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**(B) Description of Module**

Items	Description of Module
Subject Name	Women's Studies
Paper Name	Women and History
Module Name/ Title, description	<b>Women and social movements in post independent India-</b> women's Movement in independent India, the Chipko Movement, its growth and people involved with the movement, the anti arrack movement, its growth and impact.
Module ID	Paper-3, Module-30
Pre-requisites	The reader is expected to have some knowledge about women's participation in mass movements
Objectives	To make the reader understand the meaning of social movements, the movement against destruction of forests and the movement against liquor and how the issue of domestic violence comes to the public forums.
Keywords	Women's movement, feminism, chipko, environment, arrack, agitation, grass root movement.

**Women and social movements in Post Independent India**

The women's movement in India is very diverse. The cultural, historical, geographical, religious, political and other factors contribute to this diversity. In the pre-independence period, the Women's Movement began as a social reform movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the colonial period women's movements in India were born out of the same historical circumstances and social milieu as several 19<sup>th</sup> century social reform movements were born out of Liberal ideology which provoked a new thinking about various social institutions, practices and social reform legislations. It also set the Western educated Indians to think about the position and plight of Indian Women whose conditions was pitiable. Hence social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Kandukuri Veeraselingam Panthulu, Iswara Chandra Vidya Sagar etc. played a very important role in highlighting women's question. They were followed by a large number of women who raised the question of women's status. During this period the social reformists tried to channelize the Indian society by introducing constitutional and legal provisions and protecting the society and the women from the discrimination and to provide equality to all the citizens irrespective of caste, creed, race, religion and sex. It was only after Gandhiji's entry into politics that the nationalist movement under his leadership was transformed from a middle class movement into a mass movement that women themselves for the first time raised their voice against the disabilities from which they suffer. Women secured many rights and social freedom. The women's movement's, ideological and social content changed from time to time and continued into our times. In the euphoria of the post-independence period it was believed that the status of women will improve automatically after we become the masters of our destiny. When this did not happen many movements arose.

Not only in India but all over the world there has been a close link between the women's Movement and feminism, each inspiring and enriching the other. While the women's movement is a much earlier phenomenon, the term Feminism is a modern one. Yet there is a very close connection between the two. Feminism is said to be the movement to end women's oppression (Hooks 2000, 26). The term became widely used in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Women's Rights movement emerged in the United States of America with the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. This was followed by the writings of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Wollstonecraft who questioned many injustices meted out to women. Hence the term

Feminism emerged long after women started questioning their inferior status and demanding an amelioration of their social position.

In the Indian context, many groups were not comfortable with the use of the term 'feminists' and did not identify their struggle for women's rights with this term. But today, by and large, feminism as a term is understood to denote the political stance of someone committed to changing the social position of women. In the post independence period, the women's movement has concerned itself with a large number of issues such as dowry, women's work, price rise, land rights, political participation of women, Dalit women and marginalized women's right, growing fundamentalism, women's representation in the media etc. Here we discuss two important social movements one in North India, Uttarakhand an environment movement and one down south a movement against liquor.

### **Chipko Movement**

Chipko Movement was born in a small hilly village of Himalayas. The illiterate tribal women commenced this movement in December 1972. This movement became famous as the Chipko (means to embrace) movement. It was a nonviolent movement aimed at protection and conservation of trees and forests from being destroyed. The villagers used to hug the trees and protect them from being cut by the wood cutters. The Chipko movement against tree felling was initiated by the women of India's most poverty stricken district, Tehri-Garhwal whose annual per capita income was Rs.129 and who rose against tree felling. Chipko movement was based on the Gandhian philosophy of peaceful resistance to achieve the goals. It was the strong uprising against those people, who were destroying the natural resources of the forests and disturbing the whole ecological balance. The movement started in Tehri Garhwal district of Uttar Pradesh. It challenged the old belief that forests mean only timber and emphasized their roles in making soil, water and pure air which are the basis of human life. The Chipko movement raised slogans of five F's-Food, Fodder, Fuel, Fiber and Fertilizer tree to make communities self sufficient in all their basic needs. It felt that trees would protect the environment and bring permanent peace, prosperity and happiness to human kind. This philosophy popularized the movement in many countries. The women of Advani village in Tehri Garhwal had tied the sacred thread around the trees, faced police firing in February 1978 and later courted arrest. This movement continued under the leadership of Sri Sunderlal Bahuguna in various villages.

