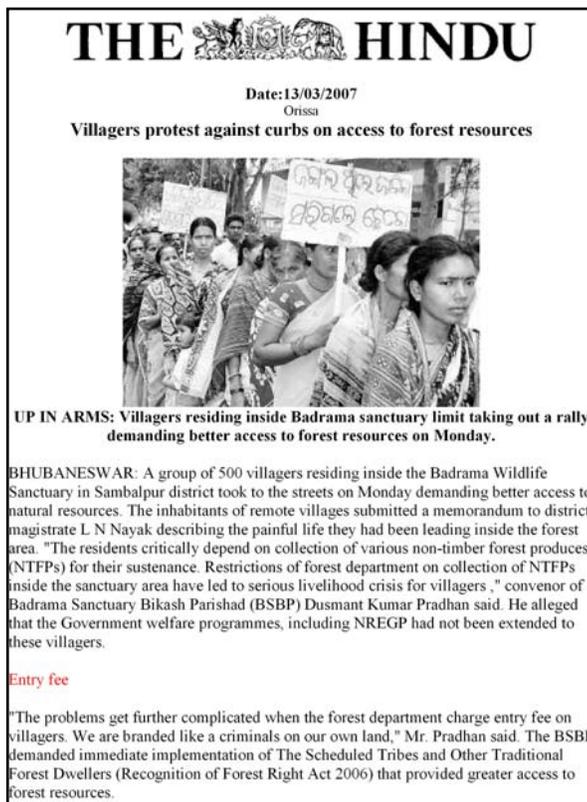
Forest & Wildlife Protection:

➤ In the initial phase a massive sensitization campaign was launched in all the villages to strengthen the conservation measures undertaken by the people at the community level. *Forest/Wildlife Protection Groups* were formed in fifteen

- villages inside the sanctuary. More and more people from the villages came forward to join the Parishad's effort in solving the long standing problems in the area. All these mobilization manifested in an *increased participation of people in the system of governance*. A system of governance that has long been a scourge for the live and livelihood of the people living in the sanctuary area was challenged for the first time. Around this time the movement caught the attention of the civil society and the system of governance.
- From July to October, as the sensitization programs were undertaken and organizational process was built up and as the people's process started creating pressure on the governance system, attempt was made to neutralize the pressure build up and the influence of the forum by initiating a *misinformation campaign* to brand Badrama Vikas Parishad as an *extremist organization* in order to create suspicion in the mind of ordinary villagers. Further, cooperation and support were deliberately denied to demoralize people's initiative. Such reactionary approach, which aimed to scuttle the people's movement, failed to make any dent in the people's process, which was firmly rooted in democratic principles and the Parishad moved ahead with its activities. At this time the name of the forum was changed from Badrama Vikas Parishad to Badrama Abhayaranya Vikas Parishad to clear confusion of members from some villages who thought that the forum is concentrated only to Badrama panchayat.

Consolidation & Diversification:

- Towards the end of the year 2006, the parishad consolidated its base by reaching out to *multiple stakeholders* who were directly or indirectly involved in the process. Village level institutions were involved in the activities. Cooperation was mobilized from PRI members, local representatives (MLAs), NGO/CSOs, Civil Citizenry, Academia, and Media, which in due course strengthened the initiatives taken by the Parishad. The movement started receiving greater support from society at large. Meanwhile the activities/initiatives undertaken by the Parishad got *diversified to include all those development issues* affecting the life and livelihood of people. In November, irregularities in the implementation of NREGS programs in some villages were brought to the notice of the Parishad. In one of the village, Laijhar, Badrama GP, Parishad looked into complaints of involvement of outside contractors in the NREGS work and delayed or non-payment of wages to the villagers. The BDO of Jamankira block was petitioned in this regard and an official enquiry was conducted which corroborated the instances of irregularities in the work. Action was taken against the Village Labour Leader (VLL) and the Supervisor and the contractors were warned against interfering in the NREGS work of the village. Similar irregularities in the BPL scheme in village Sarada was taken up by the Parishad and was followed up with the block and district officials till the problems were sorted out. By enlarging the ambit and scope of the forum's activities, *people from the villages inside the sanctuary shaped the Parishad as a forum for addressing variegated issues concerning the live and livelihood of the people*. Parishad led forest and wildlife protection started showing result and *activities of the Timber Mafia and Poachers*,



gave a written assurance to the bereaved family to provide relief and to investigate the custodial death.

