



ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS AND PEOPLE'S INITIATIVES

Dr. Prabhat Kumar Singh

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Avadh University, Ayodhya

ABSTRACT

The environmental movement (sometimes referred to as the ecology movement), also including conservation and green politics, is a diverse philosophical, social, and political movement for addressing environmental issues. Environmentalists advocate the just and sustainable management of resources and stewardship of the environment through changes in public policy and individual behaviour. In its recognition of humanity as a participant in (not enemy of) ecosystems, the movement is centered on ecology, health, and human rights.

The environmental movement is an international movement, represented by a range of organizations, from enterprises to grassroots and varies from country to country. Due to its large membership, varying and strong beliefs, and occasionally speculative nature, the environmental movement is not always united in its goals. The movement also encompasses some other movements with a more specific focus, such as the climate movement. At its broadest, the movement includes private citizens, professionals, religious devotees, politicians, scientists, nonprofit organizations, and individual advocates.

Early interest in the environment was a feature of the Romantic movement in the early 19th century. The poet William Wordsworth had travelled extensively in the Lake District and wrote that it is a "sort of national property in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy". The origins of the environmental movement lay in response to increasing levels of smoke pollution in the atmosphere during the Industrial Revolution. The emergence of great factories and the concomitant immense growth in coal consumption gave rise to an unprecedented level of air pollution in industrial centers; after 1900 the large volume of industrial chemical discharges added to the growing load of untreated human waste. Under increasing political pressure from the urban middle-class, the first large-scale, modern environmental laws came in the form of Britain's Alkali Acts, passed in 1863, to regulate the deleterious air pollution (gaseous hydrochloric acid) given off by the Leblanc process, used to produce soda ash.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary India experiences almost unrestricted exploitation of resources because of the lure of new consumerist lifestyles. The balance of nature is disrupted. This has led to many conflicts in society.

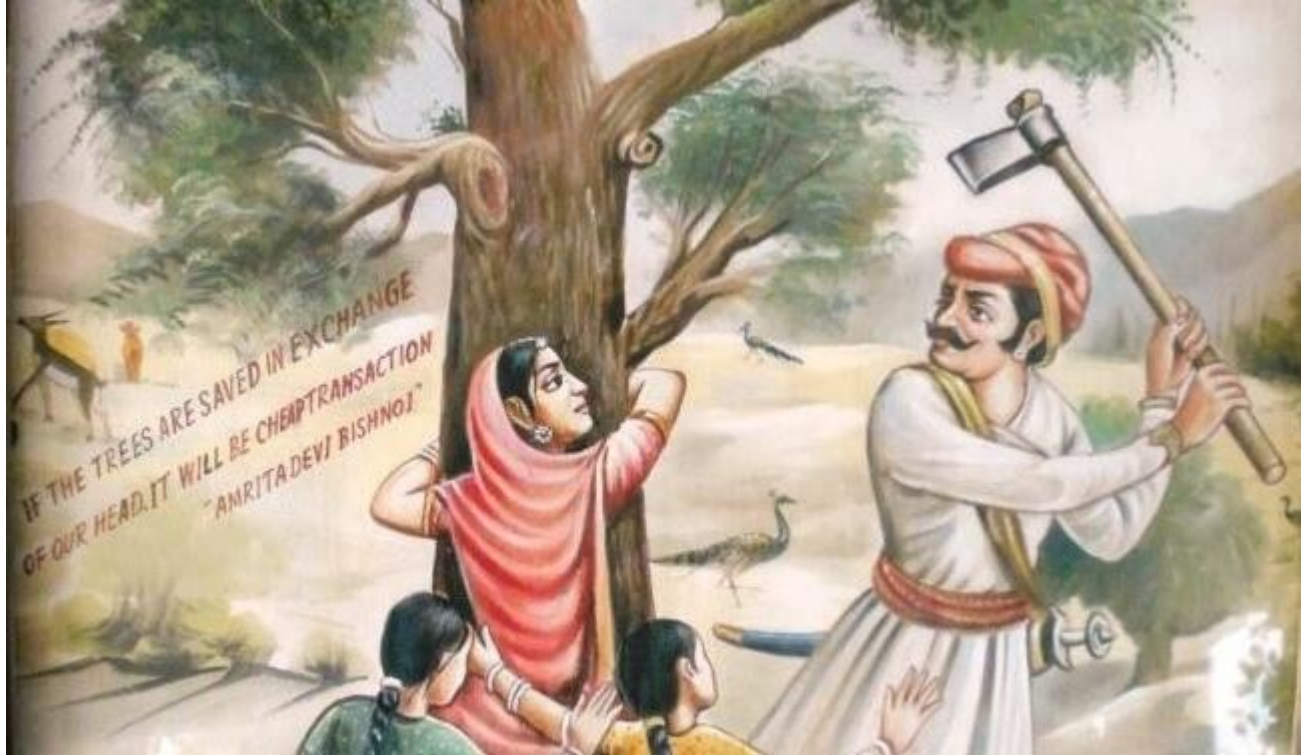
- An environmental movement can be defined as a social or political movement, for the conservation of the environment or for the improvement of the state of the environment. The terms 'green movement' or 'conservation movement' are alternatively used to denote the same.

