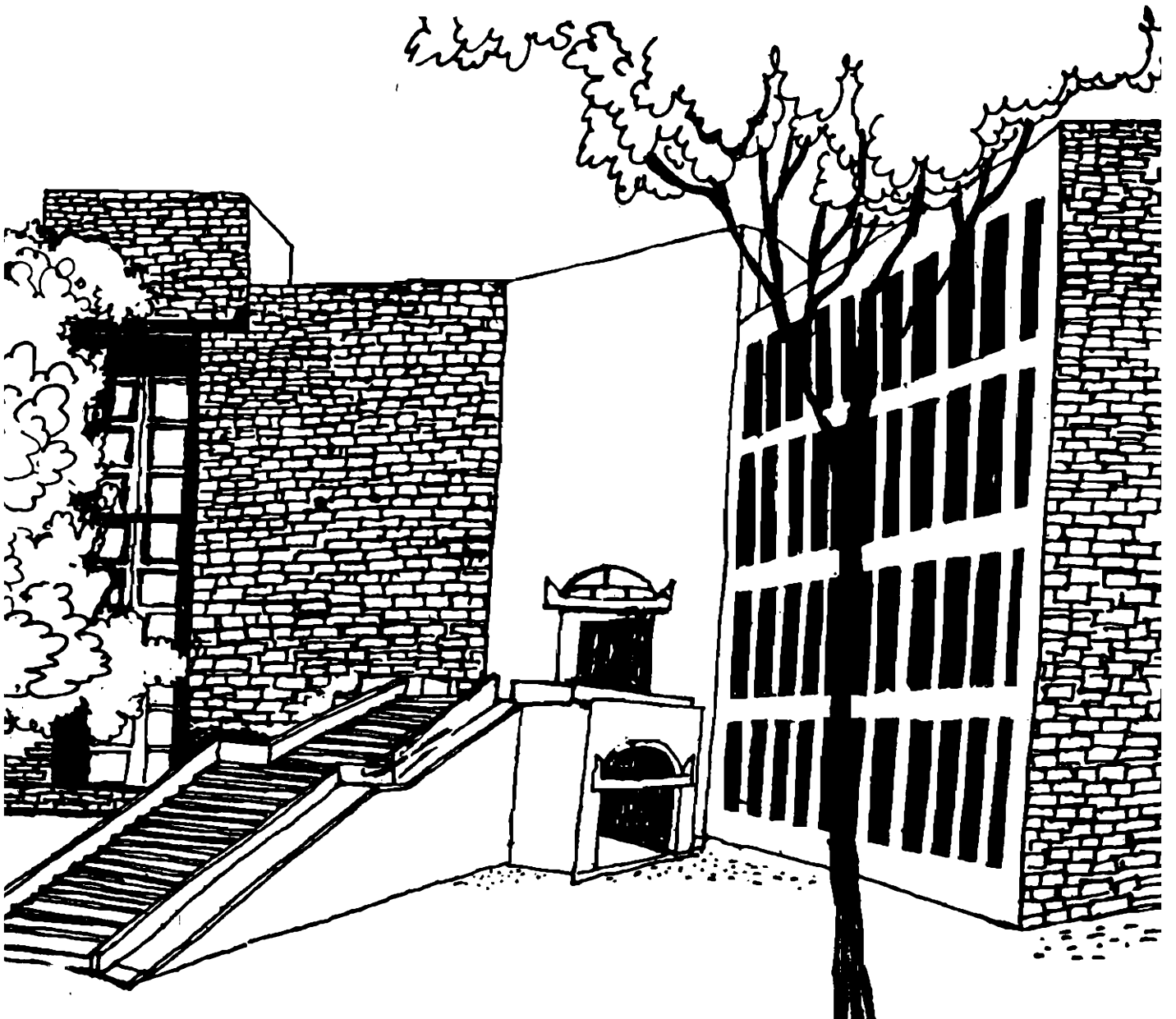




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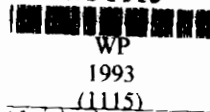


**AN ANALYSIS OF CHIPKO: A SOCIO-POLITICAL,
ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND ECOLOGICAL VIEW**

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AN ANALYSIS OF CHIPKO: A SOCIOPOLITICAL, ECONOMIC,
CULTURAL AND ECOLOGICAL VIEW

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AN ANALYSIS OF CHIPKO: A SOCIOPOLITICAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND ECOLOGICAL VIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Chipko movement in Garahwal Himalayas is now a worldwide known phenomenon which originated in the early 1970s. The movement took place when very little was being done for the preservation of environment in the country; and, policymakers in India and elsewhere in the world had hardly realized the significance of environment in generating sustainable economic growth unlike as of today. The Chipko then espoused the environmental cause--the conservation of forests -- by hugging or embracing the trees and thus not letting forest officials or associated parties cut them.

Interesting to note that when the rest of world was just beginning to think about the role of environment in economy, the people of Garahwal Himalayas were actually fighting a war against the Indian Forest Department for protection of their forest or perhaps their culture and regional economic independence. One is hence tempted to ask several questions: Why were the people of Garahwal against the Forest Department? Why people at large in Garahwal decided to stand for their rights and welfare despite various odds? What was so special about the people of Garahwal who realized the significance of environment for sustenance of life much earlier while the rest of the world was just meditating upon it? Why were the concerns for ecology and forests so deeply embedded in the psyche of average the Garahwali and so on?

Researchers in the past have tried to answer the above questions in different ways and have provided various interpretations of the movement. For example, Guha (1989) argues that it was basically an agrarian movement against commercial forestry in Garahwal. Some have identified Chipko with the feminist movement (Jain 1984, Center for Science and Environment, 1982, pp. 42-43). Others have viewed it clearly as an environmental movement for the sake of saving trees or ecology of Garahwal (Chaturvedi and Sahai 1988, Shiva 1986). The basic theme this group has in mind is that understanding of fundamental ecological utility of forest ecosystems in particular led this movement to veneration of trees. One other interpretation of Chipko is that it was a fight by local people against the Forest Department for entitlement to forest resources which, people felt, belonged to them (Raghunandan, 1987).

In this paper we argue that Chipko cannot be understood without going into the socio-political, economic, cultural ethos of the hillfolks. It is true that hugging or embracing trees was just a symbolic act of tree defence but there underlie deep layers of cultural and social ethos of Garahwali people which perhaps led people to respond in a manner they did to the crisis, not otherwise. The story of Chipko movement can be viewed as development of an human organization which cared for its long-term welfare. The development of this organization can be seen in terms of changing material and cultural endowments of the society which finally culminated into a vibrant leadership and gave birth to Chipko. A framework to analyze this is given in Figure 1. The two major assets that Garahwali people at large had were their cultural and material endowments. However, as times changed, various factors affected these endowments which intrinsically brought a change in the quality of

organizational capabilities of the society giving rise to increased level of concern for the use of forest resources in the society at large. The Chipko was basically an outer manifestation of these changes that occurred in Garahwal. In this paper we basically discuss this process of change that occurred in Garahwal Himalayas and pinpoint the crucial cultural values which provided a substructure for the Chipko movement.

[Insert Figure 1 around here]

CULTURAL AND MATERIAL ENDOWMENTS OF GARAHWAL

To fully understand the Chipko movement we will have to understand both cultural and material endowments of the Garahwali society and how these endowments underwent change over time. To make the description simple, we first discuss the cultural endowments and sociopolitical set up of Garahwal and how it changed over time; followed by the changes in the material endowments of the region.

Garahwal is part of Uttarakhand which comprises eight hill districts in Uttar Pradesh viz. Pauri, Chamoli, Tehri, Uttarkashi, Dehradun, Almora, Pithoragarh, and Nainital. The first five constitute "Garahwal" while the last three form "Kumaon". Geographically Uttarakhand in pre-British period stood as one isolated kingdom. The dense forest in the Bhabar and Terai belt in those days acted as defence against invasions from south. That is why influence of Muslim rulers in the region is minimal. Most rulers in pre-British period were indigenous people of the region.

The Katyuris were the first to organize Garahwal and Kumaon into one united kingdom in 8th century (Guha, 1989 pp.10-11). The gradual decline of Katyuris led to the breakup of kingdom into several chiefdoms ruled by different chiefs. For almost two centuries these chiefdoms existed and ramification started again sometime during 10th century AD. Somchand and Ajaypal Pamvar unified different chiefdoms of Kumaon and Garahwal respectively in 960 AD and 13th century AD. In 1768 AD Gurkha chief Prithvinaryana Sah conquered Kumaon and later Garahwal after 22 years, thus again unifying Uttarakhand. The British challenged Sah's authority and defeated him in the battle, this finally resulted into signing of the Anglo-Nepalese Treaty of 1815 AD whereby the British took complete control of Kumaon while Garahwal was handed over to the son of the last Garahwali ruler.