Policy Change & Its Impact:

- Badrama's struggle for livelihood joins a league of similar livelihood struggles by people and people's organization across other Protected Areas in Orissa and also other parts of the country. The people's initiative in Badrama was successful in sensitizing and influencing various stakeholders linked with the process like the bureaucracy, PRI, civil citizenry, NGO/CSOs and the media, but collective effort of the people met with a stumbling block in the form of the existing laws and policies relating to the conservation and the livelihood rights of the people.
- *The Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dweller recognition of Forest Rights Act 2007* generated hope for the people living in the sanctuary in that it has provisions to secure the forest rights for which people have been fighting since long. Enactment of Forest Rights Act also provided hope for the Parishad's movement for livelihood rights of the people. A rally was held on 12 March 2007 at Sambalpur (see news above) where BAVP submitted a memorandum to the district administration to *implement the Forest Rights Act immediately* and to restore the forest rights to the people for enhancement of their socio-economic condition. The district administration responded by extending an offer for discussion on the issue of livelihood rights. DFO (WL) invited the Parishad and

a threat to the forest and wildlife and responsible for degradation of forest and loss of wildlife, were effectively checked. Concerted effort by the Parishad with support from local people and increasing acceptance by the larger society raised the voice of the people to a level where it became difficult for the power that be to counter the upsurge.

- On 15th March 2007 a Rasta Roko was held at Kureibahal to protest custodial death of a person from a village (Badibahal) inside the Sanctuary. The road block was withdrawn only when the district administration

the people for a discussion, which was held on 21 March 2007 at Badrama. In that meeting instead of discussion on the livelihood rights the DFO urged the people to form EDCs and to explore alternative livelihood options. This was unexpected and hence strongly protested by the Parishad members and the local people. They tried to convince the DFO about the need to urgently address livelihood issues like collection of MFPs and settlement of other forest rights that have been ensured by the Forest Rights Act. The DFO not only feigned ignorance about the Forest Right Act but also tried to discourage people from exercising their forest rights. Such intransigency on the part of the DFO and forest officials frustrated the hope of the people and they resolved to resume their movement for their rights. A media consultation was held on 24 March 2007 at Kuchinda where the local media was sensitized about the problems of the people and their struggle. The people's representatives from the area (Rabi Nayak, Kuchinda MLA and Brundaban Majhi, Laikera MLA) and the PRI members of the villages inside the sanctuary joined the movement at this stage and a meeting was held on 8 April 2007 at Kureibahal where people decided to urge the district administration to

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TRIBES ADVISORY COUNCIL (T.A.C)
MEETING HELD ON 10.04.2007

2.6 Consideration of the need for non-application (or application with modification) of the provisions of Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and Land Acquisition Act, 1894 in respect of Scheduled Areas of Orissa.

