

HS 200: Environmental Studies

Humanities and Social Sciences

Instructor- S. Pattanaik

Topic- ‘Environmentalism of the Poor’ debate

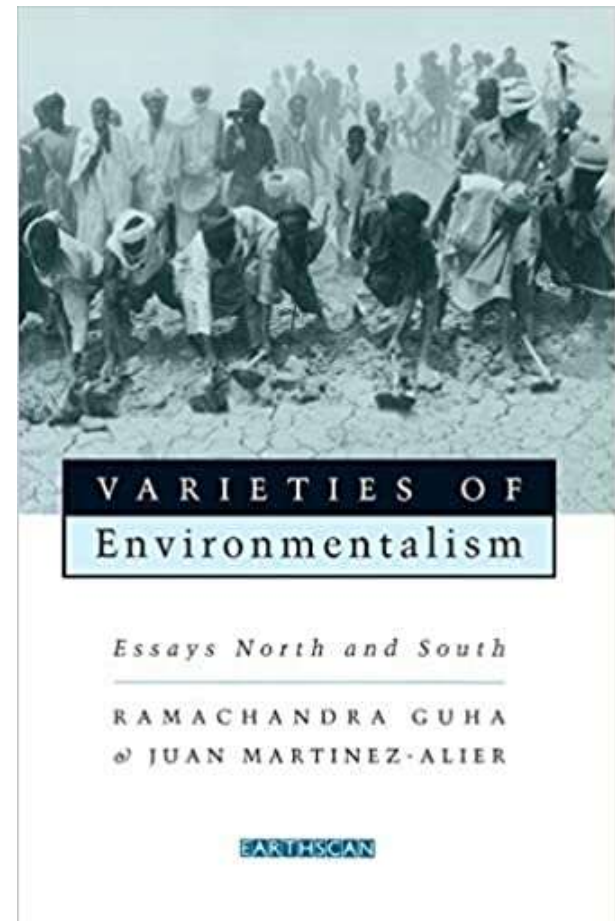
Sub-themes

- **History of Environmentalism**
- **North-South dimension of environmentalism**
- **Environmentalism of the Poor**
- **Ecological conflicts**
- **Iron Triangle concept**

