UNIT 13 ENVIRONMENT MOVEMENT

UNIT STRUCTURE

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13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Know about environmentalism, and why there was a need to campaign for the environment
- obtain an overview of the major environment movements in India
- know about the emergence, issues about prominent environment movements in India

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Most often environmental movement is also referred to as ecology movement, which is a movement inclusive of preservation and green politics. Environmental movement is also understood as a diverse scientific, social, and political crusade for addressing environmental concerns. Environmentalists across the globe promote the idea of the sustainable managing of resources and curatorship of the environment through modifications in public policy and most importantly individual conduct. The movement is balanced on ecology, health, and human rights, take & cognizance of humanity as a participant in maintaining the ecosystem.

It is important to note that environmental movement is an international uprising, represented by very many organizations, ranging from the big to grassroots organisation, based in the nooks and corners of countries across the globe. Due to it's huge participation, varying and resilient principles, the environmental movement is not always integrated in it's objectives. The movement also incorporates few other movements with a more precise motivation, such as the climate movement. In its broadest sense, the movement is represented by individual citizens, professionals, experts, religious enthusiasts, politicians, scientists, not-for-profit organizations, individual environmentalists and more. In this unit, we are going to know about environmental movements, particularly in India, in more details.

13.3 EMERGENCE OF ENVIRONMENT MOVEMENT

The roots of the environmental movement are founded on the reaction to augmented degrees of smoke pollution in the atmosphere which was a fallout of the Industrial Revolution. The arrival of gigantic factories and the simultaneous colossal growth in coal consumption gave rise to an unparalleled degree of air pollution in industrial hubs. It was seen that after 1900 huge amount of industrial chemical expulsions added to the mounting load of unprocessed human waste. Owing to growing political pressure from the urban middle-class, the first significant, contemporary environmental regulations were formulated in the form of Britain's Alkali Acts, which was passed in 1863. Britain's Alkali Acts sought to control the poisonous air pollution (gaseous hydrochloric acid) released by the Leblanc process which was used for the production of soda ash.

It is interesting to note that the contemporary conservation movement was first exhibited in the forests of India, with the application of scientific preservation philosophies. The conservation ethos that started to emerge was inclusive of three core ideologies: a) that it was the human activity that impaired the environment b) thus, it was a civic duty to preserve the environment for upcoming generations, and c) that systems founded on scientific and empirically based notions ought to be used to ensure that this

civic duty is carried out.- Sir James Ranald Martin played a significant role in promoting this philosophy, publishing several medico-topographical accounts that confirmed the scale of impairment created through large-scale deforestation and waterlessness, and promoting expansively for the institutionalization of forest preservation actions in British India through the formation of Forest Departments.

The Madras Board of Revenue began local preservation activities in 1842, led by Alexander Gibson, a practiced botanist who methodically espoused a forest conservation program founded on scientific values. This endeavour was the first instance of state management of forests anywhere in the globe. Ultimately, the administration under Governor-General Lord Dalhousie announced the first permanent and far-reaching forest conservation plan in the world in 1855, which became a prototype that soon disseminated to other colonies, along with the United States. By 1860, the Department barred the practice of shifting cultivation. Dr. Hugh Cleghorn's 1861 handbook on the forests and gardens of South India became the complete work on the subject and was extensively used by forest deputies in the subcontinent.

Sir Dietrich Brandis joined the British service in 1856 as administrator of the teak forests of Pegu division in eastern Burma. At that time Burma's teak forests was under the control of Karen tribals. He hosted the "taungya" system, in which Karen villagers gave labour for clearing, planting and weeding teak estates. He framed new forest regulations and aided in the establishment of research and training institutions of which the Imperial Forest School at Dehradun is the most prominent.

