UNIT 11: ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

UNIT STRUCTURE

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11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand the causal factors behind environmental movements
- explain the effects of state policy and development strategies on the environment
- discuss the different environmental movements in India and 'Politics of Movements'.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

The environmental movement is a global movement, which includes a choice of organizations, from the bigger to grassroots and varies across the countries. Due to its bigger member countries with different beliefs, and speculative nature, the environmental movement is not always unified in its goals. The movement also covers some other movements with a more specific aim, such as the climate movement. At its wider level, the movement incorporates personal citizens, professionals, religious devotees, politicians, scientists, non-profit organizations and individual advocates. Environmentalist focuses on the managing of resources and stewardship

of the green surroundings by bringing in changes in the individual and public policy. In its respect of civilization as a contributor in (not the enemy of) ecosystems, the movement is happening around ecology, health, and human rights.

11.3.CAUSES OF ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

The environmental movements are the consequence of the socio ecological belongings of conceived expansion based on momentary criteria exploitation. The movements are enlightening how the resource-intensive burden of growth have built-in ecological demolition and economic deprivation. The members have activated micro success strategy to defend the normal processes and to offer the macro concept for natural development at the national and regional levels.

- **THE INDIAN CASE**

  Environmental and public health is an in progress effort within India. The first stone of an ecological movement in India was the foundation in 1964 of Dasholi Gram Swarajya Sangh, a working joint initiated by Chandi Prasad Bhatt. It was inaugurated by Sucheta Kriplani and founded on land donated by Shyma Devi. This proposal was ultimately followed up with the Chipko Movement starting in 1974.

  The sternest lone event reinforceing the movement was the Bhopal gas leakage on 3 December 1984. 40 tons of methyl isocyanate was released, right away killing 2,259 people and eventually disturbing 700,000 citizens.

  India has a national campaign against Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola plants due to their practices of drawing ground water and contaminating fields with sludge. The movement is characterized by local struggles against intensive aquaculture farms.

  The most significant part of the ecological movement in India is the anti-dam movement. Dam building has been considered of as a way for India to catch up with the West by linking to the power web with huge dams, oil or oil-powered plants, or nuclear plants.

Jhola Aandolan a mass movement is conducting as struggling alongside polythene carry bags uses and promoting cloth/jute/paper carry bags to guard ecology and nature.

Activists in the Indian environmental movement consider global warming, sea levels rising, and glaciers retreating decreasing the amount of water flowing into streams to be the biggest challenges for them to face in the early twenty-first century.

11.3.1 State Power and Development Ideology

The state's claim to defend threatened resources and its exclusive right to the legitimate use of violence combine to facilitate its apparatus-building and attempts at social control. State threats or use of violence in the name of resource control helps them to control people, especially unruly regional groups, marginal groups, or minority groups who challenge its authority.

The environment has emerged as an important focus of state-society conflict in many parts of the Third World over the last quarter century, very often accompanying wider demands for socio-political and economic reforms. Environmental goals are nearly always factors in wider campaigns for greater political and economic clout.

Most environmental groups realise that if their local environment is seriously degraded or destroyed, it is they who will lose out. The issue may simply be who has the 'right' to destroy the natural environment: local people or outside interests? But the central point is that environmental protection is always highly political.

State policies in the Third World are influenced by a variety of factors, especially the nature of domestic political structures and distribution of wealth and income. Agricultural pricing policies, investment incentives, tax provisions, and credit and land concessions are designed to further elite interests at the expense of those of 'ordinary' people. Political elites are very likely to be major wealth holders with interests in a variety of activities, some of them environmentally damaging, including commercial logging, mineral and oil exploitation, plantation cropping, and large-scale irrigated farming.

Relatively powerless, usually rural peoples - especially if they belong to national minorities - suffer socio-economic and environmental costs of such schemes, sometimes losing homes, farms and fishing grounds. Rarely, if ever, have they been compensated adequately for their losses. It is hardly surprising that environmental activists belonging to such groups feel that key decisions affecting their lives and environments are beyond their control. They may link human rights to environmental rights, arguing that the natural environment cannot be protected without sustaining its human communities.