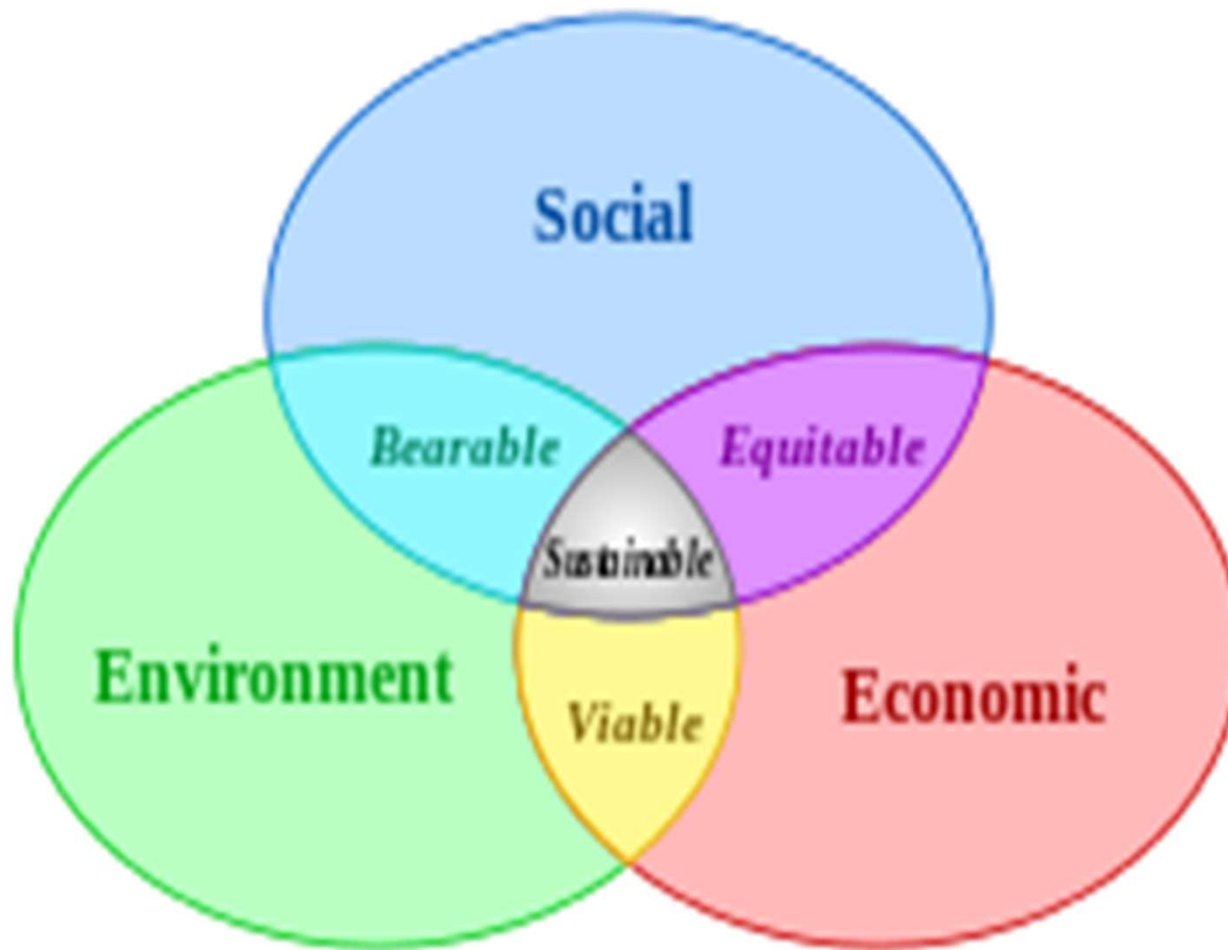
Reading

‘Environmentalism of the Poor’ – Extracted from the book *Varieties of Environmentalism- Essays North and South* (Chapter-1)

By- Ramachandra Guha and
J. Martinez- Alier, 1997.



Sustainable development



Sustainable Development



Brundtland-Report «Our Common Future» 1987

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). 1987. *Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*. Transmitted to the General Assembly as an Annex to document A/42/427 - Development and International Co-operation: Environment.

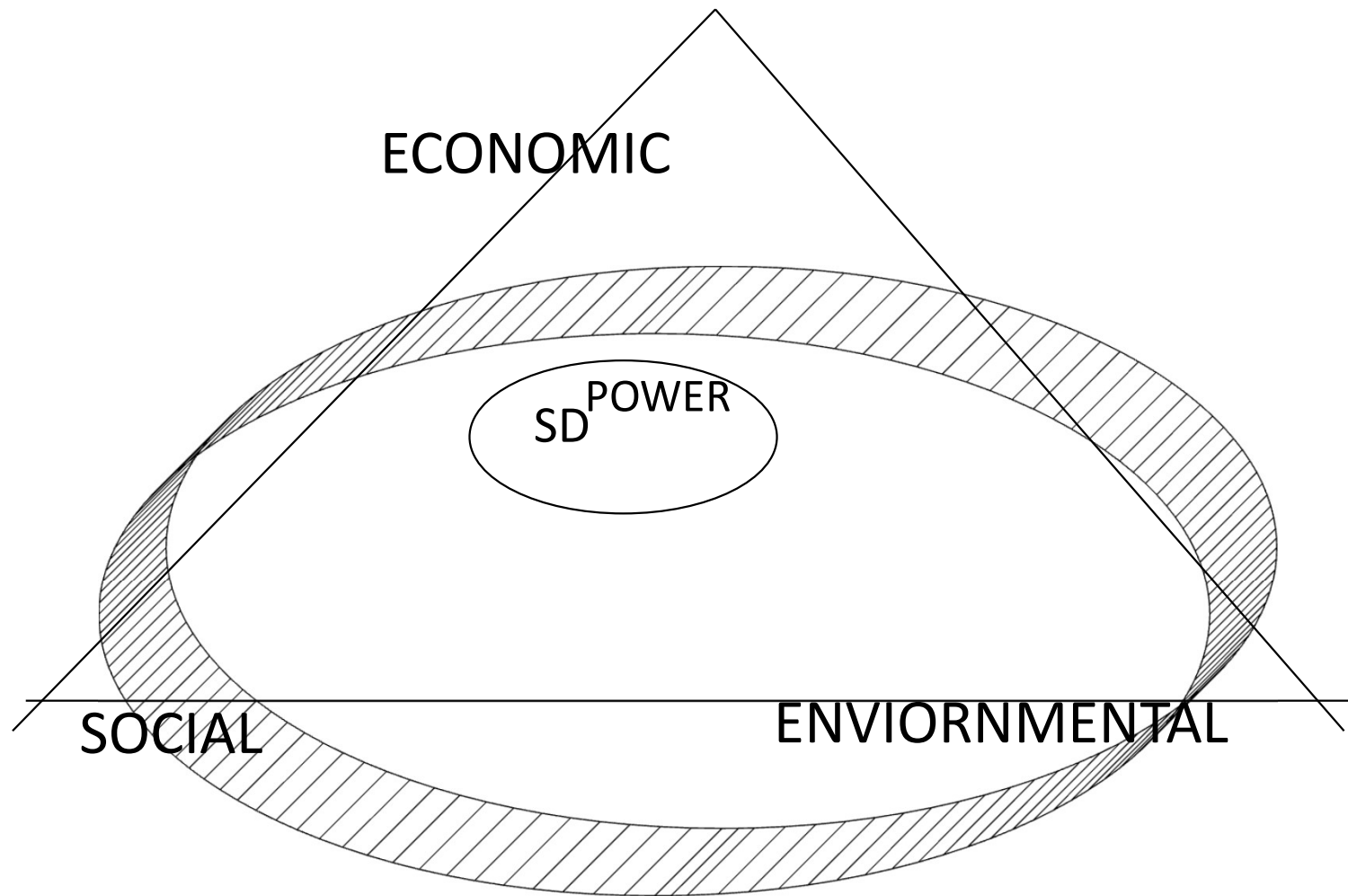
WCSD (World Commission on Sustainable Development) 1987