The Garahwali society has a rich cultural heritage which provided a strong cultural base for the Chipko movement. A study of these cultural assets of the society allows us to understand the substructure of the movement. Some strong cultural values of the Garahwali society can be described in terms of strong sense of tradition, closely knit societal structure, capacity for hardwork, a legacy of trust and faith, and so on.

The Garahwali society like elsewhere in India was divided into four castes including Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. The first three caste people were known as "bith" while the shudras were known as "dom". The intercaste barriers, in particular among the three upper caste people, were not too rigid and did not create social disharmony and tension. The untouchables or doms were not a badly treated lot as done elsewhere in the

country at that time. In fact, they were given special place to perform ceremonies. This developed a strong sense of respect between different caste communities and all communities co-existed peacefully. Thus coexistence and lack of orthodoxy prevented feudalism, ensured social traditions which promoted altruism and feeling of love for the fellow-beings. For example, there existed a strong sense of respect for elders and in return a strong filial feelings by elders to younger generation. People celebrated religious or festive occasions together and moreover they designed a number of such occasions so that frequent interaction took place among its members-- thus developed a participative culture.

Besides festivities, an average Garahwali is highly religious and attached to nature. Many rituals such as daily tree worshipping, sun worshipping, reflected this psyche of the average Garahwali. In addition, the concept of local God or Gramadevta, land-God or Bhumidevta, and personal God or Ishtadevata is very unique throughout Garahwal and Kumaon. The Gramadevta is worshipped in every village as protector of the village. Similarly, the worship of Bhumidevta signifies the veneration of land. The Ishtdevata is worshipped in each home. In brief culture accorded a high value to nature and its creations including trees, mountains, rivers, etc, and rituals related to them were zealously observed. Thus love for nature formed the very basis of subconscious mind of the Garahwali society at large.

The other important tradition of Garahwali society at large was to settle disputes among themselves through mediation of Panchayats or traditional opinion leaders of the village in general. Even in British India

people preferred to settle disputes among themselves. People refrained from going to courts and police mainly because of fear and the high personal costs of such involvements. An alternative system of justice from the court of God also existed and still exists in many parts of Uttarakhand as many individuals strongly believed in it. People who felt they did not get justice through human made courts went to temples of demigods and goddess who were supposed to provide instant justice. Sometimes, these demigods and goddess could appear through possession of any suitable person and spoke to people. Many such things still exists today and are of researchable importance. It is to be noted that whether such a system of justice worked or not is a controversial topic. But it is sure that the society of Uttarakhand, and for that matter the Garahwali society at large, was justice loving and people sought it as per their means and the final superior judge was god himself.

Resorting to such mystic ways of seeking justice through prayers to God and Goddess had very many beneficial effects in the society at large. The anger and unhealthy feelings as a result of nonachievement of justice through socially established means were thus released through pious means, not resulting into destructive activities. Nonviolence was thus deep rooted into the culture and society at large. People or individuals protested to miscarriage of justice peacefully with full faith in the almightiness of God and his system of dispensing justice. This developed a peaceful tradition of protest by and large. This is still true today. For example, the demand for separate Uttarakhand dates long back, yet so far people have protested only peacefully and no untoward incidents have occurred unlike in Punjab or elsewhere where things have blown up out of proportion of the real problem.

The concept of peaceful protest is age old in Garahwal since the days of monarchy, this was known as "Dhandak". The "Dhandak" played an important role in building the nonviolent character of the average Garahwali. It was a form of protest used by Garahwalis urging the monarch to remove corrupt officials or repeal laws which they felt were detrimental to them (Guha, 1989, pp 67-68). The mode of protest generally was non-compliance with the laws. The element of violence was totally absent in Dhandak, infact it was a democratic way of protest that was aimed at corrupt officials and not at the monarch. The Garahwalis felt that by staging "Dhandak" they were helping the king to tone up his administration.

Besides the above, the Garahwali society at large was a close-knit society. This is because Garahwal for centuries had remained inaccessible from plains, compared to Kumaon, due to relatively high mountain ranges. As a result the Garahwali society became inwardlooking and insulated from the outside world, thus the traditions and old heritage continued to remain intact. Closeness of relationship among the villagers and between people of distant far off villages, is not uncommon. For example, women who formed the backbone of the Garahwali economy always went in groups to collect fuelwood, fodder, and water from nearby sources of these products. Not only do they go in groups for collection of food, fodder, and water, but also they do various agricultural operation together through barter exchange of labor for labor. Going and working together was a necessity of the society as it helped families to do their work conveniently and economically. For example, collection of fodder and fuel in a group empowered women to fight against any attack on them by antisocial elements as well as wild animals. Moreover, the

mobility was through feet only. Even walking far off villages alone was dangerous or boring. People hence preferred always to go in groups or sought company. This made the members of society interdependent on one another, the fact which necessitated people to have good interpersonal relationships among themselves as no one could afford to do things alone.

Other important asset of Garahwali society at large was the capacity of its people to work hard. The extreme weather and geographical conditions required hard work; be it collection of fuelwood, or walking to a friend's place, etc. Hard working conditions and availability of pure air and clean water provided sound health to people, though the majority lived on coarse grains. Thus hard work was a precondition for survival in the hills. This tradition of hardwork developed by necessity is passed onto kids and young people.

Garahwali society was thus based upon the culture of friendship and strong interpersonal relationship. This was only possible when individuals in the society maintained their integrity and worked on the principles of honesty. The word of mouth thus was valued very high in such a society. In brief the strong sense of duty and faith in god and his justice system, close-knit social relations, capacity for hard work, and so on produced a society in which integrity of individual and his honesty counted a lot and society at large was justice loving, tolerant, and not prone to violence.

On one hand the culture of Garahwal was its best in the pre-British period, so was her possession of material wealth. The Garahwal or for that

matter Uttarakhand had been very rich in terms of flora and fauna. In particular the rich heritage of forests. Forests were considered as storehouse of food for people; it provided multiple benefits to people in terms of timber, nontimber, environmental and other cultural outputs from forests. Timber outputs provided wood for making houses and agricultural implements. Various nontimber outputs from forest met different needs of the society. These included fruits, flowers, leaves, herbs, etc. For example, pine-needles are used as litter for livestock and which in turn is used as manure in the agricultural lands. Similarly people got lots of wild fruits free from forests such as walnut, apricot, and different kinds of wild berries and tubers. People collected these from forest for free, thus meeting their biological demand for various body nutrients and vitamins. Besides forests provided them with fuel and fodder on daily basis.

In addition to the above tangible benefits, several intangible environmental benefits accrued to people which they valued a lot such as pure air and water. Many folk songs of Garahwal sing the praises of forests as God's beauty providing good health to all people. Forests also play a very important role in the water and soil conservation. They reduce the impacts of rainfall on soil as trees act as shock absorbers. Thus rainwater percolates down the land surface reaching into aquifers which are a source of clean drinking water. Further, leaves that fall on the ground in forests form a thick mould which help in retaining rain water. The root system of the trees binds the soil together and also allows water to percolate deep down into aquifers. Roots act like sponge, releasing water slowly, in the process it gets filtered and recharges aquifers. By this natural process the ground water

level is maintained and water flow is regulated thus reducing the intensity of floods. Forests thus not only provided the daily needs of the people such as fuel, fodder and environmental benefits but also enriched agriculture through conservation of soil and water. In brief, the whole life of the hillfolks was in equilibrium on a sustainable basis.

Because of this phenomenal dependence of people on forest they formed an integral part of sociocultural ethos of the society. People preserved and protected trees and also planted new ones. The idea of conservation and sustainability of resource base was not new to them. The use of forest was regulated by tradition and custom which prevented excessive fellings keeping the resource base intact. (Guha, 1989, pp 29-30).

Agriculture and forestry coexisted supporting each other. Agriculture provided food to people and people cared for forests and in return forests enhanced agricultural productivity. Livestock was also an integral part of system. Livestock primarily depended upon forests and provided milk, meat, and various other products for human consumption. Trade was very little, most was on barter terms with Tibet.