MLA. Rabi Naik pointed out that in 18 reserved forests in our State, the Adivasis have not yet been given individual RORs. In Uttaranchal and Gujarat, the respective Governments have already obtained the orders of the Supreme Court to record the land in the name of the Adivasis. But in our State, this has not yet been done. The Secretary, Forest & Environment requested the MLA to furnish the copy of the orders of the Supreme Court, if available with him in respect of Uttaranchal and Gujarat for appropriate action at his level.

take time bound steps to resolve long standing issues. The local MLA also assured the people to raise their concerns at various levels. These issues were taken up in the Tribes Advisory Council meeting held on 10th April 2007 where attention of the Chairman (Chief Minister) was drawn towards the livelihood problems of people in Badrama (see box). As decided in the meeting on 8th April, a charter of demand was sent to the district collector with the message that the Parishad along with the People's representatives from the area will stage a

roadblock on 23rd April (see news) if the district administration fails to respond to their problems by 22nd April. *BAVP received an invitation on 22nd April from the collector office for a discussion on the issues on 23rd at Panchayat office at Jamankira. Parishad members decided to call off the Rasta Roko on 23rd and decided to hold discussion.*

On 23rd a meeting was held at Jamankira wherein the Sub collector, DFO, Soil Conservation department, other concerned departments and the delegation of BAVP participated. A written assurance was obtained from the district administration on the various demands put forth by the people. Among other things people got an assurance from DFO that collection and disposal of NTFPs, as a mean of bonafide livelihood and as a matter of right will not be barred from this year.



A Protracted Struggle, A Policy Change and An Economic Opportunity:

➤ A turning point for the BAVP and the movement was when livelihood rights were secured for the people. Having secured the right of people on the collection and disposal of NTFPs, the BAVP started exploring options for marketing of Sal Seed in the month of May-June. Now the focus turned to securing economic control of people over the natural resources. Economic control meant management control at the hand of the people, specifically control over the marketing of NTFPs with an aim to collectivize the NTFP trade and to cut down the monopoly of private traders involved in the business. The challenge before the Parishad was to work out an arrangement that would serve the objectives of ensuring democratic control of people over their resources, ensuring optimum economic gain for the people, and ensuring sustainable use of the forest resource (Sal Seed). Options were explored for the Sal Seed marketing. *Banaja Banijya Sangha, a federation of NTFP based cooperatives facilitated by Vasundhara*, was approached for providing marketing support for Sal Seed marketing in the season. A meeting was planned between the BAVP and the board of the Cooperative Federation on 18 May 2007 at Kuchinda. In the meeting a joint business plan was worked out for Sal Seed collection and marketing in the 27villages coming under Badrama sanctuary. From among the 27villages coming under the sanctuary, 12 were found to be coming under the existing cooperatives. It was decided that the cooperatives present in these villages would take care of the non-members of the villages by providing marketing support to their collection, thereby strengthening the existing cooperatives. For the remaining 15 villages, it was decided that new cooperatives would be formed in these villages and that the BAVP and the Cooperative Federation would take joint responsibility to facilitate the process. A detail plan was chalked out in the meeting for working out the Sal Seed marketing in the new villages.

**Cooperative Profile
BANAPARVATI**

Week	Time Period	Avg Collection per member	No of member	Total collection	Total Amount
1 st	28.05.07 to 03.06.07			9.5Qt	
2 nd	04.06.07 to 10.06.07	100kg	40	40Qt	16,000
3 rd	11.06.07 to 18.06.07	100kg	50	50Qt	20,000
4 th	19.06.07 to 27.06.07	150kg	50	75Qt	30,000
		Total	140	174.5Qt	Rs 66,000

Total number of House Hold involved: 140

Total Collection: 174.5 Qt

Payment per kg: Rs4/-

Total payment: Rs 66,000/-

Expected Income per family from Sal Seed in this season: Rs 2000-5000

Cooperative Impact:

Coming together of an Economic organization and a Right based organization:

Formation of cooperatives in the Badrama area opened up a new chapter in the people's struggle for their rights and livelihood. A sustained movement for the rights of the people living in the Protected Area (Badrama) by a right-based people's organization (Badrama Abhayaranya Vikas Parishad) achieved some success in influencing the protected area governance system for securing forest dependent people's right over the ownership, collection and disposal of Minor Forest Produce (Sal Seed). Political right over resources presented a more difficult challenge before these people, which was to explore ways and devise mechanism to secure economic control over the resources. An economic model based on democratic process of collectivization led people to aspire to eliminate the economic hiatus, created by certain middleman/traders, which was the cause of exploitation of the people.