13.4 OVERVIEW ON ENVIRONMENT MOVEMENT IN INDIA

The environment in which we are living plays a significant part in our existence. It is the responsibility of the individuals to safeguard the natural resources. Conversely, owing to certain reason or the other, there is a lot of misappropriation of these natural resources, in the form of land dilapidation, water pollution, air pollution, soil erosion and deforestation. All these dynamics

lead to worsening of our environment. There are occurrences where people have repealed and embraced non-violent action movements for guarding their environment.

A well-known fact is that environmental and public health is a continuing struggle within India. The first steps towards environmental movement in India was taken in the year 1964 by Dasholi Gram Swarajya Sangh, which was a labour cooperative founded by Chandi Prasad Bhatt. It was inaugurated by Sucheta Kriplani and established on a land bequeathed by Shyma Devi. This enterprise was ultimately followed up with the Chipko movement starting in 1973.

The most unadorned single event reinforcing the environment movement was the Bhopal gas leak of 3 December 1984. An estimated 40 tons of methyl isocyanate was leaked, instantaneously killing 2,259 people and eventually affecting 700,000 people of the area.

In contemporary India, one can witness an almost unobstructed exploitation of resources because of the enticement of new consumerist way of life. The balance of nature is disturbed. This has steered numerous conflicts in the society.

It is vital to reiterate that the environmental movements are a manifestation of the socio-ecological upshot of scarcely imagined development policies based on temporary criteria of exploitation. The movements disclose how the resource-intensive stresses of development have innate tendencies of ecological devastation and economic dispossession.

Environment crusaders have triggered micro-action strategies for the protection of natural resources and to make available the macro concept for ecological growth, both at the national and regional echelons. In the past five decades resource utilization has taken place at an extraordinary level. Rigorous agricultural and industrial creations have flagged the way for proliferation in demands for the resources which has ensued into struggles over natural resources.

Note that, these conflicts take a more serious turn when the industrial establishments consuming the resources face encounters from

communities, whose subsistence is reliant on these resources and are endangered by obliteration and over use of the resources. Such struggles, which are founded on the worsening condition of the natural resources, are leading to environmental uprisings of different intensities in different parts of India.

13.5 PROMINENT ENVIRONMENT MOVEMENT IN INDIA

Listed below are few of the prominent environmental movements in India that have taken place during the period 1700 to 2000:

- **Bishnoi Movement**

  This movement took place in the 1700s, at Khejarli, Marwar region, in the Rajasthan state. The leader of the movement was Amrita Devi who was supported by other Bishnoi villagers of Khejarli and neighboring villages. The aim of the Bishnoi uprising was to protect sanctified trees from being mowed down by the king's soldiers who were clearing space for making a new palace.

  Amrita Devi could not tolerate to observe the devastation of both her belief and the village's holy trees. She embraced the trees and prompted others villagers to do the same. About 363 Bishnoi villagers lost their lives in this movement. The Bishnoi tree martyrs were swayed by the wisdoms of Guru Maharaj Jambaji, who established the Bishnoi faith in 1485 and set forth philosophies that banned harming of trees and animals. The then king came to know about these happenings hurried to the village and asked for forgiveness, ordering the militaries to stop the logging processes. Soon afterward, the king demarcated the Bishnoi state as a protected area, levying the prohibition on harming of trees and animals. This regulation still subsists in the region in contemporary times.

- **Chipko Movement**

  The Chipko movement took place in 1973, in the Chamoli district and later at Tehri-Garhwal district of Uttarakhand. The Chipko

movement was led by Sundarlal Bahuguna, Sudesha Devi, Govind Singh Rawat, Bachni Devi, Gaura Devi, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Shamsher Singh Bisht, Dhoom Singh Negi and Ghanasyam Raturi.

