



# 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
<b>Bishnoi Movement</b>	1700	Khejuli, Manvar region in Rajasthan	Amrita Devi	Used to hug trees to stop their felling.
<b>Chipko Movement</b>	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.
<b>Silent Valley Movement</b>	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.
<b>Appiko Movement</b>	1982	Kantipuzar river in Singbhum district of Jharkhand	Tribals	Against government plans to replace the natural forest with Teak plantations.
<b>Save Aarey Movement</b>	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.
<b>Save Dehing-Patkai</b>	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.
<b>Save the Sundarbans</b>	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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