THE ONSET OF BRITISH: THE EXTRACTIVE FOREST POLICY

The arrival of British in Uttarakhand after the Anglo-Nepalese treaty of 1815 AD changed the course of history in this region. Before the arrival of British, forests of Uttarakhand were properties of monarch. Villagers, however were allowed to use the forest and forestry products. They grazed their cattle, cleared small areas for cultivation, collected fuelwood etc from

the forests. Villagers thus enjoyed usufructuary rights. The advent of British coincided with industrial revolution in England, and timber to them represented a cheap raw material. British hence encouraged clearing of forests in Uttarakhand. Licenses to clear forests were given to Indian and British contractors. This served a dual purpose, as the demand for Himalayan teak in England was met through this policy and more land was brought under cultivation--an added source of revenue for British in the form of agricultural taxes (Guha, 1983, p. 1883).

Two events--the starting of the Indian railways in 1853 and the Sepoy mutiny in 1857--accelerated fellings in Uttarakhand, especially in Garahwal. The beginning of railways in India exerted unprecedented pressure on felling operations in Uttarakhand and rest of the Himalayas. This in particular affected Garahwal more than Kumaon because the former had large stock of oak trees, which were very sturdy and durable and were most suited for making railway sleepers. Further the sepoy mutiny of 1857 acted as a catalyst to further accelerate the expansion of railways as British felt the need for rapid troop movements for suppressing uprisings of any sort in future. Further, not only the demand for railway sleepers was met from felling forests, but demand for fuel in railways was also met by cutting trees and using timber as fuel whenever coal supplies fell short (Guha, 1983, p.1884). The reckless fellings, finally took their toll on the forests which started disappearing at an alarming rate.

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Realizing the graveness of the situation British thought of regulating the felling and created the Forest Department with the sole aim to protect

the forests for long term colonial benefits. Since they did not have any expertise in this field they took help of German foresters. In fact till early nineteenth century the Forest Department was manned by Germans. It is quite possible that German foresters were unaware of the extent of dependency of forest communities on the forests as the overall administration of the country was in the hands of the British. As a result, the remedies they suggested to protect the forests did not take into account the possible fallout of the remedies on forest dependent communities. The first Indian Forests act was passed in 1865, but this did not satisfy the British, as they felt their interests were not sufficiently protected by this Act. Hence the second Indian Forest Act was passed in 1878. The passing of the 1878 Forest Act put the hillfolks in a awkward position as it curtailed the traditional rights of hillfolks like collecting fuel, grazing cattle, and availing other benefits. In short the Act imposed restrictions on rights of the villagers to use forests. The hillfolks had considered these rights legitimate and inalienable. They now had to take permission from British government or their deputed persons to use the forest.

Under the Anglo-Nepalese treaty of 1815 AD, Garahwal was handed over to the Tehri Raja's son while Kumaon remained under British control. The condition of Garahwal forests worsened, despite being in the hands of a Garahwali ruler. In 1885 the Raja of Tehri leased large tracts of Deodar forests to British for a period of 40 years. Having realized the commercial value of forests the Raja began to use the forests for his own benefits. It is interesting to note that the Raja continued with curtailment of traditional rights of villagers even after the expiry of the lease when the forests were

reverted back to his control. The erosion of traditional forest rights of hillfolks, which they considered legitimate and inalienable, by the British and Tehri Raja was resented by people for certain. But overt manifestation of this resentment did not take place until after 1900 AD.

Thus with the arrival of British on the Indian scene, the felling of forests for non-local commercial needs began. This disrupted the socio-economic life of villagers, subverted their centuries old cultural ethos and undermined their traditional conservation practices (Shiva and Bandhyopadhyay, 1986,p.2). Forests which villagers had held with great respect and reverence started disappearing at an alarming rate. The forest dependent socio-economic life of people of Uttarakhand, in particular of Garahwal, was worst hit by the British policies. Locals, who were using nontimber products, on routine, day to day basis, faced severe problems as NTFPs became scarce.

Women were the first to feel impact of the reckless deforestation and curtailment of forest rights of hillfolks. Both fodder and fuel, which were required daily to meet routine household and livestock needs, became scarce and women had to go longer distances to fetch them. This took more time as well as energy, affecting the raising of children and agricultural activities. Because of massive fellings, the soil building factors also started weakening, resulting into soil erosion and finally reducing agricultural productivity. Men began to migrate to plains, in search of work, as income from agriculture was found insufficient.

The little forests which British allowed at times to use did not help as

pressure on forests was too great. The management of Panchyati or civil forest also worsened as they were commercialized by government control. The socioeconomic life of Garahwalis came under tremendous strain and the age old relations between forests and people started disappearing. Thus the concept of community sharing tumbled down. The resentment over British forest policy finally came out in the open. People burned forests over which they had no rights. This prompted British to exercise more control in the name of conservation, protection and law enforcement.

People generally protested through peaceful means but at times they turned violent too. On 27th December 1906, 200 villagers attacked a group of forest officials, camping near a temple in the town of Tehri, but the officials managed to escape. Similarly on May 30th 1930, in Telari town of Tehri Garhwal, police fired on villagers protesting against forest policies, killing 17 and injuring several of them seriously. These protests were not given due consideration and nothing was done to address the genuine problems of Garahwalis, which was mainly due to the British Forest polices. The advent of the second World War rapidly increased pressure on forests as timber was needed for military purposes like constructing bridges, roads etc. This exploitation of forests during war time added to miseries of Garahwalis. The condition in the hills did not improve even after Independence.

THE POST INDEPENDENCE ERA: BIRTH OF CHIPKO MOVEMENT

The Post-Independence era is characterized by several changes that occurred on cultural and material fronts. The material endowments of the

region worsened while cultural endowment got exposed to various outside forces which started reshaping people's ideas and concerns about social issues.

Changes in Material Wealth

Even after independence, the extractive forest policy continued. Perhaps this may be due to preoccupation of Indian leaders and planners with the model of development they had chosen. This model called for large scale industrialization using western technological know-how. The same principle was applied to forestry--the blunder that costed us a lot. The attitude of planners to forestry was basically colonial; interesting to note that one of the first government publication was in the praise of the contribution of Indian forestry in second World War (Guha, 1983, pp 884-885).

The new National Forest Policy of 1952 was framed but on the colonial lines, fully endorsing the monopoly of the State over the forests. The major aim of this policy was to maximize revenue from forests in particular by supplying forest products to the industry. Thus timber based industries were promoted and over time these industries created a strong lobby for themselves in Forest Department to influence policy changes and protect their interests. So much so that in 1959 the Forest Department called an FAO expert for consultation. The expert criticized the slow pace of promoting industrially productive trees and advised the pursual of the same forest policy more vigorously. In response, the Forest Department embarked upon an aggressive forest policy which encouraged commercial forestry. The objective was to replace industrially nonproductive trees with fast growing and high yielding species. For example trees having commercial value and industrial application

like Eucalyptus were planted at the expense of broad leaf trees. Thus forest management was reduced merely to financial management of forests and revenue maximization from forest sector. Garahwal was also affected by the commercialization motives of the forestry. Large oak trees which took long time to reach maturity and other multipurpose trees such as Bhimal which supply fodder, fibre and fuelwood, were discouraged. Also Forest Department failed to consider the ecological damage occurring due to such policies. Further the forest policy reduced the supply of various nontimber forest products such as fuelwood, fodder, grass, seeds, flowers which people used everyday and on which livelihood of many poor people depended.

This forest policy adversely affected the climatic patterns in the hills, leading to frequent floods and droughts. For example in 1970, the Alakananda floods took place, causing enormous damage to humans and materials. Water inundated an area of about 100 square kilometers of land in the Alakananda valley. In addition to this six metal bridges and 24 buses were swept away by the flood, while 10 Kms of motor road was rendered useless. 366 houses and 500 acres of standing paddy crops were also destroyed. The loss to human and animal life was considerable, while loss to properties was estimated to be in crores of rupees. The link between deforestation and climatic imbalances was later confirmed by the Swaminathan committee report of 1982. The report urged the government to ban fellings in the sensitive catchment of areas in the hills.

Besides distortion in climatic conditions, the post-independence era witnessed a fast increase in human and livestock population of the region,

thus increasing the pressure on the limited economic resources available. The estimated human population of Garahwal was about 11 lacs in 1951 which rose to about 15 lacs in 1961, 20 lacs in 1971 and 25 lacs in 1981, and so on-- thus on an average the population grew at the rate of 2.6% per annum as against the national average of 2.3% per annum. The rapid growth in population led to more than doubling of population in less than 30 years or so. But life supporting systems such as food, educational facilities did not grow proportionately, thus the carrying capacity of the land was stretched too far. The concept of carrying capacity is very useful for engineers when they deal with machine or any mechanical system. The carrying capacity is allowed to exceed only rarely, and even for such emergencies inbuilt mechanisms are generally built to withstand shocks. Unfortunately the carrying capacity of socioeconomic and ecological systems is never calculated or given consideration and is frequently stretched beyond limits. Over population is one of the primary reasons for stretching of capacity of ecosystems to breaking point--and making population unsustainable.

