



Geography

Environmental Movements

Chipko, Silent valley, Bishnois of Rajasthan an environmental movement can be defined as a social or political movement, for the conservation of environment or for the improvement of the state of the environment. They can also be called as green movement or conservation movement. The environmental movements are outcome of people trying to gain control over their natural resources, unjust developmental policies of government, socio-economic inequity and environmental degradation. So, these movements mainly center on ecology, health and human rights. Chipko movement ♣ Year: 1973 ♣ Place: Chamoli district and later at Tehri-Garhwal district of Uttarakhand. ♣ Leaders: Sundarlal Bahuguna, Gaura Devi, Sudesha Devi, Bachni Devi, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Govind Singh Rawat, Dhoom Singh Negi, Shamsher Singh Bisht and Ghanasyam Raturi. ♣ Aim: The main objective was to protect the trees on the Himalayan slopes from the axes of contractors of the forest. The Chipko is one of the world known environmental movements in India. It brought world attention on the environmental problems of the Alaknanda catchment area in the mid-Western Himalayas. The trigger for the modern Chipko movement was outcome of the growth in development that took place with the perspective of border security, after 1963 China border conflict. It proved to be disastrous for forest and total environment of the area. Widespread floods inundated the area in 1970. The other reason was that the villagers were not allowed to cut the trees for fuel wood or for fodder and for certain other purposes. However, a sports manufacturing company was given the permission to fell trees and use them to make equipment, this was final provocation and a people's movement was born. Environmentalist and Gandhian social activist Chandi Prasad Bhatt, founder of the cooperative organisation Dasholi Gram Swarajya Sangh, led the first Chipko movement near the village of Mandal in 1973. When their appeals were denied, Bhatt led a group of villagers into the forest and embraced the trees to prevent logging. The name of the movement i.e. 'Chipko', means 'embrace', in english. After many days of agitation, the government canceled the company's logging permit. The Chipko movement can essentially be called as women's movement. Women, being solely in charge of cultivation, livestock and children, suffered the most due to floods and landslides, caused due to rise in deforestation in the face of urbanisation. The message of the Chipko workers made a direct appeal to them. They were able to perceive the link between their victimization and the denuding

of mountain slopes by commercial interests. Thus, sheer survival made women support the movement. On its doodle blog commemorating the 45th anniversary of the movement, Google wrote, “The Chipko Andolan also stands out as an eco-feminist movement. Women formed the nucleus of the movement, as the group most directly affected by the lack of firewood and drinking water caused by deforestation. The power of protest is an invaluable and powerful agent of social change.” The Chipko Movement gained traction under Sunderlal Bahuguna, an eco activist, who spent his life persuading and educating the villagers to protest against the destruction of the forests and Himalayan mountains. It was his endeavor that made then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi banned the cutting of trees. Mr. Bahuguna is best remembered for the slogan “ecology is the permanent economy”. The original Chipko andolan dates back to the 18th century and was started by Rajasthan’s Bishnoi community. The Bishnois may be considered as India’s first environmentalists. Amrita Devi Bishnoi, her daughters and a group of villagers, laid down their lives while protecting trees from being felled on the orders of then King of Jodhpur. After this incident, the king, in a royal decree, banned cutting of trees in all Bishnoi villages.

• Year: 1978 • Place: Silent Valley, an evergreen tropical forest in the Palakkad district of Kerala, India. • Leaders: The Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), many NGOs and the poet-activist Sughatha kumari. • Aim: To protect the moist evergreen forest in Palakkad district from being destroyed by a hydroelectric project. Silent valley was named by English man during colonial rule, who found that there was no noise of cicadas after dark. It is one of rich bio diverse areas of India. It has a triangular shape. On two sides are the Kozhikode and Palghat cities in Kerala and on the other side is located the Coimbatore city in neighboring Tamil Nadu. Kunthipuza is a major river that flows 15 km southwest from silent valley. The idea of a dam was first proposed in 1920s by British technical expert. The first survey on this project was carried out in 1958. In 1970, the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) proposed a hydroelectric dam across the Kunthipuzha river that would have submerged 8.3 sq km of untouched moist evergreen forest. Steven Green in 1972, expressed his concerns about the possible threats to the rare lion-tailed macaque from the project. Around the same time, herpetologist Romulus Whitaker wrote to the Bombay Natural History Society about the need to conserve the Valley. Reports like these alert other naturalists. But, the Planning Commission approved this project in 1973. The project planned to generate 120 megawatt of