- The environmental movements favour the sustainable management of natural resources. The movements often stress the protection of the environment via changes in public policy. Many movements are centred on ecology, health and human rights.
- Environmental movements range from the highly organized and formally institutionalized ones to the radically informal activities.
- The spatial scope of various environmental movements ranges from being local to almost global.[1,2]

DISCUSSION

Some of the major environmental movements in India during the period 1700 to 2000 are the following.

1. Bishnoi Movement



- Year: 1700s
- Place: Khejarli, Marwar region, Rajasthan state.
- Leaders: Amrita Devi along with Bishnoi villagers in Khejarli and surrounding villages.
- Aim: Save sacred trees from being cut down by the king's soldiers for a new palace.

What was it all about: Amrita Devi, a female villager could not bear to witness the destruction of both her faith and the village's sacred trees. She hugged

the trees and encouraged others to do the same. 363 Bishnoi villagers were killed in this movement.

The Bishnoi tree martyrs were influenced by the teachings of Guru Maharaj Jambaji, who founded the Bishnoi faith in 1485 and set forth principles forbidding harm to trees and animals. The king who came to know about these events rushed to the village and apologized, ordering the soldiers to cease logging operations. Soon afterwards, the maharajah designated the Bishnoi state as a protected area, forbidding harm to trees and animals. This legislation still exists today in the region.

2. Chipko Movement



- Year: 1973
- Place: In Chamoli district and later at Tehri-Garhwal district of Uttarakhand.
- Leaders: Sundarlal Bahuguna, Gaura Devi, Sudesha Devi, Bachni Devi, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Govind Singh Rawat, Dhoom Singh Negi, Shamsher Singh Bisht and Ghanasyam Raturi.
- Aim: The main objective was to protect the trees on the Himalayan slopes from the axes of contractors of the forest.

What was it all about: Mr. Bahuguna enlightened the villagers by conveying the importance of trees in the environment which checks the erosion of soil, cause rains and provides pure air. The women of Advani village of Tehri-Garhwal tied the sacred thread

around trunks of trees and they hugged the trees, hence it was called the 'Chipko Movement' or 'hug the tree movement'.

The main demand of the people in these protests was that the benefits of the forests (especially the right to fodder) should go to local people. The Chipko movement gathered momentum in 1978 when the women faced police firings and other tortures.[3,4]

The then state Chief Minister, Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna set up a committee to look into the matter, which eventually ruled in favour of the villagers. This became a turning point in the history of eco-development struggles in the region and around the world.



- Year: 1985
- Place: Narmada River, which flows through the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- Leaders: Medha Patker, Baba Amte, Adivasis, farmers, environmentalists and human rights activists.
- Aim: A social movement against a number of large dams being built across the Narmada River.

What was it all about: The movement first started as a protest for not providing proper rehabilitation and resettlement for the people who have been displaced by the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam. Later on, the movement turned its focus on the preservation of the environment and the eco-systems of the valley. Activists also demanded the height of the dam to be

reduced to 88 m from the proposed height of 130m. World Bank withdrew from the project.