This disparity in the growth of population and the various systems supporting population led to excessive pressure on the existing support systems, deteriorating their efficiency and carrying capacity. As already explained earlier the relation between the hillfolks and forests was a symbiotic one. Extractive forest policies in the pre- and post-independence era destroyed this relationship while increasing population made the restoration of the age old relationship difficult if not impossible. Added to this was the government developmental works requiring clearance of large tracts of forest land. For example in Kumaon between 1951 and 1971 some 20,000 ha of forest

land was cleared for construction of various dams both small and big. Though figures for Garawhal are not available, it will not be surprising if it exceeds 20,000 ha. The controversial Tehri dam if constructed will not only clear large forest land, but also submerge many villages in the catchment area and thus displace the villagers. So far the Government has not come out with any substantial rehabilitation package for the villagers likely to be displaced. The benefits of this dam like water, power etc, will largely go to the metro city of Delhi while its ill-effects like soilerosion, socio-cultural shocks due to displacement etc, will have to be borne by the poor villagers. Thus it comes as no surprise that villagers generally mistrust Governments grand development plans for the hills.

Changes in Cultural Values

The independence movement which swept India in the early years of twentieth century, before culminating in independence of India in 1947, had a deep and profound impact on the cultural endowment of Garahwal and rest of India as well. While aiming to liberate India from the rule of British, the movement revitalized the spirit of the masses which had been subdued due to years of alien rule. For the people of Garawhal, who were already reeling under the extractive forest policy of the British, the freedom struggle provided an opportunity to challenge the British and their forest policy. Many Garahwalis participated in the freedom struggle, prominent among them was Sridev Suman. The freedom movement mobilized the Garahwali people for a common cause, viz., to fight the British or rather their forest policy which directly affected their lives. The movement forged unity among the people and reduced the rigidity of caste barriers. The freedom movement also ushered in a degree

of equality in gender relations as women also actively took part in the freedom struggle. The movement strengthened the Garahwali people's respect and reverence for their culture and tradition. For the people of Garahwal the fight against the British was not only a fight for freedom but also was in defence of their own culture, especially their close relationship with forests.

Along with freedom movement came exposure to outside world as many males joined the army while others migrated to the plains in search of livelihood. The experiences of these migrated persons communicated back to Garahwal made the locals aware of the customs, traditions and socioeconomic conditions of life outside Garahwal. The vernacular press and radio programmes became popular during this time. Print media and radio helped create awareness among the Garahwali populace. Independence movement and exposure to the outside world made the hillfolks aware of their legitimate rights like the right use forestry products, right to education etc.

With increased awareness, education also came to the hills. The first college--the DAVPG college-- was established in 1946 in Dehradun. Later many colleges were set up and the Garahwal university was established in 1973, whose jurisdiction extends to all districts of Garahwal. The easy access to college education led to increased literacy rate and increase in the number of graduates in the region. By 1971, about 31.6% of the total population of Garahwal was literate and there were some 21483 graduates in the region. In the 1970's decade there was a tremendous increase in educational activities in the region. For example the overall literacy rate in Garahwal between 1971 and

1981 rose by 59% with a marked increase in female literacy rate by 87% while male literacy rate rose by 50%. During this period, the number of graduates increased by a phenomenal 201%. Increased literacy however failed to improve the quality of life in Garahwal. On the contrary drudgery increased due to depleting forest cover and scarcity of fuelwood. However increased literacy, in particular among women, contributed a lot in raising general awareness of the society of its rights, especially the right to use forests. It also instilled the people, in particular women and youth with zeal to stop the reckless destruction of their forest resources.

Thus on one hand, increased literacy, exposure to outside world independence movement, introduction of vernacular newspapers and regional radio programmes gave a new shape to Garahwali culture and courage to speak for themselves. On the other hand, the sarvodaya work by two European disciples of Gandhi Mirabehn and Sarlabehn set the stage for further increasing awareness in the hills. Sarvodaya work in Uttarakhand was started to help people organize themselves. It aimed at fighting alcoholism, educating women, forming small village cooperatives, so that villagers could make a living, without migrating to plains.

In 1947 Mirabehn set up a centre for cattle development in Rishikesh, called Pashulok. Her interaction with the villagers made her aware about the hardships of these simple and honest people. She realized the environmental degradation of the Himalayas, due to insensitive deforestation. In this regard she wrote to the concerned authorities, urging them to protect and safeguard the Himalayan environment. Before leaving for Europe in 1958, she wrote an

article for Hindustan Times entitled "Something wrong in the Himalayas". Here she described in detail, environmental destruction of the Himalayas due to Government policies. She also wrote against planting monocultures like Eucalyptus which was detrimental to the Himalayan eco-system rich in its bio-diversity. She finished her article with the following words "The forests of the Himalayas are the guardians of the northern plains, which in their turn are the granary of India. Surely such guardians deserve the utmost care and attention the Government can give them"(Weber, 1987,p.28).

Gandhi's other disciple Sarlabehn started an Ashram along Gandhian lines for educating women in the hills. She was a fearless and committed worker. She relentlessly argued with the British government during pre-independence days and later with the Indian government to sympathetically consider the problems facing the hillfolks. She also organized to women to fight alcoholism in the hills. One of her disciples was Vimala Nautiyal, who later married Sunderlal Bahaguna.

Sarvodaya movement or Sarvodaya work is the Gandhian concept of bringing about constructive change in rural India. Gandhi believed independence from British should not form the ultimate goal of freedom struggle, but it should motivate the freedom fighters to liberate India from the clutches of superstition, illiteracy, casteism, religious bigotry and poverty. Gandhi's Sarvodaya revolved around villages, its aim was the revival of the dying cottage industries and Panchayati Raj in independent India. Sarvodaya was to equip the villages to be self-sufficient, self-reliant and self-content, where people would settle their differences, among themselves, without depending on

modern judicial mechanisms. Sarvodaya workers, were required to guide the villagers in this direction.

Gandhi's concept of village was one which would be in total harmony with nature. In this connection he frequently cited the example of the Himalayas, which he considered as a living embodiment of nature's harmony, a place where man animal and trees lived in peace, without fearing anybody. The village economy was to be geared for self-reliance and self-sufficiency, using local resources. For example he urged the villagers to use soil enriching organic manure like cowdung, nightsoil etc instead of chemical fertilizers, which he said reduced the quality of soil. In short he talked of sustainable development, when the modern nations of West were unaware of this concept and its importance.

The Rising Social Concerns and Chipko Leadership

The socio-economic life of people of Uttarakhand disrupted by the British forest policy did not improve in Independent India, as the same policy was continued. People of Uttarakhand, found themselves isolated from mainstream India. Due to their social setup, women were the worst to suffer. The developmental works of government, like building roads, constructing bridges etc only added to their misery, as this was done by clearing large areas of forests. Even the jobs they got in these developmental works, were manual jobs, having no job security and paying very less.

Literacy, independence movement and sarvodaya work raised the level of awareness and people began to question the cause for their deteriorating

socioeconomic situation. It did not take them long to realize that the root cause was the indiscriminate use of forest resources in the name of development. This ruthless exploitation of forests reduced the land use options of the villagers as agricultural yield and forests are closely linked in the hills unlike the plains. This raised their concern for resource use and helped develop good leadership qualities in some Garhwali youths who later dedicated their lives to fight the causes of hill people. Prominent among these leaders are Sunderlal Bahuguna and Chandi Prasad Bhatt. Their selfless and service and commitment remains unparalleled. Sunderlal Bahuguna entered politics in 1947 and soon became General Secretary of Congress Party in the Tehri region. However in 1956 Bahuguna left politics to work directly with rural poor. This decision to quit politics could have been influenced by his wife Vimala Nautiyal, a committed social worker and a disciple of Sarlabehn. Bahuguna and his wife carried Vinoba Bhave's message of Bhoodan deep into villages of Garahwal and helped the villagers in whichever way they could. Bahuguna wrote articles in various newspapers highlighting the environmental degradation of the Himalayas. Sunderlal's honesty, integrity and total commitment, impressed Chandi Prasad Bhatt, who quit his job as booking clerk in a Transport Company, to work for the upliftment of the poor in the hills. A detailed timeline of events related to origination and development of Chipko is given at the end. However, discussion of important events is briefly covered in the text.