When the Forest Department announced an auction of 2500 trees in the Reni Forest overlooking the Alaknanda River, which had already flooded disastrously, one woman- Gaura Devi- organized the women of her village to protect the trees from the company that won the auction. They physically prevented the tree felling, and thus forced the Uttar Pradesh government to investigate. Two years later, the government placed a 10-year ban on all tree felling in the area. Later on the ban was imposed in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Bihar, Western Ghats and Vindhayas. All this was done after the strong protests by the activists throughout the country. After that, women prevented felling in many other forests all along the Himalayas. They have also set up cooperatives to guard local forests, and to organize fodder production at rates that will not harm the trees. Within the Chipko movement, women have joined in land rotation schemes for fodder collection, helped replant degraded land, and established and run nurseries stocked with species they select. By the 80s, the movement spread throughout India, and led to formulation of people sensitive forest policies and stopping of open felling of trees in regions. The Chipko Movement is inimical to gender -- the theoretical underpinnings as well as the political and economic ones. Women and children gather firewood for domestic consumption. They rely on the forestry for combustible crop residues such as rice straw. This, however, is considered inferior to fuel wood. Therefore, forestry activities that increase the availability of fuel wood and development projects that promote improved stoves both release women's labour from fuel collection and permit its use in other productive activities, and improve the agricultural environment by permitting crop residues to be better used for enriching depleted soil. Chipko movement points out the link between women's burden as food providers and gatherers and their militancy in depending natural resources from violent devastation.

The Chipko women believed that the trees were living and breathing carbon dioxide, the same as they were. In essence, the trees should be respected. The extensive forests were central to the successful practice of agriculture and animal husbandry. In addition, medicinal herbs were used for healing powers. The hill women used the jungle of fruit, vegetables or roots as aids in the times of scarcity. The dependence of the hill peasant on forest resources was institutionalized through a variety of social and cultural mechanisms. Through religion, folklore and oral tradition, the forests were protected by rings of love. Hilltops were dedicated to local deities and the trees around the spot regarded with great respect. Many wooded areas were not of spontaneous growth and bore marks of the hillfolk's instinct for the plantation and preservation of the forest; indeed the "spacious wooded areas extending over the mountain ranges and hill sides testimony to the care bestowed upon them by the successive generations of the Kumaunees."

The Chipko movement has been nationally and internationally discussed as a people's ecological movement for the protection of the natural environment. Since women are the gatherers of fuel, fodder and water, it is they who feel the first impact of soil erosion. Mindless destruction of the forests has seriously upset the hill people's economy. Men often migrate to the plains; women are left to cope with an ever more impoverished existence and to provide for the old and the children. Many women have been driven to suicide because of the increasing pressures on them; therefore it is women who have seen through the government planning on which crores of rupees have been spent during the last 33 years. Women have repeatedly challenged administrators and politicians with their slogan 'planning without fodder, fuel and water is one eyed planning. In the course of this movement, Garhwal women successfully undertook leadership roles and questioned the right

of the men to decide the fate of the forests or to enter into contracts without consulting the women, who would be the worst affected. The women said that this forest is our home, we will not let it be cut down. The police force used all repressive and terrorizing methods to retreat the non-violent strength of the women.

One of the women, Gaura Devi led 27 village women to prevent the contractors, employees and forest department personnel about 60 men in all, from going to the Reni forest to fell 2,415 trees. While the women were blocking the narrow passage leading to the forest, the men used all sorts of threats and later on the pretext of being drunk, even tried to misbehave with the women. But the women refused to budge and bravely resisted all misbehavior. One of the men spat at Gaura Devi's face. The contractor tried to bribe Gaura Devi into letting his men enter the forest. When she refused this offer, the forest department personnel threatened to call the police and arrest her. Another instance of women being harassed by the village men was in DongriPaitoli village.

The slogan of the Chipko women is soil, water, vegetation are the gifts of the forest soil, water and vegetation are the basis of life. The fundamental tenet of ecology has not come to them from scientific research but has sprung from their daily experience and struggle to survive. These women knew that the commercialization of the forest management means the erosion of the soil which is the base of their existence and drying up of water sources.

