



50 Years of Chipko Movement

[Source: DTE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, 50 years have been completed for the [Chipko Movement](#), the landmark environmental movement that was started in Uttarakhand in 1973.

What was the Chipko Movement All About?

▪ Origin:

- The movement started in the 1970s in Chamoli, Uttarakhand when the region was facing **rampant deforestation due to commercial activities** by outside contractors.
- It started when the women from the [Himalayan](#) villages of Reni and Mandal hugged trees in the nearby forests to protect them from commercial loggers.

▪ About:

- The name of the movement '**chipko**' comes from the word '**embrace**', as the villagers hugged the trees and encircled them to prevent being hacked.
- By hugging they gave a clear message that "**We, our nature and us, are One**".
- It was a non-violent agitation to protect nature.
- Its biggest victory was making people aware of their rights to forests, and how grassroots activism can influence policy-making regarding ecology and shared natural resources.
 - It **led to a ban on commercial felling of trees above 30 degrees slope** and above 1,000 msl (mean sea level) in 1981.

▪ Key Figures and Leaders:

- **Chandi Prasad Bhatt:** He was a Gandhian Social Activist and Environmentalist active during the early phase of the movement.
 - He founded an organisation called **Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal (DGSM)**.
 - It played an instrumental role in shaping the movement and uniting villagers against unsustainable deforestation.
- **Sundarlal Bahuguna:** He was inspired by the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence and socialism.
 - He played a crucial role in organising the local communities and spreading awareness about the importance of forests.
 - His efforts were **instrumental in mobilising people**.
- **Gaura Devi:** She was a village woman who became an icon of resistance.
 - She led a group of women in the village of Reni to confront the loggers and physically embrace the trees, effectively preventing their cutting.
 - With that, **Chipko became mainly a women led movement**. This inspired women in the other parts of the country as well.

▪ Philosophy Behind the Movement:

- **Gandhian Philosophy** of **non-violence** and living in harmony with nature.
- **Empowering the local communities** and giving them a voice in **decision-making** processes regarding their natural resources.
- It aimed to challenge the exploitative practices of outside contractors and promote a more **inclusive and participatory approach** to forest management.

▪ Impact:

- It inspired similar movements in different parts of India, such as the [Narmada Bachao Andolan](#), **Appiko Movement (Karnataka)** and the [Silent Valley Movement](#).
 - **Internationally**, the Chipko Movement became a **symbol of resistance** against environmental destruction.
 - The movement also **influenced policy changes** in India, leading to stricter rules and regulations against illegal deforestation and the **rights of the indigenous communities**.
 - It is best remembered for the **collective mobilisation of women** for the cause of preserving forests, which also brought about a change in attitude regarding their own status in society.
- **Relevance of Chipko Movement in 2024:**
 - This movement continues to be a source of inspiration and a reminder of the power of collective action while tackling environmental challenges.
 - Its principles of **sustainability, community participation, and nonviolent resistance** remain relevant in the fight against [climate change](#) and the protection of our ecosystems.
 - It also serves as an inspiration for grassroots-level actions, **participation of women** and inclusion of **local communities** in the planning.

Other Similar Environmental Movements:

Name of Movement	Year	Place	Leaders	Details
Bishnoi Movement	1700	Khejuli, Manvar region in Rajasthan	Amrita Devi	Used to hug trees to stop their felling.
Chipko Movement	1973	Uttarakhand	Sunderlal Bahuguna	The main objective was to protect the trees on the Himalayan slopes from the axes of contractors of the Tehri Dam project.
Silent Valley Movement	1978	Silent Valley, Kerala	Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad	A movement against the Silent Valley Hydroelectric Project. In November 1983, the Silent Valley Hydroelectric Project was canceled. In 1985, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi inaugurated the Silent Valley National Park.
Appiko Movement	1982	Kantipuzar river in Singbhum district of Jharkhand	Tribals	Against government plans to replace the natural forest with Teak plantations.
Save Aarey Movement	2019	Aarey National Park in Mumbai	Medha Patkar, Arundhati Roy, and various NGOs	Against the felling of trees in the Aarey Colony for the Mumbai Metro Limited's (MMRLC) project.
Save Dehing-Patkai	Nov 2019	Dehing-Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam	Rohit Chaudhary, Adil Hussain, Randeep Hooda, and Joi Jadav Payeng	A movement against the decision by the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) to allow mining in the Dehing-Patkai Sanctuary.
Save the Sundarbans	2019-2020	The Sundarbans, West Bengal	All Assam Students' Union and All Assam Matak Youth Students' Union	A campaign to raise awareness about the threats to the Sundarbans mangrove forest after Cyclone Amphan in May 2020.

Read more: [Gaura Devi as Part of International Women's Day Celebrations](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. With reference to "Gucchi" sometimes mentioned in the news, consider the following statements:

1. It is a fungus.
2. It grows in some Himalayan forest areas.
3. It is commercially cultivated in the Himalayan foothills of north-eastern India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 2
- (d) 2 and 3

Ans: C

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