When the state's view of what is the correct procedure and weight of the distribution of the benefits fails to meet the expectation of local communities the result is frequently political conflict, often involving violence. The ability of power-holders to enforce the state's policies differs from country to country. But it is very common in African and Asian countries, nearly always forged from diverse cultures and forms of social organisation, for the state to find itself to some degree unable fully to implement its policies. In such an 'environment of conflict', the ability of the state to impose its will can be judged through 'its capacities to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and appropriate or use resources in determined ways'. Such an environment of conflict will frequently result in conflict over the environment and its resources.

Strategies utilized by societal groups and the state help determine the extent of the latter's power. This is the case not only in relation to the state's ability to get people to behave in certain ways, but also its success in mobilising resources for its own ends. Groups in society may (theoretically) use the ballot box (when it is available) to vote for the government they want; however, the less-than-powerful usually find that even when elections result in a change of government few - if any - beneficial changes occur. As a consequence, subordinate groups may choose instead to use other methods - usually involving direct action - to contest the state. Increasingly, the hegemony of the state is challenged by subordinate groups in Third World countries. Often central to the struggle is the belief that states do not have the will or ability to govern for the benefit of the 'have nots'. One of the most important - although least tangible - forces destabilising governments

is the 'bubbling diversity of change' taking place within numerous Third World societies as a consequence of modernisation.

Another reason Third World environmental groups are burgeoning is that they often build links with transnational organisations - such as Greenpeace - helping them to grow and focus their efforts. Growing awareness of the relatedness of socio-economic and political issues leads to environmental concerns serving as a focus for wider problems; transnational links may help not only to broaden a Third World group's horizons but also help support their struggles by supplying welcome publicity. But the key issue is that growing numbers of people in the Third World seem to believe their governments do little for them.

11.3.2 Different Environmental Movements and Politics of Movements

Under this section we are going to study 3 Environmental Movements in India: the Chipko movement in the Himalaya, Save the Narmada Movement in Central India, and the Silent Valley Project in Kerala as nonviolent direct-action environmental movements of grassroots India.

- **CHIPKO MOVEMENT :** The word chipko refers to stick to or to hug and refers to the means used to protect the trees of the Himalaya from trade timber cutters who have distressed the forests. The movement's activists hug the tree trunks to interpose their bodies between the trees and the axemen. The Chipko movement started in the mountainous northern segment of then Uttar Pradesh (now Uttarakhand), immediately west of Nepal. The members of the ecological movement are primarily native survival farmers, both Indo-Aryan-speaking Hindus of the lower Himalaya who are called Pahari and, in fewer numbers, Tibetan-speaking Buddhists of the higher Himalaya who are known as Bhotiya.

  Uttarakhand was a relatively inaccessible land of precipitous slopes, and fragile soils, and ample water and forests populated by subsistence farmers who derived a secure livelihood through their diligence and in a combination of terrace agriculture and animal

husbandry. After the Indian-Chinese border conflict of 1962, an extensive network of roads was built throughout the region. The motive was clearly strategic, but a significant consequence was the sudden opening of the region to the traffic of all kinds, which made its rich supply of natural resources accessible to entrepreneurs in the resource-hungry plains of India. Timber and other products, ranging from limestone for use in cement, the principal building material in India, magnesite, and potassium to rare metals, became the objects of intensive exploitation and removal by corporate contractors. Blasting of mountainsides and felling of trees to make roadbeds and hundreds of vehicles and thousands of laborers used to build the roads were soon replaced by blasting, felling, vehicles, and laborers employed in extracting the resources. The overall environmental degradation wrought by road construction-the massive erosion and landslides caused by road cuts and blast shocks, the resulting loss of soils, forests, and water sources, and the decimation of firewood and other forest products by labor crews and military units, together with social and economic dislocations endured by the local populace-was quickly dwarfed by the same phenomenon on a magnified scale in the operations of the extractive industries.

Hydroelectrical sites along the Ganga and Jamuna rivers and their tributaries were promptly exploited with similar consequences. Now, for example, the largest earth-filled dam in Asia is the Tehri Dam, constructed on the Bhagirathi River, one of the two streams that form the Ganga. This dam will submerge the historic city of Tehri one hundred villages and ten thousand acres of agricultural thousand people will be rendered homeless, and the waters will separate an unknown number of other people from their economic resources networks. Widespread protests have been supported by research and expert testimony confirming that dam will be silted beyond use in less than half the projected century lifetime and that the seismic conditions, together with the greater-than-anticipated runoff the dam will capture, make a serious threat to people and

resources downstream. However, the protests have been to no avail. Significantly, none of the interest groups that will profit from the project is local. In addition, more than twenty projects are under construction or in the planning process in the region.