As the years have gone by, the Chipko Movement itself has acquired two distinct streams of thought, personified by its two leaders, C.P. Bhatt from Gopeshwar, who pioneered the movement, and SunderlalBahuguna from Silyara in the Tehri region. The operational style of these leaders is totally different. While Bhatt is a grass-roots worker and believes mainly in organizing the people, Bahuguna a journalist, is a publicist *par excellence*. Though Bahuguna has also organized some protest activities in his region - for instance, Chipko activists in HenwalGhati once went to the forest to bandage wounded trees with mud and sacking to protest against the indiscriminate tapping of pine trees - his main focus has been on spreading the message of Chipko far and wide. In 1981, Bahuguna started on a foot march from Kashmir to Kohima to campaign against deforestation. Bhatt, on the other hand, has dug deep roots in the Chamoli region. He is, as a result, far less well known than Bahuguna. Bhatt has realized that if the local village communities have the right to control their surrounding resources, they must also undertake to conserve and develop those resources. So he has organized the country's largest voluntary afforestation programme through eco-development camps. These camps bring together local villagers, students and social workers who have planted over a million trees. The survival rate of these Chipko plantations has been an astonishing 85 to 90 percent in most cases. Bahuguna, however, tends to dismiss this activity as irrelevant at this stage of the movement, concentrating all his writing and speaking power against the forest departments. A feature published by the United Nations Environment Programme reported the Chipko Movement thus: 'In effect the Chipko people are working a socio-economic revolution by winning control of their forest resources from the hands of a distant bureaucracy which is concerned with selling the forest for making urban-oriented products.' The solution of present-day problems lie in the re-establishment of a harmonious relationship between man and nature. To keep this relationship permanent we will have to digest the definition of real development: development is synonymous with culture. When we sublimate nature in a way that we achieve peace, happiness, prosperity and, ultimately, fulfilment along with satisfying our basic needs, we march towards culture stated, SunderlalBahuguna.

However it is women who play a central role in this movement. Men, who sit on village councils and other village bodies and head their families, view the government officials with a great deal of respect and fear. They dare not oppose them. Women, on the other hand, who have never had any contact with government officials or other outsiders, have no model of interaction to follow with them. The Chamoli women understood only that the felling of trees is harmful to their well-being, and they simply acted according to that belief. On the basis of their past interaction with government officials, men are convinced of the great powers of the Government. They consider it wrong to oppose its policies. (Joshi, 1981).

In the course of this movement, Garhwal women successfully understood leadership roles and questioned the right of the men to decide the fate of the forests or to enter into the contracts without consulting the women. The Chipko Movement, which has now spread from one end of the Himalayas in Kashmir to the other in Arunachal Pradesh, is endeavouring to alter the Government's forest policy by insisting on maintenance of the traditional *status quo* in the Himalayan and other forest regions of India. In this sense, there is resistance to change and to an opening up of the area for technological development.

The collective mobilization of women for the cause of preserving forests has brought about a situation of conflict regarding their own status in society. Women have demanded to share in the decision-making process along with men; hence, there has been opposition by men to women's involvement in the Chipko Movement. Women are, on the one hand, seeking alterations in their position in society and, on the other hand, supporting a social movement that is resisting change. To understand this, it is crucial to ask why women support the movement, what the extent of their awareness is, and how many women in the hill areas are actually participating in the movement (The FAO Document Repository, Shobita Jain).

Because both the protection and afforestation programmes reflect the needs and aspirations of women, the women have spontaneously responded to the Chipko call and became the effective links of the movement. In fact recently, due to the awakening generated during the afforestation camps, women have started MangalDals in many villages have become very active. In many villages, the women stood for elections for village head. Previously, the women used to be passive listeners

in the camps too. In some camps, women with breast-feeding children walked about 18 kilometers to participate in the afforestation camp there. The women, who till recently were mere limbs of the movement, have now risen to leadership roles.

### **The Anti Arrack Movement**

The anti-arrack movement of women in Andhra Pradesh was one of most historic and significant movements of the decade of 1990's. The historic bangle waged by the women in Andhra Pradesh against the social evil of alcohol drinking is a magnum war in Indian social history. Women have played a historic role in bringing about a ban on consumption and sale of distilled liquor in Andhra Pradesh. The movement indeed was not just for elimination of liquor but for the protection and survival of their own culture. The rural women in the villages raised their voices lifted their hand to arrest the degeneration of the progress of their families and the damage caused by their men to their children and themselves.