Countering the traders: Traders were the main agencies for marketing of NTFPs collected by the people. Absence of a competitive market had contributed to the monopoly of traders on the NTFP market. A monopolistic market built up by the traders opened up scope for exploitation of the primary collectors of NTFP. It also influenced the pricing of these produce. A distorted market system coupled with a severely restricted right of people over the MFPs left the people at the mercy of unscrupulous traders and people failed to maximize the return out of their collection. Besides, people's lack of information about the NTFP market also limited their potential to actively participate and influence the market in their support. In view of the past history of exploitation, the collectivization process

initiated by the Parishad provided a sense of increased control of people over their resources. Their choice and bargaining power also improved. Dismantling of a monopolistic and exploitative NTFP market structure and development of a self-reliant economic organization resulted in people discouraging outside traders to enter into the area. Another reason of people's adverse reaction against the local traders was the impression that the traders' process is not sustainable for resource management.

Devising a Sustainable Mechanism of Resource Management (Sustainable Harvesting of Sal Seed): The Parishad initiated process of collectivization has given utmost priority to the issue of Sustainable Harvesting of Sal Seed during the collection season. Leaflets were distributed to sensitize and educate people about the sustainable practices. Volunteers selected by the Parishad constantly monitored the collection process in the areas where the collectivization started. An economic process modeled on principles of sustainable management of forest resources, which has given primary consideration to the forest ecosystem and its sustainability did not go down well with the traders who have all along exploited these resources for financial gain.

Action generates Reaction: An empowered people and an increased participation in the system of governance gave rise to confrontation between a *Community Evolved Democratic Resource Management System* and an *Entrenched System of Resource Control* created, influenced, and sustained by the system of conservation governance and private traders. A perceived challenge to resource control reflected in instances of conflict between the forest department and the people, on one hand, and between the traders and the people, on the other. Since formation of cooperatives in the sanctuary area, traders and forest department officials have tried to dissuade people from participating in such economic ventures. Badrama Abhayaranya Vikas Parishad has taken such obstacles as challenge and has continued with its effort to encourage and mobilize people to contribute to the people's process.

Containing extremism: Economic opportunities, created by a democratic people's process, generated hope in the villages inside the sanctuary, which are affected by extremism in recent years. Parishad has been trying to establish an economic model which is based on a sustainable mechanism of resource extraction that aims to strengthen the local livelihood, thereby strengthening people's initiative for forest protection and wildlife conservation.

A Summersault by the department: When people were assured of the support of the department and were readying their collection (around 400 Quintal) for transport they were suddenly informed by the Ranger that the department is not going to allow transport of the Sal Seed collected as it is illegal as per the Supreme Court order in 2000. Parishad tried to remind the Ranger of the assurance given by the DFO in a meeting on 23rd April in presence of the Sub-collector and other officials that people will be allowed to collect and dispose Sal

Seed for their bonafide livelihood in the current season. The Ranger did not pay heed to their request and stuck to his position. That led to a crisis for the people whose livelihood was threatened as they were pinning hope on the collection stocked. Having failed to find a solution at the Ranger level they approached the Sub-collector and the DFO who gave similar response to the Parishad. Parishad then approached the People's Representatives (MLAs) from the area. Assembly being in session, the MLAs shared the predicament of the people from Badrama with the CM who followed up the matter with the PCCF and the DFO. The MLA (Rabi Nayak) informed the Parishad that the DFO has already been given direction in this regard and that they need to have a meeting with the DFO to sort out the matter. As advised by the MLA, Parishad members contacted the DFO and tried to request him for a solution. The DFO was harsh in his reply and asked them why they took up the matter with the MLAs, the CM and the PCCF. He said that he is not in a position to help them as he is bound by the Supreme Court order on ban of NTFP and the Sanctuary laws, which prohibits exercise of any rights within the protected areas. When he was reminded of his assurance to the people in this regard he comfortably reneged on his promise.