The environmental issue was taken into court. In October 2000, the Supreme Court gave a judgment approving the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam with a condition that the height of the dam could be raised to 90 m. This height is much higher than the 88 m which anti-dam activists demanded, but it is definitely lower than the proposed height of 130 m. The project is now largely financed by the state governments and market borrowings. The project is expected to be fully completed by 2025.

Although not successful, as the dam could not be prevented, the NBA has created an anti-big dam opinion in India and outside. It questioned the paradigm of development. As a democratic movement, it followed the Gandhian way 100 per cent.[5,6]

4. Tehri Dam Conflict



- Year: 1990's
- Place: Bhagirathi River near Tehri in Uttarakhand.
- Leaders: Sundarlal Bahuguna
- Aim: The protest was against the displacement of town inhabitants and the environmental consequence of the weak ecosystem.

Tehri dam attracted national attention in the 1980s and the 1990s. The major objections include seismic sensitivity of the region, submergence of forest areas along with Tehri town etc. Despite the support from other prominent leaders like Sunderlal Bahuguna, the movement has failed to gather enough popular support at the national as well as international levels.

RESULTS

Environmental conservation is the practice of us humans saving the environment from the loss of species, and the destruction of the ecosystem, primarily due to pollution and human activities. Conservation is

vital in saving and helping both animals and trees as we are all dependent on one another for survival.

Trees convert carbon dioxide produced by factories into oxygen, which helps us breathe and respire. The loss of species, which makes them go extinct, would mean they are forever lost and cannot be seen by curious eyes, or studied by the scientific minds. Additionally, such loss or destruction of ecosystems would disrupt the food web, messing up the whole ecosystem in general.

There is much to do when it comes to rebuilding and protecting what's left of natural resources and the biodiversity within our ecosystems. Environmental conservation is an umbrella term that defines anything we do to protect our planet and conserve its natural resources so that every living thing can have an improved quality of life.[7,8]

Environmental conservation and preservation are two terms that are often used interchangeably, although they are quite different. Conservation refers to the responsible management of the environment and its



resources for present and future use. preservation, on the other hand, is a much stricter approach where the environment, lands and natural resources are put away, not to be consumed by humans, but are instead maintained in their pristine form. If the land is to be used by humans, it should only be utilized for its natural beauty and inspiration.

Conservation was brought up and championed by Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946). He was bothered by the methods used to transform the land in which the United States now sits, during the expansion period. Most forests were being clear-cut, meaning all the trees were removed at the same time.

Pinchot did not like this method as it saw the forests as a valuable source of timber. In his way of thought, the forests ought to have been managed in a manner that enabled both human developments and ensured the proper use of natural resources.

Conservation works in two ways. It is meant to protect nature by protecting vital resources, and it is also a way of living that works against the irresponsible practices of businesses and large corporations.

Green living takes away the power from those who have no interest in using their influence to promote the greater good of our world and choose to add to the problem instead. The more money we keep out of the pockets of big businesses who don't care for the environment, the more we can do for the planet.

Environmental conservation comes in many forms and reminds us to be mindful of daily choices. No matter how busy your life may be, it remains fairly easy to make small, yet necessary, changes for the good of the Earth.

If we all took little steps, we would make our way towards major progress. This can be achieved by paying more attention to what we buy and not using resources unnecessarily. We must also remember to recycle and dispose of chemicals properly so that the ground and bodies of water are not poisoned.

Consider every part of the environment, including the trees, the oceans, and the soil. The trees that help us to breathe also isolate greenhouse gases that would cause the Earth to heat up more quickly. They hold soil in place and naturally filter water that has been absorbed into the ground. The waters of the ocean are undeniably enchanting, but there is much more to it than visual splendor. When we look up at the clouds and feel the rain, the ocean is to thank for it.

Home to countless types of marine life and plants, the ocean is both a shelter and a life source. It gives us more than half of the Earth's oxygen supply

and stores large amounts of carbon dioxide to help keep the Earth cool.[9,10]

Finally, the soil stands as its own supporter of life by acting as a supplier of food and a filter of water. Soil that is of good quality produces crops that feed humans and animals.

IMPLICATIONS

Importance of Environmental Conservation

1. Importance of agriculture

Agriculture relies on the environment, and so do we rely on agriculture. A country's wealth could be measured on its ability to feed its people, although not all nations can produce agriculturally. Conserving the environment, with regards to agriculture, could mean preventing soil erosion, flooding and desertification, and could help its citizen have something to eat. Unsustainable farming techniques impact natural ecosystems and make farming impossible.