The movement was started in a small village Called "Dubagunta" in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh. The main reason for the movement was said to be the successful literacy mission that has been going in Nellore district. In one of the adult education classes under the National Literacy Mission (NLM), The National literacy Mission (NLM) was officially launched in Nellore District from 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1990 and was implemented from January 1991 after an intensive preparation of four months. This program was implemented in a very innovative way. At the core of the program was recognition of development as an instrument of change and empowerment of women. Hence a campaign approach was adopted to spread the message of literacy, and instead of just teaching the alphabets; there was a three-pronged approach, which was initiated. First, primers were written, Popular performances used and center for People's awareness created. Committees of dedicated officers were set up to write and prepare Primers as reading material to be used for the target groups. This was done after many discussions and issues dealt with were contemporary issues. Besides this, cultural committees were organized to convey the meaning and need for literacy in the forms of songs, dance-dramas and street plays. (Pande, 2002, 351)

The literacy classes started and the women were using three primers. One of these primers contained a story, *Seeta Katha* (The story of Seeta), where Seeta the wife of a liquor addict commits suicide after failing in her efforts to reform her husband. In Dubagunta, a lot of discussion followed and women argued that there was no other alternative. Slowly some women opened up and stated that they had also contemplated suicide but could not do this because of their children. Many others started telling about the violence they faced and there was a close bonding, which emerged. Some women felt that there must be a way to deal with this evil and soon all the women vowed that they would fight the evil of drink and see to it that no drunkards are left in the village. These women had a very simplistic solution that if the arrack shops were closed the men would not get liquor and hence would not drink. These women then marched together the next day and were able to get the arrack shop closed in their village and men could not get a drink.

The Dubagunta episode was soon quoted in another literacy primer, under the title, *AdavalluEkamaithe*, (If women unite). The lesson read thus, "*This is not a story. This is the achievement of women who have studied in the evening school. Our village is Dubagunta. We are wage earners. We produce gold from earth. But what is the use? All our hard-earned money is spent on toddy & arrack. When our men folk do not have money, they sell away rice, butter, ghee or anything that fetches them arrack.... They take away what every they can lay their hands on ... Apart from drinking they abuse us, pick up fights with us, slap our children. They make our day-to-day existence miserable ... Then we read the story of Seethama's death. We started thinking. Who is responsible for her death? We then told the sarpanch to close the arrack shop. But they could not succeed.*

*So next day hundreds of us marched out of the village and stopped a cart of toddy. We told the owner to throw away the liquor and all of us would contribute Rs. L to compensate his loss. He was terrified. That is all. From that day no toddy has entered our village.*

*When the Jeep carrying arrack arrived in the village we gheraoed it and threatened the owner we would lodge a complaint with the collector. This sent a shiver down his spine. He closed his shop. Now we became strong and got confidence. We realized that this victory was possible only through education. This year no one dared participate in the arrack auction."*

This lesson had an electrifying impact on women. Women in many other villages felt that that if women in Dubagunta had succeeded so could they. In many villages women's committees were formed. They first tried to stop their husbands and other male relatives from drinking but found that this was difficult a goal to achieve till the liquor shops continue to exist in the village. Their fight had now turned into a larger issue involving the contractor the excise department and the state itself. The women wanted to know why their village did not have drinking water, schools for children or proper wages but plenty of arrack shops? Why was nothing available in their village except arrack? Why was the Government so keen on supplying arrack?( Pande,2005, 216)

Anti-arrack movement was a spontaneous outburst of poor, lower class and lower caste women who just learnt what literacy is. The unity and the collective strength shown by the women in Andhra Pradesh was a cross caste and class barriers for the first time is historic indeed. Women's frustration and anger suddenly burst out into a spontaneous protest against the local arrack shops, the excise officials, the liquor contractors and all the machineries of state involved in the trade.

Apart from preventing the local liquor shops from functioning by destroying arrack, burning sachets and forcing local sellers to close their shops, the women have resisted their pressure tactics and attacks from contractors, excise department officials and the excise police. The inspirational guidance extended by the veteran freedom fighter Mr. Vavilala Gopala Krishnaiah, added momentum to the movement organised by the rural women within a few days the struggle spread to all villages in the district. Soon all the arrack supply sources were blocked. There were spontaneous and simultaneous demonstrations in all the areas against the evils of arrack consumption.

