



ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

Sem-III, GE-3
Topic 3.1

What is environment?

- **Environment**, refers surrounding of an organism, including other organisms and the physical world
- ‘biotic’ that includes living factors with biological origins
- ‘abiotic’ that includes non-living factors like inorganic materials and physical aspects such as oxygen, carbon dioxide, temperature, light, climate, rainfall, etc.
- for ecologists environment consists of “interconnecting relations of dependency and reciprocity” between the people, other living creatures and vegetation,
- sociologists have described environment as “the context which provides the conditions for the existence” to them
- sociologists have included ‘built environment’ such as a city or a slum or a park.

Some basic concepts

- ***Ecological imperialism*** Crosby (1986): European expansion since the late fifteenth century, and associated ecological destruction.
- ***carrying capacity***, which refers to the maximum number of organisms that earth can support with its existing resources without exhausting them.
- ***ecological footprint***, a term coined by William Rees in 1992, which conveys the human demand on environment and resources

Causes of rising environmental problems

- a) Human impact on natural systems like interference in natural systems or a loss of habitat or destruction of a species or organism for e.g. overfishing or threats to Sundarban forests and Majuli islands, both biodiversity hotspots;
- b) Impact on human health and wellbeing due to human induced changes in natural conditions for e.g. increasing respiratory problems due to increased toxicity of air in Delhi;
- c) Human impact on natural landscape- considered problematic in the more developed countries which value the natural areas which are still ‘untouched’

Social Ecology

- ***Social Ecology*** approach highlights the intricate relationship between nature and human society,
- All ecological/environmental problems are ultimately and fundamentally social in nature
- caused due to deep seated problems of society and not merely human activity or overpopulation;
- resolving environmental problems therefore require a fundamental shift in society, i.e. within people, their actions and attitudes.

Sustainability?

- ***Sustainability*** denotes the ability of a process or human activity to meet the needs of the present generation while also protecting the environment and its resources for future generations.
- sustainable activities are those that do not deplete or damage natural environment or natural resources.
- ***Sustainable development*** strives to meet people's immediate interests without compromising interests of future generations.

Environmental Movements in India

- The environmental movements in India, therefore, are not necessarily “green” or “clean” or to save heritage and species in danger of extinction, as in the West, but for the very survival of the poor (Rao, 1994).

Chipko Movement

- In 1973, the Forest Department Chamoli, Uttarakhand assigned the ash trees to a private company.
- This incident caused the DGHS to fight, this injustice,
- by placing themselves in front of the trucks of firewood and wood resin
- When these methods were found unsuccessful, Chandi Prasad Bhat -one of the leaders, suggested the activists should hug trees and therefore "Chipko" was born
- This form of protest helped in stopping private enterprise felling of ash trees as the people were literally between the axe and the tree.
- With its success, the movement spread to the neighbouring regions also
- Appiko in South India

Three aspects of Chipko Movement

- First, the close relationship between the livelihoods of the local population and the nature of the movement.
- The second aspect is about the nature of the turmoil. the Chipko movement strictly followed the Gandhian tradition of the struggle for freedom, that is, nonviolence.
- Thirdly, the sincerity of the leaders as Shri Sunderlal Bahuguna, and access to national leaders also contributed to the success of the movement

Main objectives of Chipko Movement

- Chief objective: total cessation of commercial tree felling.
- (i) based on the minimum needs of the population, a reorganization of the traditional rights;
- (ii) the dry forest should be green, with the participation of the people and the increase in the cultivation of the trees;
- (iii) village committees should be trained in the management of forests;
- (iv) national forest-related industries should be developed and raw materials, money and technology to be made available;
- and (v) based on local conditions and needs, priority should be given to the local varieties of afforestation (Mukul, 1993).

Silent Valley Movement

- This movement was organized by the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishat (KSSP) in collaboration with wildlife conservationists.
- The movement was led mainly for environmental reasons
- The main concerns of this movement were the negative environmental impact on Silent Valley
- With the active support of international organisations such the movement gained international importance (Sethi, 1993).
- Ultimate success of the movement has been attributed to the desire of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to improve her image within the International community

Narmada Bachao Andolan

- The most popular movement is against the Narmada river valley development projects.
- it gained prominence and spread in late 1980s.
- First, this movement focused on the issue of human rights as an outcome of displacement of the people.
- These claims were duly supported by environmentalists who oppose the construction of large dams on environmental grounds.
- The movement gained public attention due to the mobilization and organization of the oustees and the union of the eminent social workers such as Baba Amte, Medha Patkar and Sunderlal Bahuguna.
- In fact, the main reason behind the withdrawal of funding from World Bank project was due to international pressure.

NBA

- The movement petitioned the Supreme Court of India
- the dam construction was stayed by the Supreme Court for six years (1994-2000).
- On 18th October 2000, Supreme Court gave a judgment giving the go-ahead to dam construction,
- conditional to the fulfilment of the resettlement and rehabilitation as per Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal stipulations.

NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN



नर्मदा बचाओ आंदोलन

संघर्ष और निर्माण के 30 साल...