The primary objective of the movement was to safeguard the trees that grew on the Himalayan inclines from the machetes of contractors of the woodland. Sundarlal Bahuguna educated the villagers by telling them about the significance of trees in the ecosystem which prevents the erosion of soil, cause rains and delivers pure air. Following this, the women of Advani village of Tehri-Garhwal secured the sacred yarn around trunks of trees and they embraced the trees, henceforth it was called 'Chipko Movement' or 'hug the tree movement'. The key mandate of the people in these demonstrations was that the paybacks of the forests (especially the right to fodder) should be given to the local residents. The Chipko movement gathered impetus in 1978 when the women confronted police firings and other afflicts. The then state Chief Minister, Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna, established a commission to investigate the issue, which ultimately ruled in favor of the villagers. Chipko Movement became a landmark point in the history of eco-development battles in the area and across the globe.

- **Jungle BachaoAndholan**

  The Jungle Bachao Andolan took place in the 1980s in the Singhbhum district of Bihar. The Jungle BachaoAndholan was led by tribals of Singhbhum of Bihar, as an opposition against the government's resolution to substitute the natural Sal forest with high priced Teak. Many called this movement as "Greed Game Political Populism". Later, this movement picked momentum in Jharkhand and Orissa.

- **Appiko Movement**

  The Appiko movement took place in 1983 in the Uttara Kannada and Shimoga districts of the Karnataka State. The greatest strength of the Appiko movement lies in the fact that it was neither motivated by a persona nor was it ever officially institutionalised.

Nonetheless, it did have an initiator in Pandurang Hegde who helped to kick start the movement in 1983. The Appiko movement rose against the clear-cutting and commercialization of natural forest which had begun to disintegrate the ancient livelihood system. Many consider the Appiko movement to be the southern form of the Chipko movement. The Appiko Movement was commonally known as "Appiko Chaluvali". The locals hugged the trees which were to be chopped by contractors of the forest division. The Appiko movement made use of varied techniques to raise consciousness. Some such methods were organising foot marches in the central part of the forest, making presentations using slide shows, folk dance presentations to communicate about the movement, street plays and more. The second focus of the Appiko movement was to work for the promotion of afforestation on stripped lands. The movement at a later stage also focused on the balanced usage of ecosphere by familiarizing the people about alternative energy resources so that the pressure on the forest can be reduced. The movement became a huge success and managed to stop the project of the forest department.

- **Narmada BachaoAndholan**

The Narmada Bachao Andolan took place in 1984 in the Narmada River, which flows through the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. MedhaPatker, Baba Amte, supported by adivasis, farmers, environmentalists and human rights activists became the leaders of the Narmada Bachao Andholan. The objective of the Narmada Bachao Andholan was to challenge the construction of a large dam across the Narmada River. The movement first began as a demonstration for not providing proper rehabilitation and relocation to the people who have been expatriated owing to the construction of Sardar Sarovar Dam. Later on, the movement shifted it's attention to the conservation of the environment and the ecologies of the valley. Campaigners also called for the reduction in the height of the dam to 88 m from the projected height of 130m. As a fallout of

this movement World Bank pulled out from the project. The environmental dispute was taken into court and in October 2000, the Supreme Court pronounced a ruling allowing the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam with a clause that height of the dam could be elevated to 90 m. Notably, the height was much higher than the 88 m which anti-dam campaigners had demanded, but it was certainly lesser than the proposed height of 130 m. The project is now mainly sponsored by the state governments and market loans. The project is to be completely ready by 2025.

- **Tehri Dam Conflict**

  The Tehri Dam conflict of the 1990s was located at the Bhagirathi River near Tehri in Uttarakhand. Sundarlal Bahuguna was the leader of the Tehri Dam Conflict which rose in protest against the dislodgment of town populations and environmental concern of the weak bionetwork. Tehri dam fascinated national attention in the 1980s and the 1990s. The main reasons for opposition include, seismic sensitivity of the area, submergence of forest parts along with Tehri town and more. In spite of the backing from leaders like Sunderlal Bahuguna, the movement was unsuccessful to gather enough widespread support at national as well as global levels.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1) What is environmental movement?

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Q2) When and where did Chipko Movement take place?

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Q3) What is environmentalism?

