

Thus, the entire process of assimilating ideas of well-being of the society and graduated right from childhood and it will be a life-long process, as environment is part of our existence and life.

### Education Through Environmental Movements

In Chapter 14, we had studied about the two important movements, CHIPKO and APPIKO movements in Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka respectively to protect the forests. We also studied how the public movements were able to arrest the cutting of trees through governmental agencies and how people were prepared to give up their lives to protect the trees in the forests. We had also studied about the objectives of these movements to educate the people to have some awareness about the forests and the need for protecting the trees of the forests.

### Save the Silent Valley Movement

The people of Kerala strongly resisted the construction of hydro-electric power station in *Silent Valley*. The movement to save the environment gathered momentum under the umbrella organisations like *Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad*, the society for the protection of silent valley and 'Da Vinci Environmentalists'.

The members of these movements actively engaged in educating the public about the need for preserving the eco-system in the Silent Valley, publicised the matter through newspapers and motivated the people of the region to resist the project. The organisations educated the people by means of cycle and jeep rally from Kozhikode to Kollam and demanded a proper assessment of the pros and cons of the project. The Nehru Action Groups Zoological Society also joined with these organisations. 'Save Silent Valley Day' was observed throughout Kerala and B.G. Verghese, a prominent journalist created lot of public awareness through his articles. The Gandhi Peace Foundation also joined the campaign. The movement secured additional strength from the academicians, scientists, environmentalists and public spirited men throughout the country. The 'Friends of Trees' and the *Society for the protection of Silent Valley* (Regd) moved the High Court of Kerala and obtained a stay order for the execution of the project. This gave a temporary relief to the movement.

Readers are requested to go through Chapter 14 where detailed treatment of these movements has been made under the heading (Sub) 'Growing Awareness in India'.  
in India. Chipko Movement, Appiko Movement.

The government came to know about the magnitude of the resistance to tamper with the Silent Valley when groups of people outside Kerala joined in the protest. Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and similar organisations joined the issue and in July 1978, the BNHS sent millions of letters from the public to the Prime Minister of the country to stop the project. Scientists and experts who were much agitated offered their expertise and scientific reasoning about the possible dangers of the project and the Public were made known all details of the project. Finally, the government yielded to public opinion and abandoned the project and decided to declare the 'Silent Valley' as the national park preserving its loftiness and grandeur, as well as beauty.

### Save Narmada Movement: (Narmada Bachao Andolan)

There is a plan to build 30 massive dams on the river Narmada, besides 135 medium and 3000 minor dams, though the people of Narmada valley oppose it bitterly. Their struggle is centred on two major dams under construction -- the Sardar Sarovar Project in Bharuch district of Gujarat and the Indira Sagar Project in Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh. These projects will submerge almost as much area as it is meant to irrigate. These dams were given clearance in 1987 and construction work in them is in full swing.

Baba Amte and others of Narmada Bachao Andolan resist the construction of these dams, as the projects would create immense havoc to the environment, resulting in large scale deforestation, loss of flora and fauna in the submerged zone, in addition to water logging and salinisation and positive hindrance to people's health. Apart from ecological damages, the problem of rehabilitating millions of people would be formidable and the plan of rehabilitating the *Adivasis* would become unworkable and these poor people would become environmental refugees. The people of Narmada Bachao Andolan assert that the government did not work out the alternatives to the project. Further, the organisation, with the help of experts in various fields, worked out the broad outlines of an alternative strategy both for water and power. But the construction works are going on and the government says that it is politically impossible to stop the construction of dams. The NBA has intensified the agitation by peaceful means requesting the government to withdraw this project, as it is not going to help the people, but to destroy 1,30,482 hectares of land of which 55,681 hectares is prime agricultural land and 56,066 hectares forests. Apart from this direct submergence, there is also the land which would be required for cultivation, fuel and timber for displaced human population and for



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grazing the massive number of livestock. The construction of Sardar Sarovar and the Indira Sagar projects would mean that over three lakh people of the Narmada valley would be evicted from the centuries old land of their ancestors. For years together, these people have negotiated with the government and have come to the conclusion that rehabilitation with five acres of land to every family would be an impossibility. They have, therefore, decided that they will not leave their villages, come what may. According to Ministry of Environment and Forests the environmental cost of loss of forests due to the Indira Sagar Project will be Rs.30,923 crores and loss due to Sardar Sarovar will be Rs.8,190 crores. The Forest Conservation Advisory Committee of the Ministry, in January, 1990 demanded that the work on the project be halted, as it violated specific guidelines. The Committee said that the ecological balance of the area would be seriously affected due to the cutting down of 80 million trees at one stroke. The climate in the area will change, the rain cycle will be upset and the vital oxygen content in the air in and around the area will decrease.

The situation has now reached a point of no-return from which no solution will be possible. The Sardar Sarovar is being built. There is of course, a way out, i.e., the path of mutual dialogue and reconciliation. The sense of conflict still prevails.

### **Environmental Education In India**

Environmental education is an approach to learning to apply in the practical living and it is not a mere academic subject of study to get a degree or certificate. It endeavours to create a way of thinking requiring people to overcome prejudices, as a result of the differing views of different fields such as economics, politics and biology. It is a new kind of integrative teaching. As we had studied earlier, in backward economies the problem of educating the people in environmental awareness is very difficult, as they have the twin problem of alleviating poverty by means of economic development and preserving the eco-system.

It was in this background that a national syllabus in general science for the elementary level (Classes I to VIII), which was by and large environmental based, was developed by the *National Council of Educational Research and Training* (NCERT) in 1963. The syllabus emphasised the acquisition of knowledge of science process through the use of environmental kits. The Centre for Environment Education (CEE) Ahmedabad, is involved in the task of preparing flexible material that can be easily adapted to local conditions, material that through teacher training workshops can be supplemented with local examples,