

## PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

MBOTCC-8  
Unit - IV

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### Introduction:

Consumerist life style of people and some ill-conceived ambitious projects of the Govt. have led to unethical exploitation of natural resources of the country. Such activities have caused disruption of ecological balance, many times at an alarming scale, and have often been experienced in various forms of local or regional effects on the forest, farms, livestock and aquatic resources. As a result, many social conflicts have been noticed from time to time in various parts of the country which led to mass movements against Government's apathy towards preservation of biodiversity and scant regard for the well-being of people.

Some major People's Movements focusing on biodiversity conservation and restoration of ecological balance (Green Movements) include the following.

#### 1. CHIPKO MOVEMENT:

(i) Started in 1973 in Chameli district and later in Tehri-Garhwal district of Uttarakhand.

(ii) This movement was led by Sunderlal Bahuguna and supported by Gaura Devi and several others.

(iii) The objective of this movement was to protect the trees on the Himalayan slopes from the axes of the contractors of the forest.

(iv) Mr. Bahuguna enlightened the villagers by impressing upon them the value of trees in maintaining environmental balance which prevents soil erosion and provides rain and pure air.

(v) Women of the villages tied the sacred thread around the trunks of trees, and hugged the trees to prevent their cutting. As such, this was called "Chipko Movement".

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(2)

(vi) This movement gathered momentum in 1978 when the women faced police firings and other tortures.

(vii) H. N. Bahuguna, the then C.M. of U.P., set up an Enquiry Committee in this regard which eventually ruled in favour of the villagers. Thus the movement was won over.

## 2. SILENT VALLEY MOVEMENT:

(i) Started in 1978 at Silent Valley - an evergreen tropical forest in Palakkad district of Kerala.

(ii) The poet-activist Sughathakumari and Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), an NGO, led this movement.

(iii) The movement was aimed at protecting the Silent Valley from being cleared for the start of establishing a Hydroelectricity Power Project.

(iv) Succumbing to the people's pressure, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the then P.M. of India, declared that Silent Valley would be protected. M.G.K. Menon Committee recommended calling off the Silent Valley Power Project, and the movement finally succeeded in its mission.

(v) This valley was later developed as the Silent Valley National Park by the then P.M. Rajiv Gandhi.

## 3. JUNGLE BACHAO ANDOLAN:

(i) Started in 1982 in the Singbhum district of Bihar.

(ii) Tribals of the district started this movement against Government's decision to replace the Sal forest with the highly priced Teak.

(iii) This was called by many as "Greed Game Political Populism".

(iv) Later on, such movements started and spread in other parts of the newly carved out Jharkhand State.

## 4. APPIKO MOVEMENT:

(i) Started in 1983 in Uttara Kannada and Shimoga districts of Karnataka against the

(3)

felling and commercialization of natural forest cover. Clearing the forest for industries was the main purpose.

(ii) This movement was neither led by a prominent personality nor was formally institutionalized.

(iii) Pandurang Hegde acted as a facilitator in launching this movement.

(iv) The name 'Appiko' was a Kannad version of 'Chipko'.

(v) The locals embraced the trees which were to be cut by contractors of the forest department.

(vi) Marches in the interior forest, slide shows, folk dances, street plays and other such popular forms of attention-seeking drives were organized to lend momentum to this movement.

(vii) The movement later focused on the rational use of the ecosphere through introducing alternative energy resources to reduce pressure on the forest.

(viii) Industrial expansion projects and dam construction projects were finally stopped under the widespread public pressure and protests.

### 5. NARMA DA BACHAO ANDOLAN (NBA):

(i) Started in 1985 to protect the Narmada river flowing through the States of Gujrat, M.P. and Maharashtra.

(ii) Medha Patkar and Baba Amte led this movement and 'Adivasis', farmers, environmentalists and Human Rights activists participated voluntarily to add fillip to this popular environmentalism.

(iii) This movement was launched against the construction of several large dams across the Narmada river.

(iv) The matter was finally dragged to the court, and in October, 2000 the Supreme Court of India passed a verdict on the matter thereby fixing the height of the dams only up to 90m. The project is still in progress.

(7)  
G. TEHRI DAM CONFLICT:

(i) This movement was launched by Sunderlal Bahuguna in 1990's against the displacement of town inhabitants near Tehri and adverse environmental consequences of Dam construction on the Bhagirathi river near Tehri in Uttarakhand (then UP).

(ii) The major objections included seismic sensitivity of the region, submergence of forest areas along with the Tehri township displacement.

(iii) Despite being led by a person like Bahuguna, the movement has failed in garnering enough popular support at the National level.

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