The continuation of the agitation some women went on rampage cutting the palm trees and not allowing the authorities to reach the venue of the auctions. Nellore district collector to pacify women agitators introduced tickets to auction bidders and also promised them that in future the arrack business will be confined to professionals only. Not satisfied with this action, the women agitators forced the auctions to be put off indefinitely. The arrack dealers were in trouble. They could neither sell their liquor nor protect it from the agitators.

Hyderabad became a meeting point of all the groups in the districts. Many meetings were held dharnas given and a steady awareness campaign built against arrack. The Government had to bow down to the pressure and took the bold decision of banning arrack from 1st October 1993, even bearing a revenue loss of more than Rs 600 crores.

The Excise Department was entrusted the job of preventing smuggling of arrack from neighboring states, besides checking the manufacture of spurious liquor and adulteration of toddy. The Excise officials were given magisterial powers to deal with bootleggers with a heavy hand. In order to create awareness among the people, the Information Department launched a massive publicity campaign. Cultural teams gave public performances in each village, apart from dances, dramas, film shows, slides and exhibitions against the evil. High cut outs, against drinking were to be seen all around the city.

The women's groups were happy but soon they saw their struggle come to naught. As a result of the ban on arrack the following year there was a substantial increase in the consumption of Toddy, which was not banned. To give enough kick it was soon adulterated with drugs like diazepam or chemicals like chloral hydrate. All these had a lethal side effect. Since Indian Made Foreign liquor (being marketed by the Government itself) was not banned, the number of wine shops selling these increased. Thus the banning of arrack had made no difference in reality.

Now the women's organizations felt that unless there was Total Prohibition, nothing much could be achieved. All the women now agreed to take up this issue under a common platform irrespective of any particular ideology. A Joint Action Forum of women was formed for demand of total prohibition. A memorandum was submitted to the chief minister Mr. VijayaBhaskar Reddy and when they did not get any response they decided to collect signatures, arrange meetings in the slums, organized rallies, marches and picketing.

Many slogans were also raised during these marches. *'The habit of drinking is a disgrace to society', 'the labor of the poor should not be sacrificed for arrack.'* *"Build a tomb for this dangerous liquor", "liquor is dangerous to your life brother! Please keep away from this habit".* *"Forget liquor, shape your family."* *"Friendship with liquor is a step to death."* *"Don't go to the wine shop, don't break the marriage vow.* There was a message. *o The house where no one drinks is a house full of flowers of joy".o We will no longer be quiet and we will no longer be beaten, we will shout and drive away Sara".o Oh brother please stop drinking, please don't go near the crematorium.*

#### **Street Plays and other mediums to spread the message:**

Street Plays became a very important medium to express the sentiments of the people during the agitation. Since this did not require any kind of stage or set it was used very often to spread the message. An important stage play that was performed was, **Sabdham** by Divi Kumar and Uday. It showed how arrack consumption was responsible for the rise of the crime rate and poverty in the rural areas. It also described how the arrack contractors maintained cordial relations with the political leaders and the police. It also showed how contractors hired a number of anti-social elements to protect their business and scare the women who were raising their voices against arrack. Another street play described how prostitution, gambling and cock fighting were banned by law. It made a powerful statement that though Article 47 of the Constitution banned intoxicating things why did arrack continue and the government was involved in it.

#### **Appropriation of the Movement:**

Till now the movement was being fought as a women's movement without any political leadership but soon it was high jacked by political parties. At a rally on 2nd Oct 1994, N.T.Rama Rao proclaimed that if his party were elected to power he would declare total prohibition. Prohibition became a very important issue in the coming elections. Elections to the State Assembly were held in December and the Telugu Desam party was elected with a thumping majority of 214 assembly seats out of 294. On 12th December 1994, at the swearing in ceremony, N.T.Rama Rao once again reiterated his commitment to Total Prohibition and declared that from 1st January 1995 the state would follow total prohibition.

The women had achieved their victory. A private violence, which had started as an agitation soon became a movement and after the ban on arrack was announced the first phase of the movement came to an end. Soon because of the lacuna in the arrack laws, a second phase of "Total prohibition" was born and it resulted in changing the existing Political party (Congress) in the state, and giving power to the opposition the Telugu Desam Party. The State Government promulgated an ordinance amending the Andhra Pradesh Excise Act to make manufacture of liquor illegal and punishable with conviction and fines up to 1 lakh.

