

AN APPRAISAL OF CHIPKO MOVEMENT

Mitra Mondal

*Assistant Professor in Geography, Vivekananda College for Women, Barisha,
Kolkata 700008*

Abstract

Environmental movement occurs due to degradation of environmental quality which in turn affects socio economic conditions of the local people. Chipko was the first environmental movement by village women of hilly areas after independence. The tribal women played a novel role in this movement as their daily work associated with directly and indirectly with forests resources. Deforestation makes their life difficult. This movement started to protect the forest cover in hilly areas.

Key words: *Conservation, deforestation, environmental, movement, protect*



[Scholarly Research Journal's](http://www.srjis.com) is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

Introduction: The chipko movement was an ecological movement that practiced in non – violent way. In the 1970s, the protection against deforestation particularly in hilly areas rises all over India. This forest protection movement is known as chipko movement. The meaning of the term is embrace as the movement started through hugging the trees. The movement first started in the Garhwal Himalayas of Uttarakhand in 1973. By the 1980s, the movement became popular throughout the India.

History of Chipko Movement

A similar movement was happened in Bishnoi village of Rajasthan. The king of Jodhpur wanted to set up a new residential house in this village. The king ordered his soldier to cut the trees in Bishnoi village for this purpose. When soldiers came to the village and started to cut the trees, the villagers mainly Bishnoi women protest it. Therefore a clash between Bishnoi community and villagers rose. The soldiers attacked them and 365 people lost their lives. Being failed, the villagers under the leadership of Amrita Devi hugged the trees to stop being felled. When the king heard this incident; he withdrew his order and ordered his soldiers to come back in Jodhpur.

The Movement at a glance

The Himalayan region had been subjugated from the British regime for its natural wealth. Therefore, the forest cover was destroying at an alarming rate. Deforestation resulted in scarcity in fodder and firewood collection. This causes soil erosion and land slide. Springs

began to dry up in hills. Water shortages became acute problem. Subsequently people gave up livestock. Some villagers migrated to other place for their livelihood. They gradually realized the environmental problem. In 1964 Chandi Prasad Bhatt, environmentalist and social worker, established DGSS (Dasholi Gram Swarajjya Sangh) in Gopeswar Village for the protection of forest.

In March 1973, the lumbermen for sporting goods arrived at Gopeswar. Mainly they came here to collect woods for making tennis racket. The villagers prevented them from cutting the trees. DGSS worker also joined with villagers and together protest it. The lumbermen did not combat with them and left the village. The villagers were determined on no deforestation by the outsiders.

The major event took place on 26th march 1974. It was at Reni village of Chamoli district of Uttarakhand. On that day the village men were outside the village. The state government announced the compensation due to previous deforestation. But that was false pretenses. To collect this compensation the men went outside. At that time the loggers came here. A village girl saw them approaching towards the village with cutting tools. She ran to the village Mahila Mangal Dal. The head of this Mahila Dal was Gaura Devi. The girl informed her about wood cutters. Gaura Devi and other village women reached to the field and tried to prevent them. The lumbermen threaded them even with guns. Then the women took decision to embrace the trees to stop cutting. The women stood firm by their forest for whole night. On the next day, when men came back, they also join with women togetherly to prevent the loggers. This incident propagated to the other adjacent villages and many villagers came to the Reni village to join the movement. This environmental protest is known as Chipko Movement as the people hugged the trees from being felled. The movement continued for four days. Then the contractors forced to leave the village. This news reached to the Chief Minister. He established a committee to investigate the incidents. After investigation the committee supported the villagers.

The success of chipko Movement encourages the environmental movement throughout the country. The movement highlighted on importance of forest cover. Many environmentalists like Sunderlal Bahuguna, Chandi Prasad Bhatt and other persons attached themselves to the movement. Sunderlal Bahuguna introduced another slogan like that ecology brings good economy. He believed in sustainable use of natural resources. He was the supporter of small scale industries by local people bases on local resources. He also appealed to Mrs. India

Copyright © 2017, Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies

Gandhi, The prime minister .She passed an order that banned the felling of trees for 15 years in these areas until the forest was fully recovered.

Sunderlal Bahuguna organized a foot march of 5000 kilometre in Trans Himalayan region in 1981-83. Women of this village played a crucial role in the movement. They set up cooperatives to in vigil the local forest cover. Gradually they introduced land rotation scheme for fodder and other resources collection.

Conclusion: Chipko movement was a livelihood movement rather than forest conservation movement. It also generates a new way to protect environment. It is also eco-feminist movement and this movement was awarded the Right livelihood Award in 1987.The movement encourages many environmental programmes like water management, afforestation, energy conservation and others.

References

- Ahuja, ram.2004. *Society in India*.jaipurRawat Publication
- Banaszak, Lee, Ann.1996.*Why Movements Succeeds or Fail, Princeton: Princeton University Press*
- Hasnain, Nadeem.2004. *Indian Society and Culture: Continuity and Change. New Delhi:Jawahar Publishers and Distributers.*
- Pandey. V 2016.*Indian Society and Culture. Jaipur , Rawat publications*
- Rao, M.S.A.1978. *Social Movements in India. New Delhi, Monahor Publications*
- Roy, B.K.burman.1984. *Tribes in Perspectives.New Delhi: Mittal Publication*
- Shah,Ghanshyam. 1998. *Social Movements in India.New Delhi: Saga*
- Weber, Thomas. 1988. *Hugging the Trees; the Story of the Chipko Movement. New Delhi: Vking*