When the roads came, other opportunities for profit presented themselves to outsiders. Land previously cultivated by local farmers for subsistence or devoted to pasture and fodder for livestock was suddenly used for the cultivation of luxury and commercial crops. Accordingly, large firms vied with lesser capitalists in buying up and exploiting the newfound agricultural bonanza at the expense of local people.

The shrines of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Jumnotri, and other places sacred to Hindus became accessible to pilgrims and tourists in a day or two of travel by bus and taxi from the plains rather than the weeks of trekking formerly required. This new form of mass tourism taxed the capacity of the Himalayan environment heavily by populating the pilgrimage routes with hotels, restaurants, shops, and other businesses. At the same time and often on the same routes secular tourism flourished, attracting plains people and foreigners alike to areas featuring snow views and wildflowers, trekking, hunting, fishing, mountain climbing. The effects of the tourists on the environment and local people received little or no attention. The consumption of fuelwood alone is devastating because the demand for fires to cook food for the tourists and to warm their shelters far exceeds that of the local residents.

The beneficiaries of these kinds of development are almost exclusively outside entrepreneurs, their customers, and political patrons. Most of them are absentee landowners from the plains; a few are expatriate mountain people; and a very few are elite, educated, wealthy, plains-oriented residents of the mountains. On the whole local people are not even employed in the enterprises brought to the region by development. If employed, they are at most porters, milkmen, guides, or manual laborers.

The usual effect of these development activities has been to deplete the forests, to erode the soil, to dry up water sources, to pre-empt firewood, fodder, and building materials, and to co-opt or destroy much of the viable agricultural land and pastures. As a result, during the past twenty years, the migration of men to the plains has accelerated. Most of these men become part of an oversupply of urban unskilled and unemployed. In Uttarakhand villages most of the able-bodied men have emigrated, leaving families to run farms with depleted work forces and resources. Village life virtually ceases to be a possibility under these conditions.

The exploitation of the forest by outside entrepreneurs with governmental approval had been the source of conflict between Uttarakhand villages and the state forest department(thenUttarakhand was a part of Uttar Pradesh state). This conflict, which includes violent incidents, dates to 1821, when the British instituted the Tribal Forest Settlements in Kumaon. The conflict has been accompanied by denial of forest use to the villagers who traditionally depend on its products. The policies have been rationalized by the long-standing assertion that indigenous agriculturalists and herders caused deforestation by misuse and overuse, but these practices rarely could be observed. Trees were not cut for fuelwood; instead, dead trees, fallen branches, and brush were used. Branches were lopped for fodder, but trees were felled only to obtain material for house construction and the making of implements. It is true that new agricultural land was cleared, but unlike the situation in nearby Nepal, the practice has been closely controlled by the government, even as road building programs have facilitated the access by timber and charcoal merchants and other profiteers.

The special effects of the timber and charcoal contractors have been huge and conspicuous, but the neighbouring people are answerable for the deforestation. With the aid of Gandhian community workers, local labor cooperatives and small-scale- creator cooperatives were recognized by the villagers in each of the Himalayan districts of Uttar

Pradesh throughout the early 1960s. The objective was to let the local people share in the profit of development. As a result of confrontations between the villagers and social workers and the timber contractors, their employees, and forestry-department personnel, a series of incidents began in 1972 near Gopeshwar in Chamoli district. A local supportive group was deprived of consent to cut its small annual share of twelve ash trees to use in the creation and for tools. The government sold the trees to a sporting-goods maker to make cricket bats and tennis rackets.

The villagers were unsuccessful in their arguments to the government, they adopted Gandhian nonviolent resistance-they attached themselves to the trees to protect them from the axe. They were successful, and contract to the sporting-goods manufacturer was cancelled.

From that action arose the Chipko environmental movement. More than a dozen major and minor incidents of confrontation occurred during the 1970s. Each confrontation was nonviolent and successful. The successes led to increasing national and international publicity and recognition for the movement. Going from village to village, the Chipko activists prepared for each confrontation by informing people of the movement's purpose and inviting their participation. Workshops and training sessions were accompanied by rallies and picketing at auctions held by the forest department. The movement is diversifying its activities: it now sponsors research on issues of forest, mineral, soil, and water conservation and publishes the results. Reforestation and afforestation activities now foreshadow confrontational practices.