The Indo-China war of 1962, resulted in massive developmental works in Uttarakhand, as Government felt the need to facilitate communications and transportation for security reasons. The construction work did not provide

employment to local people, as the contractors brought their own laborers. In order to help villagers get employment, Chandi Prasad Bhatt organized them to form labor co-operatives. He and his colleagues formed the Malla Nagpur Labor cooperative Society Committee (MNLCSO) in 1962 and requested the Public Works Department (PWD) to give labor contracts to them. The PWD agreed to this request. Being a non-profit and non-exploitative cooperative organization the laborers were paid better wages. However vested interests, mainly contractors from plains envied their success and using their connections with Government officials, disrupted the work of co-operatives, by placing various procedural hurdles in their paths. For example only non-profitable contracts were awarded to cooperatives, forcing the co-operatives to reduce the wages of laborers. Eventually they abandoned their construction activities.

In 1964, the Dashauli Gram Swarajya Sangh (DGSS) was formed with the aim of starting village based industries. In those days, the availability of timber in Garahwal was through auctions held by the Forest Department. The DGSS entered the auctions, won some contracts for their small workshop, manufacturing farm tools and paid the workers fairly good wages. Between 1964 and 1968, DGSS won four contracts and generated reasonable employment opportunities in the hills. With increase in popularity of DGSS its membership and goodwill among the locals increased. Again vested interests, this time timber merchants from plains, resenting the success of DGSS, outmaneuvered DGSS at the auctions by bidding higher than DGSS. Later the timber merchants covered their losses, because of their higher bidding at the auctions through illegal fellings. DGSS being a non-profit organization did not follow suit, stopped bidding and subsequently went out of business. In order to provide

livelihood for the displaced workers DGSS started the collection of roots and other medicinal herbs, and sold them in the market. In the process they found that middlemen from cities, cornered the major chunk of profits leaving only a pittance for DGSS. The Sangh's pleas to give them a better deal fell on deaf ears. DGSS then started marketing the herbs themselves by cutting out the middlemen, and ensured good wages for workers. During the Alaknanda floods of 1970 DGSS actively took part in flood relief work and saw the miseries of the flood victims. On the basis of their of their first hand observations, the DGSS prepared a report and sent it to the Forest Department of Uttar Pradesh, urging them to set up a commission to study the environmental stability of the Alakananda region and ban commercial fellings. However this report was ignored and the fellings continued as before.

In order to increase employment opportunities for the unemployed villagers, DGSS set up a small resin and turpentine factory processing lisa, the sap chir pine. The factory was located at Gopeshwar. Here too DGSS faced problems as the supply of lisa was controlled and regulated by the Forest Department. The Forest Department reserved most of the lisa for the Indian turpentine and resin factory in which the Uttar Pradesh Government had a stake. In fact the Forest Department refused regular supply, of the required amount of lisa to DGSS. Lack of raw materials forced the DGSS owned factory to be shut down for a period of 8 months, resulting into increased unemployment. During this time an incident took place that eventually triggered the Chipko movement.

DGSS was maintaining a small tool unit, manufacturing farm tools. The

unit was dependent on ash trees for its survival. Ash was the preferred wood because of its lightness and durability. Ash trees were allotted by Forest Department. Like in the case of lisa, the Forest Department denied ash wood to DGSS whenever they got an opportunity. In March 1973, the Forest Department refused 1 ash tree to DGSS, but allotted 300 ash trees to Symonds Company (which manufactured sports goods). The trees were allotted from Mandal forest, which was 13 Kms from Gopeshwar, where DGSS was located (Weber, 1987, pp 40-41).

Villagers under the leadership of Bhatt decided to fight this blatant government discrimination. During one of the meetings Bhatt suggested the idea of physically hugging the trees to prevent them from being felled. He used the word "Chipko", which in Hindi means to hug. The Villagers wholeheartedly supported Bhatt's plan and a resolution to this effect was passed at DGSS office. A report was prepared and sent to the Government explaining the reasons, the aims and objectives of the proposed action against fellings. To diffuse the situation Government invited Bhatt to attend a Government organized seminar on hill development. But this failed to improve matters as Government refused to ban the proposed fellings in Mandal forest.

On April 24th 1973, officials of the Symonds Company encountered 100 slogan shouting villagers, when they arrived to fell trees. Facing stiff and determined resistance to fellings, company officials and their lumbermen went back empty handed. In order to break the deadlock, Government offered one ash tree to DGSS, provided they allowed Symonds Company to fell their quota of ash trees. DGSS rejected this offer and subsequent offers of ash trees by

Government.

Sunderlal Bahaguna praised the resolve of people, in resisting discriminating Government policies. He spread the message of Chipko in villages of Garahwal. He was joined by prominent Garahwali folk singer, Ganshyam Sailani, who sang songs praising Chipko movement. In a reconciliatory move to pacify the Chipko agitators, the Government offered the trees of Mandal forest to DGSS while allotting trees from Phata forest, about 80 Kms from Gopeshwar, to Symonds co. But Chipko activists rejected this offer. Having seen the havoc wrought by the Alakananada floods due to deforestation and owing to their own belief in forests being guardians of their socioeconomic life, the rejection of the Government offer was not surprising. Environmental conservation for long time benefits became their goal. It was from here environmental conservation and preservation took precedence over other demands of Chipko.

Chipko activists got in touch with Kedar Singh Rawat, a prominent social worker of Phata and warned him about the proposed fellings. Braving heavy rains a large gathering of villagers once again prevented Symonds Company from felling trees. The Symonds Company complained to the Government against Chipko agitation which prevented fellings, for which they had paid and obtained the necessary license. The Government advised them to wait, believing the agitation would fizzle out and moreover the license to fell trees was valid for a period of 6 months. Symonds Company officials, in order facilitate fellings quickly, met the villagers and requested them, that since the Company had legally obtained the felling rights, they should be allowed to proceed

with the fellings. In a democratic manner this argument of the Company was put to vote by the activists. However the villagers overwhelmingly rejected it saying their case for preservation outweighed the Company's case for fellings. Finally the company's permit to fell trees expired and they went back empty handed. The first year of Chipko agitation was a tremendous success for the activists, as not only forests were saved, but Government also ended the policy of discrimination in the supply of Lisa.

Despite pleas from Chipko activists, Government did not stop the auction of forests. The Government auctioned several forests in late 1975. One of the forest was close to the village of Reni located in the sensitive catchment area of the Alakananda river. In order to save the forest Chipko activists held various meetings and organized rallies to protest the proposed fellings. The communist party of the region also supported the demand of the activists to preserve the forest. The Government angered by the opposition to the proposed fellings (a source of revenue) decided to outsmart the villagers and the activists to ensure fellings in Reni. The Forest Department convened a meeting between Chandi Prasad Bhatt and the conservator of forests at Gopeshwar on the day of the proposed fellings. The Government also arranged for compensation to be paid to the villagers the same day for their lands appropriated by the army during and after the Chinese war for security reasons. The compensation was to be paid at Chamoli. In one stroke the Government prevented Bhatt, the motivating force of the activists from reaching the site of the fellings and made sure the male members will be absent for large part of the day. However Government plans failed to succeed, as Gauradevi an elderly lady in the village of Reni organized the women folk

and confronted the lumbermen. Despite threats and rude behavior the women refused to budge. Thus women on their own prevented the fellings.

Other important forests saved by Chipko activists include Advani, Salet, Loital and Malgaddi forest. Individuals played important roles by their courage in saving forests. For example Dhum Singh Negi, the village headman of salet forest, organized his men to prevent the fellings and fasted for five days to instill confidence in the villagers. Kunwar Prasan and Vijay Jardhari braved isolation and cold weather to keep a vigil on the Malgaddi forest. Their perseverance finally paid dividends as villagers too joined them in maintaining vigil. The saving of Malgaddi forest was the hardest because Government had managed to elicit villagers support by branding Chipko as anti-developmental and promising good schools, employment etc in exchange for the forest.

Thus what began as a protest against Government policies concerning ash trees became a highly successful grassroots movement that achieved its objectives through non-violence and peaceful protest. Chipko raised questions against the Government's developmental policies, like spending huge amounts on constructing roads, setting up industries, etc at the expense of forests.

Bahuguna's various footmarches took him to remote parts of Uttarakhand and the Himalayan region. These long treks confirmed Bahuguna's fond belief that forestry should not be commercialized. His argument was since trees take years to grow there is no point in felling them and then run around searching for alternatives. He infact called for total ban on all fellings irrespective

of whether they were meant for satisfying local needs or nonlocal commercial needs. This view was not subscribed by many Chipko activists and even Bhatt did not agree with Bahaguna's views. Bhatt was of opinion that fellings should continue, if meant for local industries. Government tried to take advantage of this so called rift in the Chipko tried to wean the people away from it. But however Government failed in its mission to widen the rift in Chipko. On the contrary Government ordered a moratorium on green fellings in 1980 as evidence of ecological damage started mounting.