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Q4) When did First environmental movement start?

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13.6 LET US SUM UP

- The environmental movement in its broadest sense is inclusive of all and issues related to the environment, preservation, and biology, as well as protection of landscapes, flora, and fauna for a range of purposes and uses.
- When an act of ferocity is committed against somebody or some organization in the name of ecological protection, it is referred to as eco terrorism.
- The environment conservation uprising seeks to defend natural areas for sustainable ingestion, and keep it suitable for traditional activities like hunting, fishing, trapping and spiritual usage.
- Environmental preservation is the process in which one is engaged in preserving the natural characteristics of the environment. It can be done through a process of reforestation, reprocessing, or check on pollution etc.
- Again, environmental health movement goes back to the Progressive Era, and emphasizes on urban facilities like clean water, well-organized sewage management, and steady population growth.
- Environmental health is also inclusive of nutrition, precautionary medicine, aging, and other trepidations related to human well-being. Environmental health is also considered to be an indicator of the condition of the environment, or a primary warning mechanism to what may happen to humans.
- Environmental justice is yet another facet of the movement that took birth in the U.S. in the 1980s and sought to end environmental prejudice and stop low-income and minority communities from coming in contact with highways, poisonous garbage dumps, and factories. Alongside, the Environmental Justice movement also aims

to connect social and ecological environmental problems, simultaneously stopping de facto racism, and classism. This makes it predominantly suitable for the construction of labor-environmental associations.

- Bright green environmentalism in contemporary times is a popular sub-movement, which highlights the idea that through use of technology, good design and more considerate usage of energy and resources, individuals can live a responsible, sustainable life while relishing richness.
- Another sub-movement is the Light green, and dark green environmentalism movements, which correspondingly define environmentalism as a lifestyle choice (light greens), and endorsing lessening in human numbers and/or a renunciation of technology (dark greens).
- Deep Ecology is considered to be an ideological byproduct of the environment movement that views the multiplicity and veracity of the planetary environment, in and for itself, as it's prime value.
- Furthermore, the anti-nuclear movement resists the usage of varied nuclear machineries. The preliminary anti-nuclear aim was nuclear decommissioning and later the emphasis began to shift to other matters, mostly opposing the use of nuclear power. There have been numerous large anti-nuclear parades and protests. Leading anti-nuclear assemblages include Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Greenpeace, the Nuclear Information and Resource Service, Friends of the Earth, and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War**.**



13.7 FURTHER READING

1) Anjaneyalu, Y. 2004. *Introduction to Environmental Science. BS Publications*, Hyderabad, A.P. India.

2) Cunningham, W.P., Cooper, T.H., Gorhani, E and Hepworth, M.T. 2001. *Environmental Encyclopedia*, Jaico Publ. House, Mumbai.

3) Kaul, S.N. and AshutoshGautam. 2002. *Principles of Environmental Studies*. Daya Publishing house, New Delhi.

4) Rajagopalan, R. 2015. *Environmental Studies: From Crisis to Cure*, Oxford University Press; Third edition

13.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No1: environmental movement is a social or political movement, for the preservation of environment or developing the environment for the future generations.

Ans to Q No2: 1973, Chamoli district and later at Tehri-Garhwal district of Uttarakhand.

Ans to Q No3: Environmentalism also known as environmental rights is an all-encompassing viewpoint and social uprising championing the cause environmental protection

Ans to Q No4: Initial interest in the environment was a facet of the Romantic Movement in the early 19th century. And systematic efforts began in 1870s, in response to industrialization.

13.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions (Answer each question within 150 words)

Q1) What are factors related to environmental movement?

Q2) What are the parameters that denote the term 'environment'? Elaborate

Long Questions (Answer each question within 300-500 words)

Q1) What global environmental problems exist in the late twentieth century? Elaborate with the help of examples.

Q2) What is ecofeminism? What are some ecofeminist critiques of Western attitudes toward nature?