- **Brundtland Commission Report (1987)**
- Report on '*Our Common Future*'-1987
- Definition on S-D (ECED)

The definition provides two concepts:

1. The concept of present needs (Needs of the World's poor to which overriding priority should be given);
2. The idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology & social organization on the environment's ability to meet present & future needs.

Dimensions of Development



- SD: Field of Sustainable Development

S-D on Environment and Development

- Access?
- Control?
- Equity?
- Sustainability Conflicts?

Conflicts within Sustainable Development

Between:

- the present and future generations
- human well-being and the protection of nature
- the poor and rich
- a local and a global focus: 'Here' and 'Elsewhere'

Sub-themes

1. History of Environmentalism
2. North-South dimension of environmentalism
3. Environmentalism of the Poor
4. Ecological conflicts
5. Iron Triangle

1.

History of Environmentalism

Environmental awareness in the Globe and in India

Earlier in the 20th century:

- British attempts to improve public health,
- water supplies, sanitation;
- German science of conservation
- biology, forestry;

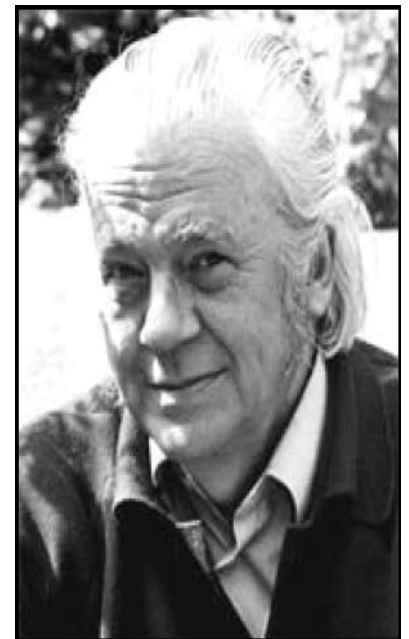
1960s Ecological approach to Nature
Chemicals in the food-chain,
Rachel Carson: ***Silent Spring***, 1962



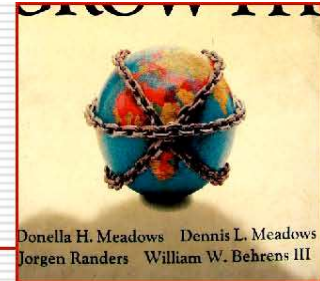
'Buddhist economics' Intermediate,
Technology,

