The Power That Nourishes: The Chipko Movement in India

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Introduction

This research seeks to illuminate the ways in which the Chipko movement in India bridged the women’s social movements from the late 19th century to the modern-day agitations. It is my argument that Chipko, a spontaneous protest led by women from the lowest class, created a model for inclusive social action among Indian women. Its impact permeates contemporary movements.

It is important to understand that the Chipko model is fundamentally different from the political movements driven by the middle and elite classes that characterized the women’s movements in the late 1800’s and early part of the 1900’s. Because this organic movement sprang from the lower caste, it created an awareness across India. In essence, it motivated women to congregate in the streets to agitate for self-determination. The Chipko movement acts as a bridge between the pre- and post-Independence women’s social movements in India.

Purpose

• Provide a historical context for recent women’s social movements in Northwest India.

• Explore the 1970’s spontaneous, ecological resistance of lower-caste women in Uttarakhand, India, known as the Chipko movement, which created a pivotal era in female activism.

• Interpret the impact of the Chipko movement on modern agitations regarding self-determination for women in India.

Guiding Question

In what ways did the 1970’s Chipko movement in Uttarakhand, India, function as a bridge between contemporary and pre-Independence women’s social movements?

References


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