

Environmental Movement in India

- Nature of environmental movement in India
- Difference betn the environmental movement in India from that of West.
- Major environmental protests.
- Achievements & challenges.

Status of environmental movement in India

- It is a matter of academic debate whether there is environmentalism of the South. They believe that there can be an environmentalism only when society resolves the basic questions of bread & butter. & and only then society can move towards post-materialist values.
Some of the scholars in the North go to the extent of suggesting that environmental agenda of South is to extract funds & technology from North.
- According to Ramchandra Guha, above approach reflects ethnocentric attitude of North. We cannot say that there is no environmentalism in South. In fact the countries of South have always given importance to nature. Most of the countries in the East have been nature worshippers. However it is true that at present environmentalism of South is different from environmentalism of North.
Environmentalism of North is full stomach environmentalism & of South is empty stomach. Environmentalism of North is environmentalism of rich & that of South is of poor. Environmental degradation is a bigger concern

for countries of South because it intensifies deprivations & increases challenges for development.

Types of environmentalism

- Deep ecology

when environment is an end in itself.

- Shallow ecology

when environment is to be protected for fulfilment of the interest of people. At present environmentalism in South & in India is in the state of shallow ecology.

Ramchandra Guha also makes distinction between North & South in terms of strategies, concerns in the movements.

Strategy in North.

- There is a proliferation of political parties based on Green Ideology that influences the law making.

Strategy in South

- In South in general & India in particular environmentalism is guided by Gandhian techniques & even leftist ideology.

- In South & particularly in India, direct actions are preferred. So dharnas, strikes, jalsamadhi, fast are the common techniques.

Environmentalism in India is still not a prominent issue in electoral politics.

Environmentalism in North is for protection of animals, plant species.

But environmentalism in South is to protect the livelihood concerns of the people, their bread & butter, their hopes

Environmental movement in India

- Not only India but in all places environmental movements challenge the developmental strategy followed by the states.

The 2 prominent areas of Indian movement are

- i) Movement for protection of forests from commercial forestry.
- ii) Movement against construction of dams because of displacement of people & very poor state of rehabilitation & resettlement.

- Recently there have been popular protests against govt's policies of SEZs, mining leases as well as against nuclear reactors.

Some of the high profile protests have been 'Chipko Movement', 'Narmada Bachao Andolan', 'Appiko Movement', Movement for protection of Silent Valley (Kerala), tribal protests against POSCO Vedant.

Achievements

- Chipko movement has impacted the forest policy & gradually social forestry & legislations like Forest Rights Act could come into existence.
- Narmada Bachao Andolan also have partial success in forcing foreign lenders like World Bank to stop

giving funds though they could not force Govt. of India to stop the project. Even SC's verdict has been in favour of the project.

In one way the Land Acquisition & Rehabilitation Act can be linked to these grassroot protests.

- In India govt has also been a party to environmental movement. Govt. of India has been a vocal & quite vocal in shaping global environmental agenda.

- Govt has India has brought legislations like Environment Protection Act

It has started environment impact assessment for giving environment clearances. though at present

Nat.
Climate
Action
Plan.

Overall assessment of environmental movement

- To some extent environmental movements have been successful in generating public awareness.

- It has also been successful in getting the support of media & Judiciary.

However it has not been able to build non antagonistic relationship with politics & bureaucracy.

- Sumita Narayan has pointed following challenges before Indian environmental movement.

- Bureaucratic corruption in India.

- There have been opposition to specific projects but no opposition as such to the development policy of Govt. of India.

- According to her, environmentalism has to go beyond for fighting approaches against individual projects.

- Environmental movement has to strategise itself.
- Environmental movement has to take a position on development & environment because both are necessities in India.
- It also faces the challenge of economic globalisation of North.

- Corruption
- lack of transparency
+ people's

View of Sunita Narayan.

Madhav Gadgil's
Sunita

- Environmentalism is not about conservation of tigers. Rather it is about democracy. Without empowerment of the masses it is not possible to move on sustainable development.