2. Importance to fishing

The various bodies of water, like the oceans, lakes and seas are another source of essentials such as food. All over the world, communities depend on seafood and related activities. Marine conservation is therefore vital in protecting human food supplies, human activities and marine animals. It saves more animals from extinction and also feeds land animals which depend on water. Some of the major challenges affecting the oceans include overfishing and pollution.

3. Importance to the climate

Human activities have a direct impact on the climate and a subsequent effect on all life. Global warming, linked to greenhouse gas emissions, which is an adverse effect on the climate, results in droughts, floods, rising sea levels and cases of extreme heat and cold.

Climate change is a result of human activities and has been linked to excess rainfall, extreme weather and a change in regular weather patterns. Conserving natural environments should be done to see these extreme outcomes reversed, making the world a better place. For instance, reforestation will bring about rainfall, which will facilitate agriculture.

4. Excellent water quality

Conservation measures ensure there is excellent-quality water for all. This, in turn, has both social, environmental and economic benefits. Economically, conservation of the environment boosts tourism, provides catch for fishing, decreases the cost of healthcare, and provides an environment for the ecotourism industry.

Socially, a conserved environment decreases the prevalence of water-borne diseases, increases the



quality of water entering aquifers, helps use surface water for recreation and increases the overall quality of life. Environmentally, a conserved environment preserves the diversity of water-dependent plants and animals and preserves the various natural services of aquatic ecosystems.

5. It leads to healthy air quality

Again, a conserved environment provides good-quality air, which also has both social, economic and environmental benefits. Economically, it boosts tourism, decreases healthcare costs and decreases the erosion of buildings and pavements.

Socially, it decreases the prevalence of circulatory and lung-related diseases and also increases the quality of life for the residents. Environmentally, it preserves water quality and preserves aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity.[11,12]

6. Preserves biodiversity

A conserved environment preserves biodiversity, which has equal benefits to the ones mentioned above. It preserves water and land-based ecosystems, preserves energy flow throughout the biosphere, provides for natural services, preserves food webs, and boosts nature-based tourism

7. It protects wildlife

Environmental conservation protects wildlife and promotes biodiversity. Maintaining a healthy and functional ecosystem helps prevent the extinction of certain animal species. If the environment is destroyed, some animals are forced out of their habitat, making it hard for them to survive elsewhere. It could also bring about human and animal conflict, which ends disastrously for both species.

8. It protects the earth

Environmental conservation definitely protects and safeguards the environment from certain factors that are wrecking the planet, such as climate change. We need to reduce the amount of harm we are inflicting on the planet as it is contributing to its destruction. If we do not conserve the environment, nature has a ferocious way of fighting back, such as extreme weather, droughts and heavy rains which are negatively affecting our lives, our food, and homes. We have to do everything humanly possible to conserve the environment, for the planet.

9. It protects human health

Environmental conservation will in turn protect and improve human lives and health. If the environment is destroyed, new diseases emerge, and species that could help produce medicines are destroyed. Wild habitats are particularly important as they prevent emerging infectious diseases from jumping from animals to humans.

The Ebola outbreak, for instance, is an animal disease that jumped to humans and is believed to have been spread to humans by bats. The same could also be said about COVID-19 which has so far claimed the lives of over 1.18 million people in 2020 alone. Simply put, we cannot be healthy in an unhealthy environment. We have to conserve the environment for our own health and future.[13]

TRENDS AND APPROACH

Methods of Environmental Conservation

1. Forest conservation

Afforestation and reforestation help in conserving the forests, which are responsible for trapping absorbing a huge amount of carbon dioxide from reaching the atmosphere. We should make it our life mission to plant trees as much as possible, both on public and private lands, and take care of them. Additionally, legislation that protects the forests should be highlighted, so that we help in environmental conservation.

2. Soil conservation

Soil conservation helps control erosions and improves the soil for agricultural purposes. We should plant more trees, protect pasture lands, and grow cover crops which regulate the blowing away of soils. We should also minimize the use of chemicals, use compost fertilizers and terrace farms on slopy lands.

