

India has witnessed several environmental movements aimed at raising awareness and addressing ecological concerns. These movements have played a crucial role in protecting forests, rivers, wildlife, and natural resources from destruction due to industrialization, deforestation, and pollution. Below are some of the most significant environmental movements in India:

1. Chipko Movement (1973)

The Chipko Movement was one of the earliest and most well-known environmental movements in India. It originated in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand (then part of Uttar Pradesh) when villagers, led by environmental activists like **Sunderlal Bahuguna** and **Gaura Devi**, hugged trees to prevent them from being cut down by logging contractors. The movement successfully raised awareness about deforestation and led to a 15-year ban on commercial logging in the Himalayan region.

2. Silent Valley Movement (1978-1985)

The Silent Valley Movement was a campaign to protect the Silent Valley, a tropical rainforest in Kerala, from being destroyed due to the construction of a hydroelectric project. The movement, led by environmentalists and organizations such as **Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP)**, was instrumental in pressuring the government to abandon the project. In 1985, then-Prime Minister **Rajiv Gandhi** declared Silent Valley a national park.

3. Narmada Bachao Andolan (1985-

Present)

The **Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)**, led by **Medha Patkar**, is a movement against large dam projects, particularly the **Sardar Sarovar Dam** on the **Narmada River**. The movement opposes the displacement of thousands of tribal and rural communities and highlights the environmental consequences of large-scale dam construction. While the movement could not stop the project, it significantly influenced policies on resettlement and rehabilitation.

4. Tehri Dam Protest (1990s-2000s)

The construction of the **Tehri Dam** in Uttarakhand led to widespread protests due to its environmental and social impact. Environmentalist **Sunderlal Bahuguna** played a key role in this movement, emphasizing the dangers of constructing a dam in a seismic zone, the displacement of local people, and the ecological imbalance it would cause. Despite strong opposition, the dam was eventually completed, but the movement helped raise awareness about the environmental costs of such projects.

5. Appiko Movement (1983)

Inspired by the Chipko Movement, the **Appiko Movement** started in the Western Ghats of Karnataka to protect forests from commercial deforestation. Led by **Pandurang Hegde**, villagers embraced trees to prevent logging. The movement successfully brought attention to deforestation issues and led to conservation efforts in the region.

6. Save Ganga Movement (1990s-Present)

The **Save Ganga Movement** is a continuous campaign focused on cleaning the **Ganga River**, which has been severely polluted due to industrial waste, sewage, and religious offerings. Activists like **Prof. G.D. Agrawal (Swami Gyan Swaroop Sanand)** and other environmentalists have worked towards improving policies and creating public awareness about maintaining the purity of the river.

7. Save Western Ghats Movement (1980s-Present)

The **Save Western Ghats Movement** emerged as an initiative to protect the **Western Ghats**, one of India's most significant ecological regions, from deforestation, mining, and development projects. The movement has been instrumental in advocating for conservation policies and sustainable development.

8. Coalition for Environmental Justice in India (2000s-Present)

This is a more recent collective of environmental activists and NGOs fighting against large-scale industrial projects that threaten ecological balance. It focuses on issues like air pollution, river pollution, and deforestation caused by industrial activities.

9. Plastic Ban Movement (2010s-Present)

Various states in India have initiated plastic ban movements to reduce plastic waste and environmental degradation. Cities like **Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Delhi** have implemented strict regulations against plastic usage, and organizations are raising awareness about the harmful impact of plastic

pollution.

Conclusion

Environmental movements in India have played a vital role in shaping policies and increasing public awareness about sustainability. From protecting forests and rivers to fighting against pollution and displacement, these movements have contributed significantly to India's ecological consciousness. While challenges remain, continuous activism and government intervention are crucial for preserving the environment for future generations.