By the late 1980s, the movement had splintered into two groups that have broad grassroots support and advocate participatory methods which respond to local issues in the context of local social and cultural traditions. One group pursues a strategy that emphasizes ecologically sound development of forests by local people to meet local needs. Activities include small- scale sawmills and other forest

industries as part of the program of local cooperatives. This model is based on an acceptance of current modes of resource utilization with a new emphasis on conserving and strengthening the natural-resource base. Technology is viewed as a solution to poverty. The second group follows the deep-ecology paradigm of environmental management. It advocates that no trees be cut. It follows a more symbolic approach to attain its goals-fasting, ritual marches, pilgrimages-and accentuates its public profile by participating in conferences and mass media. The rebuilding of nature's productivity is seen as the solution to poverty.

- **SAVE THE NARMADA MOVEMENT :** The Narmada basin covers 94,500 square kilometres between the Vindhya and Satpura ranges in central India. Between gorges flanked by densely forested basaltic hills, the 1,300-kilometer-long Narmada valley contains large alluvial plains in Madhya Pradesh. To the west the Narmada River, which is sacred to the Hindus, meanders through Gujarat, widening into a 25- kilometre-long estuary as it flows into the Gulf of Cambay. Other than twenty- one million in the valley, mainly in villages, a lot of tribal groups, such as the Bhils and the Gonds, reside in the woody uplands.

  The Narmada valley is the site of one of the world's largest multipurpose water projects: The Narmada River Development Project, which involves the construction of thirty large dams and many small ones on the river with fifty-one main tributaries. The project will transform the valley and its residents and will increase food production and hydropower generation in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

  There has been no complete evaluation on the whole of environmental, social, and technological effects of the Narmada project, but the creation of dams and reservoirs will displace approximately one million people and will sink 350,000 hectares of forestland and 200,000 hectares of agricultural land. The Sardar Sarovar Dam in Gujarat, which is undergoing construction, is facing

main resistance from tribal groups that hunt and seek in the jungle canyons and from villagers who are being evacuated by the deluge from the reservoir, which will sink almost 40,000 hectares of land and 250 villages. So far the engineers have built only part of the dam and have dug only some 130 kilometres of canals.

The World bank is committed to environmentally sound development and has issued guidelines for resettlement and rehabilitation of persons displaced by the dams. Despite its commitment and operational guidelines, which assert that no affected person should be made worse off by a bank- supported project, the bank continued to fund the project. For various reasons, the Indian and state governments could not meet the resettlement and rehabilitation guidelines, and social and environmental issues went unaddressed. In 1992 the bank decided to cease funding the project, but the Indian government pledged to complete it.

Save the Narmada Movement began in the 1980s as a struggle for just resettlement and rehabilitation of people being displaced by the Sardar Sarovar Dam, but the focus has shifted to preserving the environmental integrity and natural ecosystems of the entire valley. The movement has used the plan as a sign of Indian development planners' attraction with costly projects at the expenditure of the environment and the poor. The removal of World Bank financial support was an ethical victory for the movement.

Field surveys in July 1993 revealed considerable anti project sentiment among the residents of the basin in Madhya Pradesh. In Gujarat displeasure exists among people whose homes and lands were expropriated without sufficient reward by the government. There was also worry about unbalanced compensation: the rich receiving more than the poor farmers for the same amounts of similar quality lands. The World Bank had noted these relocational problems, but little attention was given to them. By linking problems of environmental degradation of the valley with issues of economic equity justice, the movement forced the bank to withdraw from the project.

- **SILENT VALLEY MOVEMENT :** The Silent Valley, one of the few remaining undisturbed rain-forest areas in India, lies in the Malabar region, the least-developed section of the state of Kerala, at the southern end of the Western Ghats. Far-off from main inner-city centres or highways, the valley has experienced fairly little lumber cutting and almost not any of the peasant or tribal farming that characterizes the rest of rural southern India. Many rare species of plants, ferns, and endangered fauna survive in the valley. Throughout the early 1960s, the state government began setting up a dam for the Kuntipuzha River, which flows all the way through the valley, to produce hydroelectricity as the base for local financial development. The project offers a classic example of the dilemma between environment and development.