E. F Schumacher: **Book→ *Small is Beautiful***
(*Economics, as if people mattered*)

***One of the 100 most influential books published after
World War II***

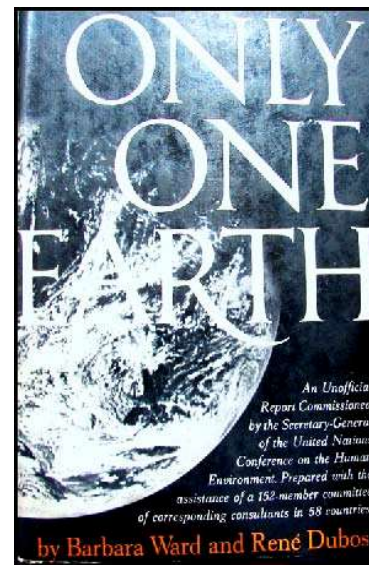


QUEST FOR BALANCE / 1972 STOCKHOLM UN Conference: The Human Environment



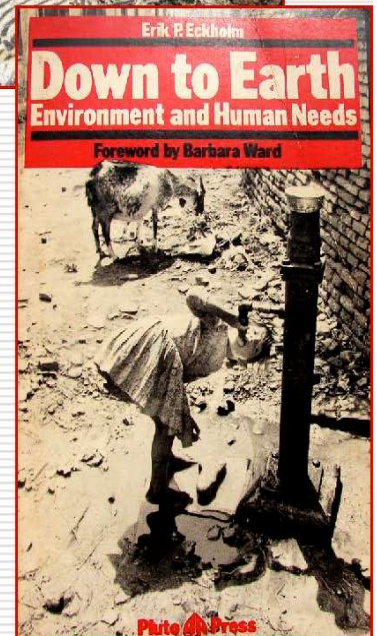
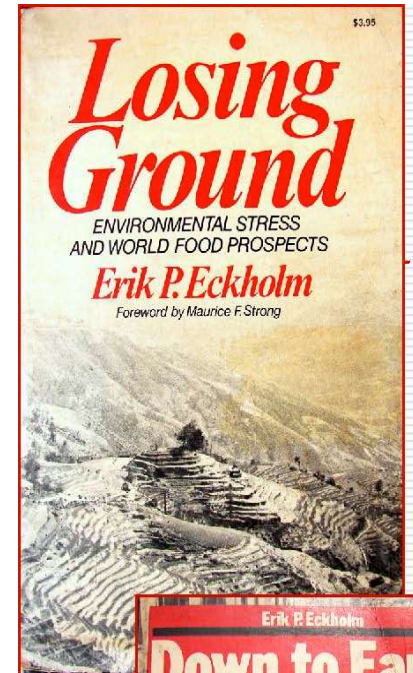
1972 Stockholm provided the foundation for -Global environmental governance -Preservation of natural habitats -Checking trans-boundary pollution -Stopping environmental degradation .

Indira Gandhi: ‘Poverty is the greatest polluter’

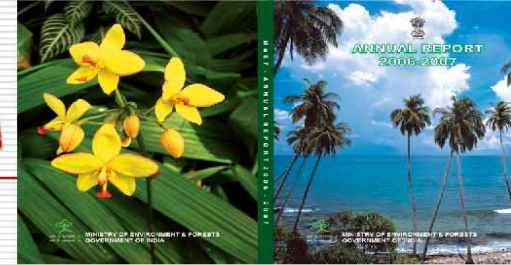


Global impact of Stockholm

- Series of UN conferences through 1970s: on Population, Food, Women, Human settlement, Water, Desertification, Primary health care, World development
- **Regulation:** CITES (1973) trade in wildlife
- Eric Eckholm's Book *Losing Ground: Environmental Stress and World Food Prospects*, 1976
(politics of soil conservation, deforestation)
Down to Earth, 1982



India post-Stockholm poverty ~ ecodevelopment/tourism



Governance and Law:

- ND Tiwari Committee NCEPC 1972
- - ‘ NCEPC → Department under DST, 1980 → Ministry of Environment and Forests

Education:

- - 1973-75 Environmental Studies introduced (under the aegis of the British Council) in selected primary schools in Delhi, Chennai. Using the environment as a learning resource.
- Took 25 years and a SC judgment for ES to be introduced in higher education

December 1984: Bhopal disaster: Indian environmental policy, before and after

Widespread shock; Later, sense of people being abandoned by government

Pre-Bhopal: specific laws and institutional mechanisms

- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 National Parks
- Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (amended 1988)
- Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
- Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981
- Setting up Central, State Pollution Control Boards to oversee Acts

Post-Bhopal: more broad-based laws

- Environmental Protection Act, 1986.
- National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on the Environment, 1992

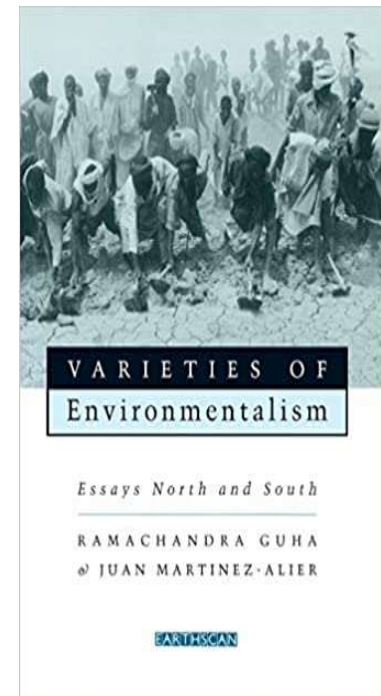
2.

