

CHIPKO MOVEMENT OF GARHWAL HIMALAYA, INDIA



The 'Chipko movement' is a movement that followed Gandhian method of non-violent resistance though the act of hugging trees to protect them from being felled.

The Chipko movement started in early 1970 in the Garhwal Himalayas of Uttarakhand (the then U.P). The landmark event took place on 26 March, 1974 when a group of peasant women of Reni village in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand acted to prevent the cutting of trees and reclaim their traditional forest rights. Their actions inspired hundreds of such actions which spread throughout India. It led to the formulation of people sensitive policies which put a stop on the open felling of trees.

The Chipko movement, which was also a livelihood movement, created a precedent for non-violent protest. It occurred at a time when there was hardly any environmental movement in the developing world. This non-violent movement was immediately noticed worldwide which inspired many eco-groups to slow down the rapid deforestation, increase ecological awareness, and demonstrate the viability of people power. A quarter century later, India today has mentioned the people behind the "Forest satyagraha" of the Chipko movement as amongst "100 people who shaped India".

On March 26, 2004, Reni, Laata, and other villages of the Niti Valley celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Chipko Movement, where all the surviving original participants united. The celebrations started at Laata, the ancestral home of Gaura Devi, one of the leaders of Chipko movement.



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