CHIPKO: AN UNIQUE MOVEMENT

The Chipko movement in Garahwal was unique in many ways. One of the greatest achievement of Chipko was its nonviolent character. Nowhere did the movement resort to violence or intimidation to realize its objectives. The activists always maintained peace even when they did not succeed in preventing forest auctions by the Government. Gandhian principles of "Ahimsa" played a significant role in guiding the movement on a peaceful path but even more important factor was the peaceful, nonviolent and God-fearing nature of people. In short they were conditioned by their tradition and culture to be peaceful and nonviolent.

Unlike movements of today, Chipko was totally non-political in nature. It did not identify itself with any political party or subscribe to any external ideologies. As a result Chipko was spared the pitfalls like corruption and factionalism that plague present day movements and there was a notable absence of vested interests within the movement.

The Chipko activists used indigenous and novel methods to protest against Government policies and articulate their demands. The methods proved to be highly effective. In a region where majority were illiterate the only way to create awareness was through footmarches. Footmarches or Padyatras also have a religious aura about them. Pilgrimages in ancient India and in some cases even now is done by padyatras i.e on foot. Bahuguna undertook various padyatras to create awareness about Chipko. The hardships which Bahuguna undertook through his padyatras and his message of Chipko greatly impressed the villagers and they joined the movement enthusiastically. Similarly folk songs were used effectively to spread the message of Chipko. For ages folk songs in India has been a link for rural folks with their past. These songs have a very powerful message. Past acts of courage, bravery, deceit, martyrdom, etc are passed from generation to generation through folk songs. The noted Garhwali folk singer Ganshyam Sailani accompanied Bahuguna in his various padyatras and sang in praise of Chipko. This created a tremendous awareness among the people.

A powerful reason for the success of Chipko was that it was led by persons who believed in the concept of Sarvodaya and nonviolence. Moreover Chipko took place at a time when many of Gandhi's close associates and followers like Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Jai Prakash Narayan were alive. Both of them endorsed Chipko. Brute force could not be used to suppress the agitation because of its Gandhian connection and peaceful nature. Uttarakhand is also of enormous religious significance to Hindus throughout India. Hindu scriptures mention Himalayas as the abode of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Many Pilgrimage centers of great significance to the Hindus like Badrinath and

Rishikesh are situated in Uttarakhand. The rivers which Hindus consider to be holy also pass through this region. Thus the agitation had moral support of the majority Hindus making it that much more difficult for the government to take action, moreover both Bahaguna and Bhatt were respected by leaders like Mrs Gandhi and Mr Moraji Desai. Chipko took place at time when global environmental awareness was taking root and thus had worldwide support.

The Chipko movement was the first movement of its kind in Independent India. It helped create environmental awareness throughout India and forced the government to address environmental problems which the government had conveniently neglected in the past. It protested against Government's developmental policies which favored the urban minority. Development and Environment were considered to be independent of each other. Chipko showed the interdependence between the two. It highlighted the importance of ecologically sound development and forced the government to consider the environmental factor in all its developmental undertakings. It was truly an indigenous environmental movement.

In fact, environmental awareness raised by Chipko led people to take direct action against those who destroy environment in different parts of the country. For example on lines of Chipko, the Appiko (meaning to hug in Kanada) movement was started in Karnataka. The Appiko movement took place in Uttara Kannada district in Karnataka and was launched by the people of Sirsi and Siddapur talukas. The agitation protested against policies of the Forest Department of Karnataka. Like the people of Garahwal, people from these talukas depended on the surrounding forests for their livelihood. Commercial

Chipko also has its share of failures. In Uttarakhand many of the activists who took part in Chipko are a disillusioned lot today. The activists forced the government to abolish the contractor system. But this has been replaced by Van Nigams, which according to the villagers is no better than the contractors as the felling is still continuing. In the village of Reni, women who had once defended the trees against contractors are lamenting that they are not allowed to collect even minor forest products like herbs and leaves in the name of conservation. (Mitra, 1993). Their point is well made as they are unable to use the very forest they saved twenty years ago. Similar complaint can be heard from the women of Doongri Paintoli village. In fact the village of Doongri Paintoli still does not have a primary health center or a pucca road. All developmental works in the region, which would have benefitted the villagers like pucca roads, schools etc have been shelved in the name of environment while large developmental works like the construction of controversial Tehri dam is continuing. The Chipko movement apart from demanding a ban on commercial forestry had also demanded more rights for the locals to use the forest, setting up of forest based house-hold industries, providing techniques and finance for such small scale ventures and giving priority to local species of trees in afforestation programs. So far these demands have not been met satisfactorily. Good roads, health facilities, educational facilities, electricity, piped drinking water, employment opportunities etc available in the plains is still lacking in the hills. This has created discontentment and can lead to serious problems.

Chipko perhaps is even more relevant today than it was twenty years ago, when it first originated. The indiscriminate felling of trees is continuing in

various parts of country contrary to Government claims. This has seriously disrupted the socio-cultural life of tribals. The tribals are forced to migrate to plains where they are ruthlessly exploited and being militant by nature they take up arms. Opportunistic politicians for their own selfish interests misguide the tribals and the whole situation gets out of hand. Jharkhand is a glaring example.

In sum, lessons from Chipko are not only relevant to India but to all third world countries. Most of the Third World countries were colonies of European powers and had a background of exploitation and suppression like India. The model of development adopted by these countries depend heavily on capital intensive Western technology. This developmental model depends on non-renewable natural resources like forests minerals etc. Massive demand on forest destroys their regenerative capacity and results in scarcity of forests, leading to severe conditions of famine and drought. The chronic recurrence of famine and drought in Somalia and Ethiopia is due to the lack of forest cover. The recent floods and land slides in Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu and Kerala prove trees are the only insurance against such natural calamities. Chipko was a movement in this direction, its aim was to provide insurance in the form trees against natural disasters. Though the movement was confined to Uttarakhand its message was for the entire world. Chipko no longer exists in its original form, but its spirit lives on.

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TIMELINE FOR CHIPKO MOVEMENT

- 1815 British occupy the Kumaon region (Almora, Pithoragarh and Nainital) following the Nepalese war.
- 1824-5 Bishop Reginald Heber describes the environmental deterioration of Kumaon in his book "Narrative of a Journey" through the Upper Provinces of India. Increasing population, indiscriminate grazing of cattle are some of the reasons he listed down in his book.
- 1840s British entrepreneurs start penetrating even the higher mountain valleys.
- 1840-5 In Tehri Garhwal, state forests were leased out to contractors for exploitation. After the lease expired, the forests were reverted to the state which established its own Forest Department, which had its repercussions.
- local people resented this encroachment,
 - village economy dependent on forests were destroyed due to excessive logging and the severity of the new laws,
 - exodus of able-bodied males to the plains in search of livelihood started,
 - out of resentment and hatred towards the forest officials, locals cut trees whenever possible and refused to extinguish forest fires.
- 1845 Improved system of floating logs down the Ganga and its tributaries was developed.
- 1850s District officials report that the lowland forests have lost their best timber due to excessive felling.
- 1850 An English man named Wilson obtained lease to exploit all the forests of the kingdom of Tehri Garhwal, for an annual rent of Rs.400.
- 1850 Railways in India experience phenomenal growth supplies onwards of fuel and timber met from Uttarakhand.
- 1864 Impressed by Wilson's successful timber business, British rulers in the North-Western provinces took a lease of the forests for twenty years and engaged Wilson to exploit the forests for them.
- 1865 Indian Forest Act was passed. Till then no system of conservation was in force in the British areas, as a result of which valuable forests were wantonly destroyed by government contractors.