#### **The aftermath;**

Total Prohibition was no doubt a populist measure for the Government to get women's votes and this coupled with other populist measures like subsidized rice for people below poverty line and cheap electricity for farmers, ensured a majority for the party in the legislature. However in translating these slogans into actions the government found the path to be strewn with thorns. Meanwhile through a coup within the party, Chandra Babu Naidu, the son in law of the Chief Minister and a member of the Cabinet wrested power from his father in law blaming him to be very arrogant and dictatorial. The new government of Chandra Babu Naidu was now in a catch 22 situation. It could not give up on prohibition and annoy the woman who had supported it wholeheartedly, nor could it deal with the worsening financial situation, after the loss of revenue on liquor. The period following this saw an increase in water cess, electricity charges and other taxes and every one blamed the women and the prohibition for these developments.

The opinion on the prohibition policy now became divided. Women's groups felt that this policy had brought in a lot of changes in the rural areas. There was a reduction in domestic violence and increase in the savings and the living standard of the people had gone up. They strongly felt that government must reduce expenditure and look for other sources of revenue. The other strong lobby felt that the government had no right to impose its rules and regulations on individual social habit. They did not like the heavy financial burden of the state being passed on to the individual through heavy taxation. They felt that the ban on Indian made foreign liquor should be removed so that those who can afford it can spend the money on liquor. Soon the government policy on liquor began to sag and prohibition was lifted in a phased manner from November 1995 and today there is only partial prohibition in the state, though the prices of liquor are very high when compared to some states. Recently there is a lot of discussions taking place that prohibition should be lifted. The State of Andhra Pradesh has taken up various reforms to liberalize the economy and it is heavily in debt to the world bank. There are a number of arguments being given that prohibition (not that it is strictly enforced) should be lifted.

Today, just because the state has gone back on prohibition does not mean that this movement was a failure. Women may have failed to maintain the momentum by continuing the pressure, and finally the movement was appropriated by the political party, but it gave a lot of sense of power to the women. Given the various hurdles, the movement was itself a considerable achievement, especially in the face of a recalcitrant state. The state may have withdrawn the ban but it was done in a very defensive manner. The greatest achievement of the movement was that it created a public space for a private violence. This movement created the necessary awareness, raising consciousness in the countryside to take control of one's life situation. This one hopes would go a long way in strengthening many democratic movements like Panchayati Raj which are being carried out at the grass root level in our country today. Women have definitely emerged out winners because they are well aware of their strengths and ability to bring about change in society. Most importantly, the anti arrack agitation is a very good example of the articulation of a family violence in public. It showed a feminist way of looking at issues, especially a private issue like family violence and aligning it to a larger issue of state and society. It questioned the notion about domestic violence being private and woman not being able to do anything about it.

The literacy classes provided the space for this movement. This was a spontaneous movement, starting as an agitation in a remote village in Dubagunta, but soon became a movement. As a result of the literacy classes women got together and discussed. Women found out that all of them were individually facing violence and could do nothing about it. They now decided to do something about it. This movement was basically as a result of their experiences of violence at home and their responses to these life experiences came spontaneously. Whether it was deciding to stop an arrack van from coming into the village, or burning arrack sachets or taking out processions, submitting memorandums and petitions, punishing the village drunk, all was done spontaneously by the women. This movement was loosely organized and flexible in structure. The literacy classes were utilized by women as spaces for holding discussions and articulating their personal grievances. Initially none spoke for fear of being ostracized or stigmatized. It was the women who bore the guilt and shame of being beaten up by their husbands. However after few meetings they opened up and started speaking about their financial problems, their husband's drunkenness and realized that all of them were facing a similar problem individually.

Another interesting factor about this movement was that there was no organized leadership and most of it came about because of local initiative. Leadership was offered by many voluntary organizations, women's associations and women based in the villages. Political parties entered at a very later stage and tried to hijack the movement. No detailed planning went into the agendas. Women took action on the spot depending on the situation, going to liquor shops, and arguing with shop owners, snatching away the liquor sachets. Most of the activities were planned and implemented by the women, be it canvassing, going on processions, dharnas, stopping the men from drinking. Through this movement, women have definitely emerged out winners because they are well aware of their strengths and ability to bring about change in society. Most importantly, the anti arrack agitation is a very good example of the articulation of a family violence in public. It showed a feminist way of looking at issues, especially a private issue like family violence and aligning it to a larger issue of state and society. It questioned the notion about domestic violence being private and woman not being able to do anything about it. The noteworthy feature of women's movement is that it was led on the Gandhian principles. In support of the movement, various cooperative societies in the state have declared that in future loan facilities would be extended only to those who give up drinking (Pande, 2000,132)