Targeting a collective process: Supreme Court order and Sanctuary laws, trotted by the DFO in support of his betrayal, seem to have been favorable to villages where collective process of resource management has not started by the Parishad. Even traders are doing brisk business there. There has not been any problem with the transport either. But only in three villages, Kutub, Rengumunda, and Badibahal where people have started a self-managed process of Sal Seed marketing under the aegis of Parishad, the department is creating problem in the name of the laws cited above. The department has gone to the extent of digging trenches on the approaching roads of these villages to prevent any kind of transportation of Sal Seed. Such exploitation and double standard has prompted the Parishad to question the laws of conservation that have no space for people's rights. They are now at loss to figure out why such untiring effort of the Parishad for forest and wildlife protection has neither been acknowledged nor been reciprocated by the local conservation regime. Not only that, the department has also been grossly insensitive towards the livelihood needs of the people living in the Badrama Sanctuary.

Vision of a People's Sanctuary: Foundation Day of Badrama Abhayaranya Vikas Parishad came amidst the cooperative crisis where people resolved to continue with their effort to establish a co-management system with the objectives of ensuring better forest & wildlife conservation and livelihood security for the people contributing to the process of conservation.

Movement for Rights meets with Economic Gain and a Dilemma starts: Which path to choose: Years of deprivation and distress of the people living in the sanctuary found a voice in the Parishad Process and the collective process empowered the people to assert their right and engage proactively with the governance system. Policy changes expedited the pace of empowerment and

people finally achieved partial success in influencing the department to allow collection and disposal of Sal Seed. With that the collectivization process also picked up. For the first time people from all the villages inside the sanctuary area could engage in collection of Sal Seed without the fear of the department or the fear of exploitation by traders. The phase of collection passed off without any hassle, but as people prepared for transport of the stock collected, trouble started gathering. The department took a u-turn by reneging on its assurance for support. Again the situation reverted to conditions that had formed the backdrop of formation of the Parishad led people's movement. When the movement was fighting for people's rights, it was successful in building a collective force. But as the political process paved way for an economic opportunity and as the economic opportunity started returning economic benefits to the people, the people's movement showed sign of change. The "organized and collective" process that used to be the force of the Parishad seemed to crumble after the collectivization started. Recent developments involving the Sal Seed crisis exhibit disturbing trends for the movement. Apprehension of economic loss due to damage of Sal Seed collection has prompted the Parishad to explore possibilities of "negotiation" with the department and traders. The movement came to a 'crossroad' where people were seized with two important considerations which were to guide the future course of action of the Parishad. Either to continue with their 'principled struggle' and choose to fight with the department for their right with the objective of finding a sustainable solution to the problem and to give direction to similar people's movement, or to "compromise" with the department and explore the possibility of an instant, but short term solution.

People decide to fight: After exhausting all options and having passed through all the *ideological churning* people finally decided to protest the ban on Sal Seed disposal and fixed 5th July 2007 for a Road Block at Kureibahal. Meanwhile media reported the proposed Road block and Parishad approached Kuchinda MLA, Rabi Nayak to take up the matter in the assembly. On 4th July, Ashish Kothari and Madhu Sarin visited Badrama where they interacted with people and the Parishad members. They also visited the villages where collectivization has started. During the discussion on the issue of restriction on NTFP collection and disposal, people shared that most of the time the Supreme Court order in 2000, cited by department officials in support of the restriction, has conflicted with the livelihood of the forest dependent people. People were informed about the anomalies in the interpretation of the Supreme Court order and how it has been subsequently misinterpreted by the MOEF and the CEC. In order to democratize the management of the Sanctuary the Parishad was advised to press for constitution of Sanctuary Advisory Committee in Badrama as provided in the Wildlife Protection Amendment Act 2002. They were also advised to assert their rights under the newly enacted Forest Rights Act 2006. On 5th July 2007, people from villages inside the sanctuary protested the restriction on collection and disposal of Sal Seed with a road block where a large number of women from the collectives also participated. This time the district officials' *Supreme Court bluff* was countered with an informed response from Parishad that completely took

