

Chipko movement was a challenge to hierarchy of development: Murali Sivaramakrishnan

Discussion held on the book *50 Years of Chipko – the Movement and its Afterlives* that has been edited by him

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perspectives such as ecofeminism, ecocinema, deep ecology, gender, and so on.

On the meaning of Chipko in the present, Mr. Sivaramakrishnan pointed out that recently, felling of trees for highway widening in Uttarakhand had been halted temporarily by the government following widespread public protests. “The book establishes a connection between human beings and nature. There has to be compassion for one another and for nature,” he concluded.

Jancy James, former Vice-Chancellor, who along with educator and entrepreneur Kalyani Vallath gave an overview of 50 years of Chipko, said it was not merely an environmental movement but a philosophy of the relationship between humans and nature.

The book, she said, was an eyeopener for those who thought about what nature meant and what humanity had been doing to nature.

Ms. Vallath said it was exciting to take a look through the book at the tradition of people's voices. Chipko was not a single ideology promoted by one leader, but saw the involvement of so many people. The book treated the forest as ecosystem, historical archive, cultural text, sacred landscape, and political territory.

Referring to the landslips in Wayanad in recent times, Usha V.T., former head of the Centre for Women's Studies, Pondicherry University, questioned why human beings could not see that to survive they need to preserve trees. She also spoke about how Chipko had affected the ecofeminist movement that existed even before the term ecofeminist came to be.

C.A. Lal, head of the Institute of English, delivered the welcome address.

The book contains 13 essays by 12 contributors and offers various perspectives of the movement's impact in Indian environmental policies and global cultural narratives and thought.

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