In the initial phases the women from lower castes belonging to Schedule castes and Scheduled tribes were involved in the movement, but soon the upper caste women also came and joined. Their support however remained indirect because though they openly did not participate in the agitation they gave their full support and when ever possible tried to stop their husbands from using liquor as a tool to get more work from agricultural laborers. Soon caste was no longer a factor and the village became important, when came out in large numbers. The strength of the women came in their large numbers and

once they realized this they mobilized more and more women to participate in their struggle. When we visited the village the women spoke to us collectively about their activities. Women also developed their own intelligence network to prevent the sale of arrack. They would remain awake at nights and keep turns to see that arrack was not brought to the villages. They would get up early and follow their husbands who would buy arrack secretly on the pretext of going to the toilet.

The women through holding meetings and discussions maintained the momentum of the movement. There was no clear action plan or time frame for these meetings. In an attempt to retain control of the movement, women refused to take initiatives that went beyond their village. In the absence of a single leader many women in-groups exhibited leadership qualities by mobilizing other women and in the process even sidelined the men. Soon men were also involved in their struggle.

In the beginning the political parties were a bit wary of the movement. They were not sure if this would succeed because while on the one hand media reported on the activities of the women, it also showed how the police and the state were trying to control the movement by using violence and registering police cases against them. Most of the political parties thought that the movement would die a natural death and so they did not take it up immediately. Besides this many political parties had a close nexus with liquor contractors, who were the main stay for election funding. Many politicians were themselves liquor barons.

Once political parties saw the movement gaining momentum and there was no stopping the movement, they all wanted to hijack it to increase their vote bank. The greatest irony of this movement was that the same N.T.Rama Rao, who had brought liquor into the homes of the people by packaging it in sachets, now did a somersault and emerged as a leader of the masses, the savior of women, in demanding prohibition. Public memory is very short and no one questioned him, infact he won the elections with a majority on the issue of prohibition.

Many street plays also portrayed how arrack consumption was responsible for domestic violence, the rise of crime rate, poverty in rural areas. They also showed how the arrack contractors if they themselves were not political leaders, maintained cordial relations with the political leaders and the police. Many plays also attempted to show how the contractors tried to divide the people involved in the anti arrack movement. During the anti arrack movement many of the old dramas were once again brought to the forefront to spread the message of a free society and to avoid liquor. The most important among them was "Madhuseva" written by Kallakuri Narayana Rao in 1926, during the days of the National movement when the slogan "Avoid Toddy and open your eyes", were very popular in Andhra Pradesh. This drama dealt with the theme of how the consumption of liquor spoilt the health and led to the ruin of a family and its property. Through this play and its character the dramatist dealt with all the dimensions of liquor and how it ruins the moral value and economy of a society and leads to colossal waste of human life.

The newspapers also played a very important role in popularizing this movement. The Telugu newspaper, Enaadu, kept aside two pages every day to cover each and every aspect of this movement. It consentized the people at large and made the people in Urban areas familiar with what was happening in rural areas. It also carried a lot of cartoons dealing with liquor and its drinking and also spread the message of prohibition.

Today the State may have given up on prohibition but this movement served its purpose. It gave a tremendous self-confidence and sense of power to the women, who realized their strength, came in large numbers and unity of action. Despite the hurdles, the movement had considerable achievement especially in the face of a recalcitrant state. This one hopes would go a long way in strengthening many democratic movements like Panchayati Raj which are being carried out at the grass root level in our country today. Women have definitely emerged out winners because they are well aware of their strengths and ability to bring about change in society. The greatest achievement of the movement was in using popular performance in creating the necessary awareness, raising consciousness in the countryside to take control of one's life situation. This had a great impact than any amount of speeches or writing could have had.

Hence both the Chipko and the anti-arrack movement, one by raising its voice against the destruction of environment and bringing a crises to the economy and the other by raising its voice against liquor and bringing in a lot of violence in the domestic sphere raised questions about these issues in the public forum to bring about a change in women's status.