- 1878 The 1865 Act proved to be inadequate and hence another Forest Act was passed in 1878. With the passing of the Indian Forests Act of 1878, most of the forests were brought under the control of the State Forest Department gradually. Forests were classified as reserved and protected.
- Reserved: Because of their vital role in national economy, only well defined and limited private rights were recognized.
- Protected: Private rights were upheld and restrictions were only imposed in the interests of the right holders themselves.
- 1906 Due to the loss of their traditional rights to use forests, the morning of 28th December witnessed 200 villagers armed with sticks attack officials inspecting a forest surrounding the Chandrabadni Temple near the town of Tehri. The Conservator of forest lost his gun and tent, but was lucky to escape with his life.
- 1907 The Governor of the United provinces at the Bareilly Durbar declares the government was taking over the hill forests for their protection rather than for the purpose of commerce.
- 1916 Sridev Suman whose ideas had a profound impact on Sunderlal Bahuguna is born.
- 1930 May 30th: People gathered at Tiliari in Tehri Garhwal to protest against forest policies. State police fires on them. Seventeen killed and many seriously wounded.
- 1947 Mirabehn, Gandhi's disciple sets up 'Pashulok', a centre for cattle development, at Rishikesh. Sunderlal Bahuguna enters politics.
- 1949 August 1st: Tehri Garhwal became an integral part of the Union of India.
- 1956 Sunderlal Bahuguna leaves party politics to work directly with the rural poor. He sets up the Navjeevan Ashram. This Ashram was later used as the Chipko Information Centre, by the Chipko activists.
- 1958 Before returning to Europe Mirabehn writes an insightful article entitled "Something Wrong in the Himalaya" for the Hindustan Times. Here she wrote about the perils of deforestation, commercial forestry and the cause of floods in the Plains.
- 1956-60 Sunderlal Bahuguna started a school at his ashram and organized a cooperative aimed at securing road building jobs for the locals.

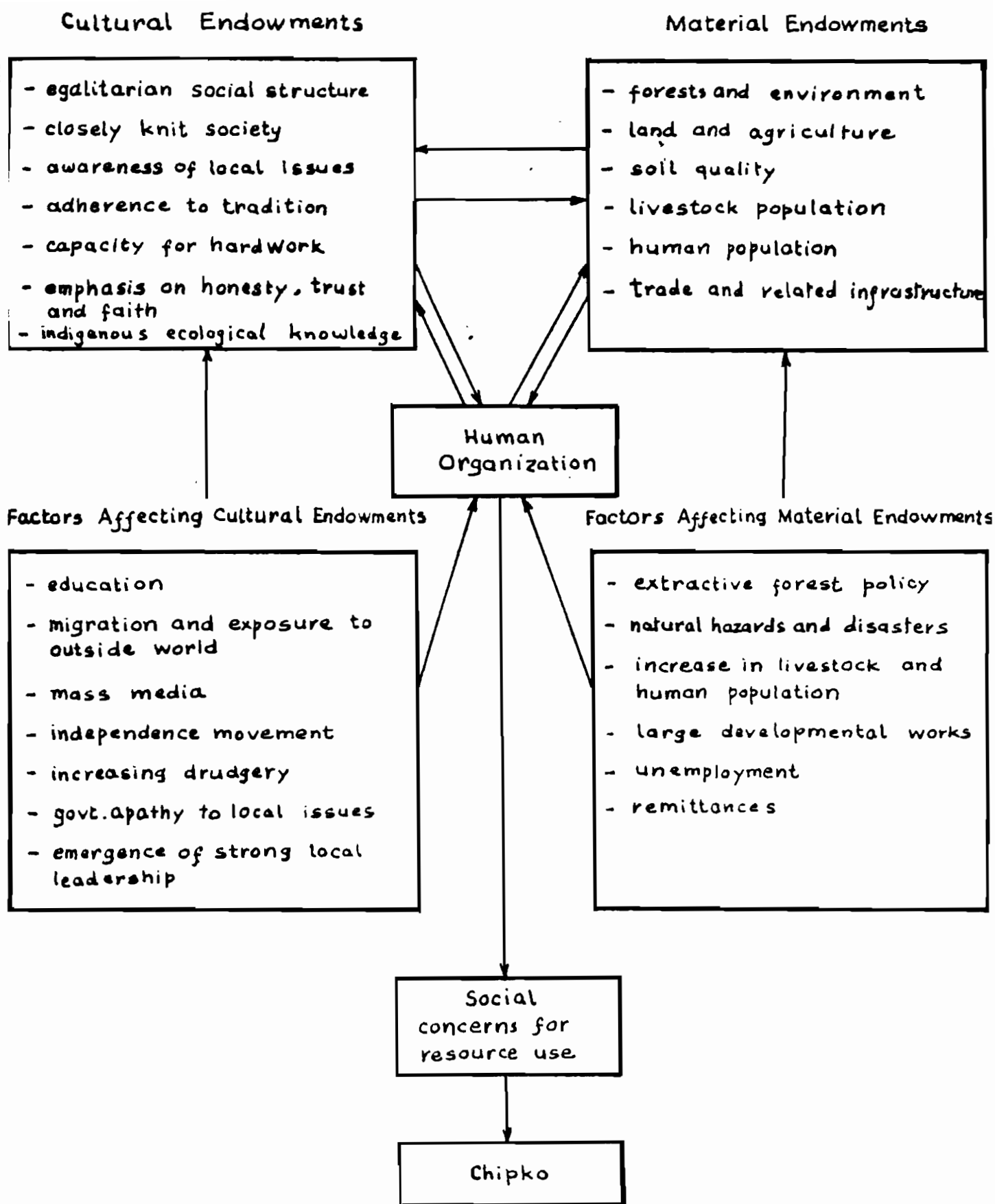
- 1960 Vinoba Bhave asked Sunderlal Bahuguna to take the message of Gram Swaraj to the Republics. Sunderlal Bahuguna and others spread this message from village to village.
- 1962 After the Chinese invasion, development works were accelerated. Forests were cleared to build army cantonments.
- 1963 Sunderlal Bahuguna writes an article for the Hindustan Times, pointing out the condition of the Himalayan Forests and says this could lead to floods.
- 1964 Chandi Prasad Bhatt and others form the Dashauli Gram Swarajya Sangh (DGSS), with the aim of starting village industries based on natural resources of the forests. Two years earlier Bhatt had organized the laborers and managed to get a fair deal for them from the labor contractors.
- 1964-68 The DGSS made a fairly good start. Timber was sold by auctioning the forest lot, by the UP Forest Department. The highest bidder got the timber. Despite having no resources, the Sangh managed to win four contracts with the help of the goodwill of the people, donations, and interest free loans. Profits were made and workers received lot more than they would have under an outside contractor. The contractors however managed to outbid the Sangh and made up the difference through illegal selling.
- 1968 May 30th: A memorial was erected to the people killed in Tehri Garhwal the same day, 38 years ago. This day was declared a forest day.
- 1969 May 30th: Sunderlal Bahuguna and other Sarvodaya workers take a pledge to protect the forests.
- 1969 The Sangh turned to collecting medicinal herbs from the mountains, to ensure a livelihood for the workers. Exploitative middlemen were cut out and the Sangh started marketing the herbs themselves to the benefit of the workers.
- 1970 The disastrous flooding of the Alaknanda floods leaves many dead and property worth crores destroyed.
- 1970 DGSS and other Gram Swarajya Sanghs decide to set up small resin and turpentine factories processing resin (the sap of the chirpine). The government however was not forthcoming with the resin, as most of the resin was earmarked for the Indian Resin and Turpentine factory in Bareilly. Moreover, even the little resin provided to DGSS was at a 30% higher rate, than the rate charged from the Indian resin and turpentine factory.
- 1971 October: Villagers demonstrated at Gopeshwar against the UP Forest Departments policy of supplying resin. Due to lack of resin, factories had to be shut down.

- 1972 November 9th: National Herald (Lucknow) carries report of the work done by the Sangh and the hardships faced by them, because of government policy concerning resin.
- 1972 Swami Chidanandji of Rishikesh, undertook a month long tour to bless the people in their struggle against the Forest Department.
- 1972 December 11th: Rallies were organized at Uttarkashi and Gopeshwar, to protest against government policies concerning resin.
- 1973 At the beginning of the year Forest Department refused to provide a small amount of Ash trees to the DGSS, for their small wood craft unit, but allotted 300 Ash trees from the Mandal forest, 13 Km from Gopeshwar to Symonds Company, which manufactured sporting goods. The villagers decided to fight.
- 1973 March 27th: At one of the meetings of the villagers, Chandi Prasad Bhatt vows to hug the trees, to prevent them from being felled. The word Chipko (Hug) is used for the first time.
- 1973 April 24th: Agents of the Symonds Company, seeing huge gathering in Mandal forest leave without felling the trees. DGSS demand the inclusion of local people in Forest Administration and Management. Sunderlal Bahuguna and folk singer Ghanshyam Baidani take this message to the villages.
- 1973 In mid May, Government informs DGSS, that Mandal forest Ash trees would be allotted to it and Symonds Company would be given Ash trees from Phata Forest, 80 Kms north west of Gopeshwar.
- 1973 June 24th: DGSS workers and other activists descend on Phata Forest to prevent the felling of trees. Government advises the Company to wait, as the contract was valid 6 months.
- 1973 July to December: Company officials move from village to village explaining that since they had paid money for the trees, they should be allowed to cut the trees. The villagers however were adamant. On 31st December, Company's permit expired. During this time set out on a 'Padyatra' to communicate with the villagers and to spread the message of Chipko.
- 1973 November: Government decides to auction the Reni Forest. Chandi Prasad Bhatt pleads against it, but the Government auctions the forest.
- 1973-74 November to March: Chandi Prasad Bhatt organizes the villagers and they decide to protect the Reni Forest.
- 1974 March 26th: Government requests Bhatt to stay in Gopeshwar for talks and also announces compensation will be paid on 26th, for those who lost their land to the Army during the Chinese invasion.

