

## **7.6 ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS**

### **CHIPKO AANDOLAN MOVEMENT**

- The name of the Chipko movement originated from the word 'embrace' or 'Hugging'.
- Birth place - Gopeshwar in District Chamoli in 1973.
- First Chipko action- March 1974 in Reni village.

#### **Why Chipko Movement?**

- The forests of India are a critical resource for the livelihood of rural peoples throughout the country.
- These forests have been increasingly felled for commerce and industry.
- If the Himalayas are not saved all of India will be turned in to a desert, Fodder will not be available, There will be Soil Erosion and landslides.
- It was started to prevent the cutting of trees.
- It aimed at protection and conservation of trees and forests from being destroyed.

Major people involved in the Chipko Movement were Amrita Devi, Gaura Devi, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, and Sundarlal Bahuguna.

**Women's Participants:** (Gaura, Sudesha, Bachni) Devi, (Mira, Sarala) Behn Amrita Devi.

- Bhatt's teachings focused on the protection of the Himalayan Mountains from deforestation.
- Organized rallies to protect the forest from mass destruction.
- Sundarlal Bahuguna He has contributed globally through awareness raising measures concerning deforestation.

- He was one of the first people to stop the construction of the Tehri Dam.

### **Reasons for Protestation:**

- The relocation of more than 100,000 people.
- This region was the site of a 6.8 magnitude earthquake.
- The dam-break would submerge numerous towns whose populations total near half a million.
- The intention of the Dams was to divert water flow to New Delhi, this will lead to reduction of water supply in mountain villagers.
- The villages get water supply of only 4 litres per family.

Slogans of Chipko Movement :

Before 1978: “What do the forests bear? “Resin, timber and business.”

After 1978 : “What do the forests bear? “Soil, water and pure air.”

### **Success of the Chipko Movement**

- Ban was imposed on cutting the trees for the 15 years in the forests of Uttar Pradesh in 1980.
- By 1981, over a million trees had been planted through their efforts.
- It generated pressure for a natural resource policy which is more sensitive to people's needs and ecological requirements.
- New methods of forest farming have been developed, both to conserve the forests and create employment.
- It is still working to protect the trees today through the same nonviolent methods.

## **BISHNOIS MOVEMENT OF RAJASTHAN**

**Year:** 1700s, **Place:** Khejarli, Marwar region, Rajasthan .

**Leaders:** Amrita Devi along with Bishnoi villagers in Khejarli and surrounding villages.

**Aim:** Save sacred trees from being cut down by the king's soldiers for a new palace.

- A female villager could not bear to witness the destruction of both her faith and the village's sacred trees.
- She hugged the trees and encouraged others to do the same.
- 363 Bishnoi villagers were killed in this movement.
- The Bishnoi tree martyrs were influenced by the teachings of *Guru Maharaj Jambaji*, who founded the Bishnoi faith in 1485 and set forth principles forbidding harm to trees and animals.

Soon afterward, the maharajah designated the Bishnoi state as a protected area, forbidding harm to trees and animals. This legislation still exists today in the region.

### **Recent Trends of Bishnoi Movement-**

- In memory of the 363 Bishnois, who died protecting their dear trees, a number of khejri trees are planted around the area, which is still notably lush and rich with animal life.
- The Bishnoi sacrifices became the inspiration for a much larger Chipko movement that is still growing today, in which villagers physically embrace trees to save them from logging.

## **SILENT VALLEY MOVEMENT**

- It was a social movement aimed at the protection of Silent valley, an evergreen tropical forest in the Palakkad district of Kerala, India.
- Silent Valley, occupying an area of 8950 hectares at an altitude of 3000 feet in Palaghat district of Kerala.
- It is perhaps, the only remaining undisturbed tropical rainforest in Indian peninsula.
- In the 1960s the state government began planning a dam to generate hydroelectricity as the basis for regional economic development.
- It was started in 1973 to save the Silent Valley Reserve Forests from being flooded by a hydro-electric project.
- The government eventually abandoned the project in 1983 and the valley was declared as Silent Valley National Park in 1985.

### **History of Silent Valley Movement:**

- It was a battlefield of personal agendas, between the then prime minister Morarji Desai, the Kerala government and the environmentalists.
- The Silent Valley hydroelectric project was to dam the Kunthipuzha River, submerging the entire biosphere reserve and destroying its four-million-year-old rainforests.
- In 1980, the M.G.K. Menon Committee set up to review the project, came out with a recommendation to scrap it.
- With 40% of its so-called surplus power being supplied to other parts and many villages of Kerala waiting to be electrified, this grassroots movement became the bedrock of Indian environmental activism.
- After the announcement of imminent dam construction the valley became the focal point of "Save Silent Valley", India's fiercest environmental debate of the decade.

- Because of concern about the endangered lion-tailed macaque, the issue was brought to public attention.
- Romulus Whitaker, founder of the Madras Snake Park and the Madras Crocodile Bank, was probably the first person to draw public attention to the small and remote area.
- In 1977 the Kerala Forest Research Institute carried out an Ecological Impact study of the Silent Valley area and proposed that the area be declared a Biosphere Reserve.
- In 1978, Smt. Indira Gandhi, the Honourable Prime Minister of India, approved the project, with the condition that the State Government enact Legislation ensuring the necessary safeguards.
- Also that year the IUCN (Ashkhabad, USSR, 1978) passed a resolution recommending protection of Lion-tailed Macaques in Silent Valley and Kalakkad and the controversy heated up.
- In 1979, the Government of Kerala passed Legislation regarding the Silent Valley Protection Area (Protection of Ecological balance Act of 1979) and issued a notification declaring the exclusion of the Hydroelectric Project Area from the proposed National Park.
- Silent valley is the home to the largest population of lion-tailed macaques.
- They are among the world's rarest and most threatened primates.