North-South dimension of Environment- or Environmentalism

First (North) & Third (South) World Environmentalism

- Ecology of Affluence
- Southern challenge
(Environmentalism of the Poor)

Guha, Ramachandra and Martinez-Alier, 1997
(*Varieties of Environmentalism*)



Environmentalism of the North is refereed as “**full stomach**” **environmentalism** and the environmentalism of the south is called as “**empty – belly**” **environmentalism**.

Some Varieties of Environmentalism in the Globe

North-South or West-East Environmentalism

(In Affluent
Countries)

Materialist

reaction against the increased impact of the effluents of affluence, i.e., the environmental justice movement in US, the anti-nuclear movement.

Non-Materialist

Cultural shift to post-materialist 'quality of life' values and increased appreciation of natural amenities,

(In poor
countries)

The environmentalism of the poor, i.e., the defence of livelihood, & communal access to natural resources

'Biocentric' eastern religions

Reaction against environmental degradation caused by poverty, population growth..

Essentialist eco-feminism

- **The environmentalism of the North is refereed as “full stomach” environmentalism and the environmentalism of the south is called as “empty – belly” environmentalism.**
- **Environmentalism of the Southern Word (India): ...since 1960s..**

Chipko, Tehri, SSP, Silent Valley, Mining issues and conflict, Singur, Coke Plachimada , Jaitapur sruggle ..

3. Environmentalism of the Poor

The first lesson is that the main source of environmental destruction in the world is the demand for natural resources generated by the consumption of the rich (whether they are rich nations or rich individuals and groups within nations)....

- *The second lesson is that it is the poor who are affected the most by environmental destruction.*

(Anil Agrawal, 1986, Founder of CSE, Delhi, Down to Earth Journal)

<https://www.cseindia.org/>



Environmentalism of the Poor: Ramachandra Guha

Page no- 4-10 (Reading)

Instances: Resistance against KPL, Karanataka
1984

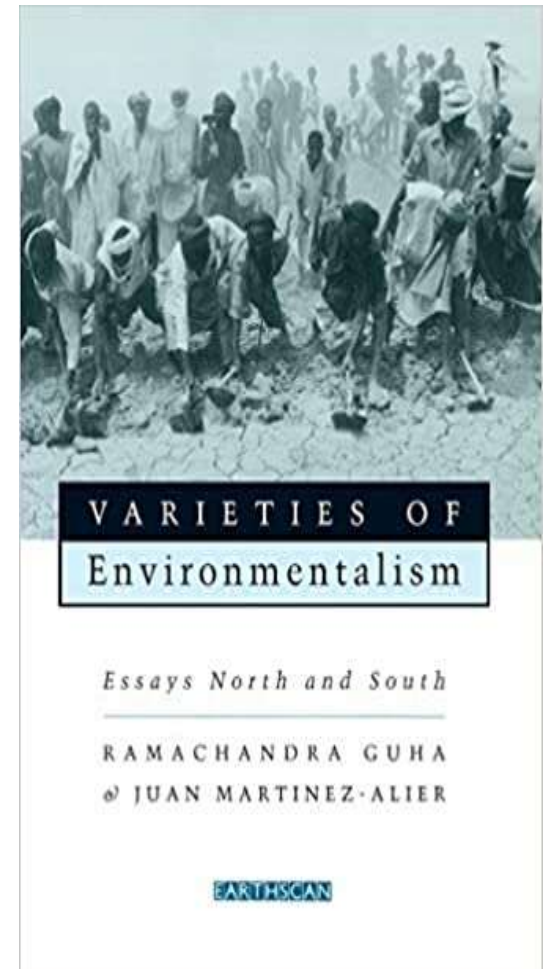
Chipko Movement -1960s

In the global and Indian history of
Environmentalism of the poor-

Exp: **Chipko Movement**

Another Example- **KPL, Karnataka**

Chipko, KPL, NBA- 1960s- 1980s:
witnessed series of popular movements in
defense of community rights to natural resources.