  The Kerala People's Science Movement (Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad) is a network of rural school teachers and local citizens that promotes environmental scientific projects in the villages. The movement recognized the apparent financial needs of the people of Malabar but contended that the Silent Valley project would make only a trivial involvement to local development. Thus the assembly opposed the project with a movement that brought into quick focus the natural consequences, specifically the possibility of destruction of species that had evolved over millions of years.

  Villagers in Kerala also learned that new industries and clear cutting of timber in the upper watersheds of the river were contributing to the disruption of streams and water supplies. The movement began to confront the plan that energy generated by the dam would help the rural people of Kerala. Most of the energy from the project was to be exported to industrialized areas of Kerala and surrounding states.

  The state government favoured the project, but other environmental groups expressed doubts. After years of activism, the movement asked the Indian government to sign upan advanced committee to inspect the project's ecological and socioeconomic

effects. The committee subsequently recommended the abandonment of the scheme, which the state government accepted in 1983.

The controversy over the Silent Valley project marked the fiercest environmental dispute in India and established a precedent wherever a major development project, specifically a dam, threatened ecological balance, Save the Narmada Movement cited the decision about the Silent Valley in mobilising support for its stance against dam projects.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What is eco terrorism?

Q2: Define the anti-nuclear movement?

Q3: What is the Bhopal gas tragedy?

Q4: What is JholaAndolan?

Q5: What is the Eco-Revolution Movement?



11.4 LET US SUM UP

- The environmental movements are an expression of the socio ecological effects of narrowly conceived development based on short-term criteria exploitation. The movements are instructive on how the resource-intensive burden of progress have built-in environmental damage and fiscal deprivation.
- The environment has emerged as an important focus of state-society conflict in many parts of the Third World over the last quarter century, very often accompanying wider demands for socio-political and economic reforms. Environmental goals are nearly always factors in wider campaigns for greater political and economic clout.
- State policies in the Third World are influenced by a variety of factors, especially the nature of domestic political structures and distribution of wealth and income.

- When the state's view of what is the correct procedure and weight of the distribution of the benefits fails to meet the expectation of local communities the result is frequently political conflict.



11.5 FURTHER READING

1) Haynes, J. (1999). Power, politics and environmental movements in the Third World. Environmental Politics, 8(1), 222-242. https://doi.org/10.1080/09644019908414445

2) Swain, A. (1997). Democratic Consolidation?? Environmental Movements in India Author(s): Ashok Swain Published by?: University of California Press Stable URL?: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2645699 University of California Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize , 37(9), 818-832. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/2645699

11.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: When an act of violence is committed against someone or some institution in the name of environmental defense it is referred to as eco terrorism.

Ans to Q No 2: The anti-nuclear movement opposes the use of various nuclear technologies. The initial anti-nuclear objective was nuclear disarmament and later the focus began to shift to other issues, mainly opposition to the use of nuclear power. There have been many large anti-nuclear demonstrations and protests. Major anti-nuclear groups include Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, and the Nuclear Information and Resource Service.

Ans to Q No 3: Bhopal gas tragedy implies the Bhopal gas leakage which happened on 3 December 1984. 40 tons of methyl isocyanate was released, immediately killing 2,259 people and ultimately affecting 700,000 citizens.

Ans to Q No 4 : JholaAandolan a mass movement is conducting as fighting against polyethylene carry bags uses and promoting cloth/jute/paper carry bags to protect the environment & nature.

Ans to Q No 5: 'Eco Revolution Movement' has been started by Eco Needs Foundation in 2008 from Aurangabad, Maharashtra state.The pioneer of the Eco Revolution Movement is Prof.PriyanandAgale and more than 20,000 youths are associated with this movement to strengthen this movement.



11.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q1: What Influences state policies in the third world?

Q2: What is the link between third world environmental groups/movements and transnational organisations?

Long Questions (Answer each question in about 350-500 words)

Q1: Write a short note on development activity in the forest area and its effect on local people.

Q2: Write a note on 'Save the Narmada Movement' and 'Silent Valley Movement'.

Q3: Discuss dams as a development strategy and the consequent rise of anti-dam movements.

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