them off-guard. The six hours long road block was withdrawn after an assurance from the district administration that transport of *Sal Seed stock would be allowed temporarily* from the villages inside the sanctuary. Parishad members also demanded constitution of a Sanctuary Advisory Council for collaborative management of the protected area.

Parishad desires to approach the Supreme Court: The Sal Seed crisis prompted the Parishad to raise the issue of arbitrary action by the executive in the garb of compliance to a Supreme Court order (IA 548) that never meant to restrain and restrict people from exercising forest rights to meet their bonafide livelihood needs. Stand taken by the authorities on this issue led the Parishad to realize that there is an urgent need to approach the apex court to point out the impact of its order on the livelihood of communities living in the sanctuary.

Special Mention on Badrama: On 11 July 2007 Kuchinda MLA (Rabi Naik) in a special mention in the assembly wherein drew attention of the state government towards the forest rights violation in Badrama and in other Protected Areas and asked the state government to make a statement as to why forest rights guaranteed by the recently passed Forest Rights Act 2006 are being violated by arbitrary executive action in protected areas in Orissa. In response to the special mention the state government replied that Forest Rights Act can not be implemented as the rules for the same are under formulation. Such a reply from the state government was a severe jolt to the people who had expected that the government would take note of the Forest Rights Act 2006 and would ensure that tribal people living in the forest area could exercise their rights on the forest and the resources.

Second Summersault: As the people prepared for transport of the Sal Seed stock again after the road block and agreement with the authorities, the department struck again. This time the Ranger said that until and unless there is a written instruction from higher authorities he will not be able to allow transportation of the stock. Enraged by the decision the Parishad members again approached the local MLA who in turn started a series of discussion with the authorities to resolve the stand off. On 18 July 2007 the MLA visited Badrama and held discussion with Parishad members and the Ranger. On the insistence of the MLA and taking into account the simmering discontent and anger of the people the Ranger agreed to allow transport of the Sal Seed stock from the villages inside the sanctuary. This brought a reprieve to the people and ended the crisis of Sal Seed.

People's Struggle for Conservation & Livelihood achieves the first major success, but questions remain: After the negotiated settlement on the Sal Seed issue, collection to the tune of 800quintal stocked in eight villages inside the sanctuary was transported in the third week of July (20-25 July). A people's struggle that had started a year back for Conservation of Forest and Wildlife and Livelihood Security for the people living in the sanctuary area met with its first success when people launched a successful campaign against restriction on right of people over MFP and influenced successfully the government machinery to

address the issue of forest rights of people living in the sanctuary area. The Sal Seed season and the crisis raised some important concerns for the Parishad like how long-term solution can be worked out with respect to rights issues in Protected Area, especially when anomalies exist either in the law or in the process of implementation. Empowerment built up in the process also brought in the question of devising mechanism to preempt abuse of empowerment in detriment to the forest and wildlife resource. For example, after setting up the process of collectivization, some of villages complained that people are cutting down Sal trees for faster collection. Such instances of exploitation provided an opportunity to the Parishad to integrate principles of sustainable use of resources in the strategy. Responding to the incidents of tree felling the Parishad distributed leaflets regarding sustainable harvesting of Sal Seed in all the villages coming inside the sanctuary. Another important issue was the collectivization process, its structure and management in the protected areas. *Concern for the impact of unrestrained resource extraction on the ecosystem led Parishad to strategize on a model of collectivization which would bring in sustainable economic return to the people while ensuring conservation of the sensitive ecosystem and the biodiversity.*