Chipko Movement



The movement's major success came in 1980, when an appeal from Bahuguna to Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi resulted in a 15-year ban on commercial felling in the Uttarakhand Himalayas. Similar bans were enacted in Himachala Pradesh and the former Uttaranchal.

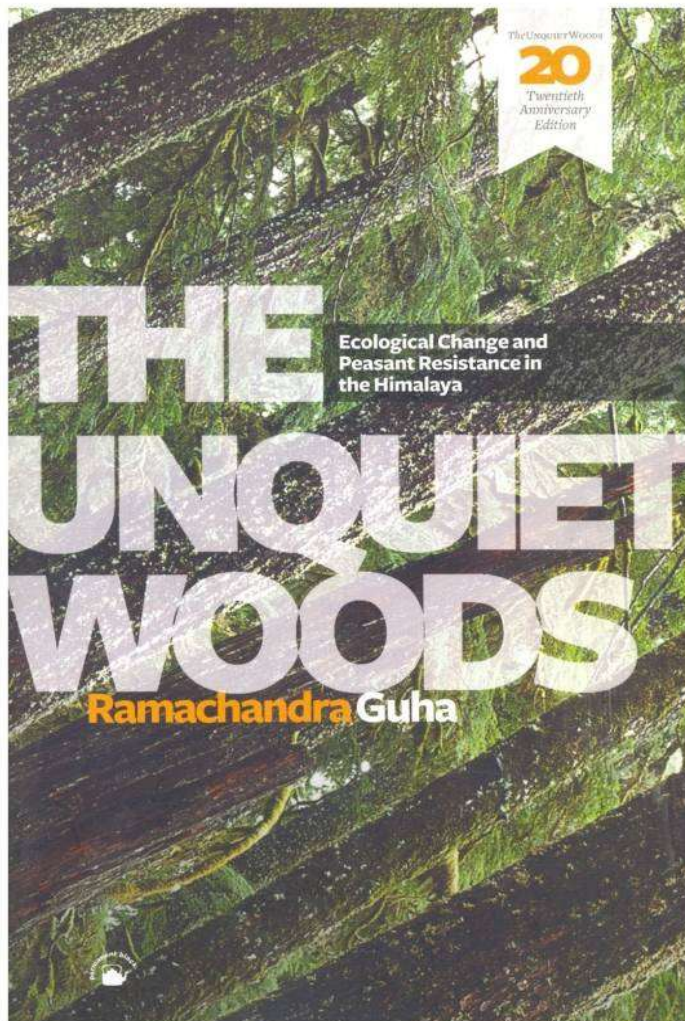
Chipko: Government, Paper Mills / Loggers, People



Sunderlal Bahuguna



Chandi Prasad Bhatt,
Dasholi Gram Swarajya
Sangh (DGSS,
established in 1964)



Environmentalist and social historian **Ramachandra Guha**, author of **The Unquiet Woods**, *“Chipko is the latest in a long series of peasant protests going back to the turn of the century against commercial forestry in the Uttar Pradesh Himalaya in the Uttar Pradesh Himalaya”*

4. Various instances of Ecological conflicts in India- Strong Environment-Society Interactions- *'Environmentalism of the poor'*

- Chipko- Garhwal Himalayas
- Dams and mutli-purpose projects- Tehri, Narmada,
Silent Valley
- Plachimada – Kerala (struggle aganst Hindustan Coca Cola
Beverages Private Limited ,HCCBPL)

Iron Triangle approach

- **Iron Triangle approach: Class and the use/ abuse of natural resources (Guha and Gadgil, 1995)**

“the pattern of development can be attributed to the dominance in Indian society of an ‘iron triangle’ approach of politicians and bureaucrats who use public resources to extend patronage to and receive support from industry, large landowners and urban middle class populations”. ..called as ***Resource omnivores***

Resource Omnivores, Ecosystem People, Ecological Refugees- form the iron triangle

- **Omnivores:** industrialists, rich farmers, urban middle classes, politicians (the pattern of development can be attributed to the dominance in Indian Society of an '**Iron Triangle**' of .. Who use public resources to extend patronage to and receive support from industry...
- **Ecosystem people:** Rural, those who rely on natural resources (small and marginal farmers, hill peasants, landless labour, tribals, pastoralists)
- **Ecological refugees:** Displaced, evicted, resettled, impoverished urban migrants

