

The conflict between China and India in 1963 led to significant infrastructure developments in the formerly heavily forested region, which is where the tale of Chipko Andolan begins. These forests provided food and fuel to the local inhabitants that lived close to them.

As infrastructure developed, multinational logging corporations started eying the lush, green forests that were still unaffected in Uttar Pradesh (modern-day Uttarakhand), and they began using these forests for profit.

These formerly impenetrable areas were ravaged by a flood in 1970; ongoing tree-logging has made the local populations exposed to catastrophes that could have been avoided. Unchecked deforestation led to a variety of issues, including decreased agricultural productivity, dwindling water supplies, and land erosion that increased the risk of flooding.

Additionally, the government forbade the nearby communities from harvesting any wood from the trees and instead granted a sports firm a licence, which further enraged the locals.

The first Chipko movement was launched by Gandhian activist Chandi Prasad Bhatt in 1973. Dasholi Gram Swarajya Sangh, a cooperative organisation, was founded by Bhatt (Founded 1964). In the upper Alaknanda Valley, close to the village of Mandal, the first Chipko movement began. Bhatt led a group of peasants into the forest when the government rejected their requests, where they hugged trees to prevent them from being cut down.

But this tree-hugging strategy was nothing new; in Rajasthan a century earlier, a similar incident occurred when the Bishnois gave their lives to prevent the Khajiri trees from being cut down since they were seen as auspicious in their culture.

After numerous days of nonstop protests, the government granted the residents' request for the land and revoked its permit for the sports company. Due to the effectiveness of this demonstration, the villagers, those in Bhatt's organisation, as well as Sunderlal Bahuguna, another Gandhian activist, and other people in this area who were dealing with related problems, adopted these tactics.

The women of the village adopted the role of men and hugged the trees when the government summoned the men during one such protest in the village of Reni under the guise of discussing a compensation, allowing a crew of workers to fell the trees while they were gone. Gaura Devi served as the group's leader.

This decision wasn't made in a vacuum; the destruction of trees directly and negatively impacted women's ability to support their families and earn a living through agriculture. These women clutched the trees not simply to preserve the forests, but also to preserve their agency and standing in the agrarian society. As a result, the Chipko movement is regarded as one of the very first ecofeminist movements in India..