- The payments Bhatt out of their way the Company laborers
- 1974 March 31st: The biggest demonstration in hills were held against felling. The Reni Forest was finally saved.
- 1974 May 25th: Sunderlal Bahuguna and several young people start out on the historic Uttarakhand traversing Padyatra. During the Padyatra, they explained the need for conserving forests to the villagers.
- 1974 October 3rd: Sunderlal Bahuguna entered the auction hall (where forests of Dehradun, Nainital, Kotdwara, Uttarkashi and Tehri were to be auctioned) and made an impassioned plea for the halting of processing. His appeal however went unheeded, and he decided to undergo an indefinite fast at the nearby Hanuman temple. The Government decided to set up a Committee to enquire into the demands of the Chipko movement and a moratorium on auctions was imposed. Government also made raw materials more readily available to the villagers as a result of which local cooperatives flourished.
- 1975 March 31st: First anniversary of the successful Reni struggle was celebrated on the banks of the Rishi Ganga river. Sarvodaya leaders, said Chipko would recommence to save the Shital forest on the banks of the river Mandakini, which had been auctioned.
- 1975 June 5th: Large demonstration was held by villagers in Gopeshwar to protest the abuse of the forest by Government officials to decorate their Gardens. The District Magistrate publicly apologized and assured the villagers their rights would not be infringed.
- 1975-76 Sunderlal Bahuguna spent most of his time in long padyatras, educating the people about the need for environmental protection. He saw that local cooperatives were felling trees for their industries, and called for a total ban on commercial felling. Sarvodaya workers started reforestation programmes.
- 1977 At the international Vegetarian Congress in Delhi, Richard St. Barbe Baker, who founded men of the trees organizations introduced to Schumacher's book, small is beautiful. This was to have a profound impact on Sunderlal Bahuguna.
- 1977 May 30th: A slogan shouting procession enters a forest in the Hemaval of ghathi region of Tehri Garhwal and applied mudpacks and sack plasters to the wounds of recently tapped pine trees.
- 1977 June: A meeting organized at Sarla Behn's Ashram to discuss Chipko is attended by all activists and intellectuals like Sri D.D. Pant.

- 1977 June to October: As the resolution calling for a felling of green trees fell on deaf ears, activists commenced a program of removing iron blades inserted in the trees for tapping resin. Women also took part in large numbers. Despite the 42nd amendment to the constitution, which made it mandatory to protect the environment, the auctions continued in Garhwal and about 1000 trees were cut in Advani and Salet forests.
- 1977 December 5th: A group of women led by Bachhni Devi who was the wife of the local village headman, himself a contractor entered the Advani forest to protect the auctioned trees from being felled. Dhum Singh Negi, a Chipko activist fasted for five days to make the people fearless. In the Salet forest too activists prevented the felling of trees by hugging them.
- 1978 The disastrous Bhagirathi floods and recurrent landslides in mid 1978 galvanized public opinion against green felling. During this year the trees of Lalital forest in Ranichauri region, Amarsar forest near Kangal village in Tehri Garhwal were saved by the activists by hugging the trees. Similarly trees in the Malgaddi Forest were also saved.
- 1979 January 9th: Sunderlal Bahuguna commenced an indefinite fast in the forest to awaken environmental consciousness. He was arrested, but broke fast only on 2nd February, when the state government promised to stop fellings, till the Chief Minister met Sunderlal Bahuguna. It was during this stage the leadership of Chipko began to see environment from different angles. While Sunderlal wanted a complete ban on commercial felling, DSSS wanted to maintain commercial felling if it was for local purposes. (The Government did everything possible to discredit Sunderlal Bahuguna and to widen rift between him and other activists. It issued a moratorium on the green felling, claiming this was done to protect Sunderlal Bahuguna, who was on a indefinite fast. With this ban even the villagers, who depended on the trees for their livelihood, were deterred from felling the trees. Sunderlal Bahuguna was labelled a villain. Many Chipko activists including Chandi Prasad Bhatt declared that they were opposed to the suspension of peoples rights to use the forests.)
- 1980 The State Government proposed to set up a cottage industry below Sunderlal Bahuguna's Ashram, in order to further discredit him. They financed the setting up of a small bobbin and shuttle factory. But the contractor was allotted trees that were an important source of scarcity season fodder to the villagers. The locals decided to protect the trees and the government designs were foiled.
- 1980 January 26th: Government awarded Padmashri to Sunderlal Bahuguna, who initially welcomed it, but later rejected it saying "I do not deserve this till the flow of flesh and blood of mother earth is stopped."

- 1981 May: Sunderlal Bahuguna began a long Kashmir to Kohima Fadyatra. He commenced his 'Fadyatra' from the capital Srinagar to spread his message of Chipko.
- 1983 February: Sunderlal Bahuguna reached Kohima. He wrote extensively during his travel about degradation of forests and urged the people to live more harmoniously with nature. Since then, Sunderlal has travelled extensively presenting articles, giving lectures and spreading his message of Chipko.
- 1984-85 Women from Bacher, a village near Gopeshwar prevent the Van Nigam from felling dead trees in nearby forests as it lead to soil erosion and endangered their source of fuelwood.



ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHIPKO

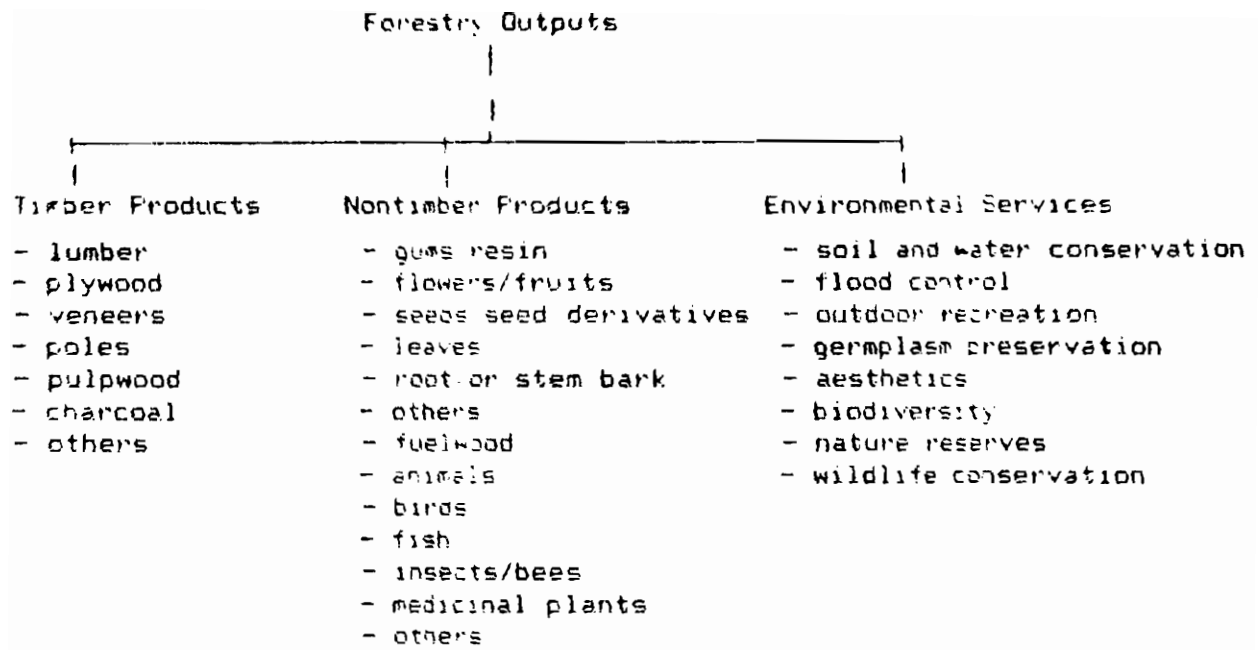


Figure 2: A Simplified Classification of Forestry Outputs

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