3. Managing waste

Solid waste is produced by market areas, industries, homes, settlement areas and many other locations. We should therefore manage our solid wastes and help keep the environment healthy. Municipalities should also conduct programs that manage solid wastes, designating litter bins all over the towns and collecting the waste regularly. Additionally, we should teach ourselves how to manage our waste without littering all over.

4. Recycling

We should learn to recycle everything we can for as long as it is possible. Glass, paper, plastic and even metal are reusable, and should not be thrown away after its original use. about 90% of all plastic bottles do not reach recycling units and this is unfortunate. They are not biodegradable and about 500 billion of them are used every year. Reusing these bottles, containers, bags and more will help in environmental conservation.

5. Reducing our water consumption

Clean, fresh and safe water is precious and not easily available. It is therefore very crucial to save as much water as possible, and prevent water pollution, otherwise, it will be scarce in years to come. Reduce the number of baths, take showers, use the washing



machine only, do not discard waste in bodies of fresh water, and recycle, so that we conserve the little freshwater we have now.

6. Control pollution

We should regularly maintain our cars and leave them at home for as much as it is possible as they are a primary source of air pollution. Using rechargeable batteries helps the environment as we will not be prone to throwing them away once they are empty.

Composting also avoids littering, and not only does it protect the environment, but is also a reliable source of natural manure. Avoid chemical fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and insecticides that pollute the environment. We should control pollution in as much as it is possible, to conserve the environment.

7. Create public awareness

Make people aware of the consequences of our activities through the various means available such as social media, seminars and the traditional media. Also, discuss environmental protection with your friends and family members so that everyone is made aware of environmental conservation, ways to conserve the environment and potential consequences if we do not take care of the environment.

Promoting environmental conservation

1. Education

Environmentalism needs to be a bigger part of the education system, from elementary school on up. We should teach our young ones how to take care of the environment as well as the consequences of not doing so. For instance, create an event which sees school-going kids plant trees and take care of them for as long as they are in the institution. By the time they graduate, the trees will be bigger and will help the environment.

2. Talk about it

Simply talk about environmental conservation in everyday life, blogs, vlogs, books, and articles. Also, elect leaders who are aware of environmental conservation and see the need to conserve the environment. Talk about it even in churches, in seminars, in school, and in other locations. Promote the cause and talk about it everywhere, not just in limited contexts.

3. Engage the community

Engage the community in tree-planting exercises as well as events that see the environment cleaned. For instance, in Rwanda, they have what is called 'Umuganda', which is a community clean-up exercise, held each last Saturday of each month, where everyone has to spend the day cleaning the environment and those who do not participate are fined.

4. Ban plastics

Plastics are responsible for a dirtier environment. They ought to be banned and people should learn to either recycle or reuse them or fail to use them at all.

5. Create legislation that promotes environmental conservation

Governments should come up with legislation that promotes environmental conservation. This should also be done on an international level, led by international agencies such as the United Nation with its UN Environment Program.[14]

CONCLUSION

People should take initiative's like

- Stop smoking. If you don't smoke, you lessen air pollution and improve your lung health.
- Change the way you clean the house. Use sustainably made items or all-natural products that aren't made with dangerous chemicals. It's better for your health as it doesn't pollute the air, and is less harsh on personal items.
- Conserve water. Wash your clothes and dishes only after you have a full load. Save water by turning off the faucet, taking shorter showers, and make use of nature's water by collecting rainwater to water your lawn.
- Unplug things. If an item isn't in use, that doesn't mean it isn't requiring electricity while plugged up. When an item is unplugged, it's not using any power at all. This saves more energy for future use while being cost-effective.
- Learn to upcycle. There are so many crafty ways to reuse things you already have. Research to learn fun new projects that can bring new life to old items so that you don't have to throw them away.
- If you can, avoid using plastic water bottles and paper so often. Anything you do use that is recyclable, be sure to dispose of it properly.
- Contact government officials and support petitions and other companies that promote change.
- Be kind to others. Donate things that you don't use anymore instead of throwing them away. You avoid trashing valuable items while making it available to someone else for less money. On a similar note, purchase items that were gently used instead of buying new



material that has been mass-produced with no regard for the environment.[15]

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