



**Chandi Prasad Bhat speaks on  
'Himalaya Environment and Development: Experiences of Chipko Movement'**

**Chandi Prasad Bhat**, octogenarian Gandhian environmentalist and one of the leaders of the Chipko Movement of Uttarakhand, came to address students at Azim Premji University on **August 14, 2015**.

The talk titled, "**Himalaya Environment and Development: Experiences of Chipko Movement**" addressed the critical issue of how Himalayan range is important to the eco- system of the entire country. He shared that 63% of the country's river water is influenced by the Himalayan terrain. Glaciers and glacial lakes in the Himalayan region are the origin of major rivers like Ganga, Yamuna and Brahmaputra. Aggressive commercialization and unplanned construction and deforestation are the major causes of recent ecological disasters such as floods, landslides and avalanches. The influence of the Himalayan range impacts five countries including India, China (Tibet), Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Chandi Prasad Bhatt has been working with the local people from the 70's to protest against the felling of trees and leading the efforts for greening of the environment through tree plantation. The movement has been conducted in a non-violent manner throughout and has had the active participation of women and students. The group has also undertaken a study of the terrain to arrive at a balanced route of development where construction of hydro-electric plants etc. do not endanger the safety of the local people or lead to degradation of the environment.

The University students were engaged thoroughly with the presentation and asked many interesting questions. They were curious to know how the Government bodies have been acting on his suggestions and how much progress has been made to protect the Himalayas.

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