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SHAPING THROUGH MOVEMENTS

AUTHORED BY - SWETHA S G B

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Environmental degradation has emerged as one of the most pressing challenges confronting humanity in the twenty-first century. Rapid industrialisation, urban expansion, deforestation, climate change, loss of biodiversity, and pollution of air, water, and soil have severely disturbed the ecological balance essential for human survival.¹ While early state responses to environmental harm were largely sectoral and regulatory in nature, it gradually became evident that governmental action alone was inadequate to address the scale and complexity of ecological crises.² This governance gap contributed to the emergence of environmental movements, driven by citizens, indigenous communities, civil society organisations, and transnational advocacy groups demanding environmental protection, accountability, and sustainable development.²

Environmental movements represent organised collective actions aimed at resisting environmentally destructive activities and influencing legal, political, and policy frameworks. These movements have played a decisive role in transforming environmental concerns from peripheral social issues into central components of constitutional mandates, statutory enactments, judicial interpretations, and international environmental agreements. From local struggles against deforestation and displacement to global campaigns against climate change, environmental movements have reshaped environmental governance by compelling states and international institutions to recognise environmental protection as both a legal obligation and a matter of inter-generational justice.³

In India, environmental movements such as the Chipko Movement, Silent Valley Movement, and Narmada Bachao Andolan have significantly influenced environmental jurisprudence and policy-making. These movements highlighted issues relating to forest conservation, biodiversity protection, displacement of indigenous communities, and

sustainable development. Judicial responses to such movements have led to progressive interpretations of Article 21 of the Constitution of India, recognising the right to a clean and healthy environment as an integral component of the right to life.⁵The Supreme Court of India has further developed environmental law principles such as sustainable development, precautionary principle, and inter-generational equity, drawing inspiration from both constitutional values and international environmental norms.

At the international level, environmental movements and non-governmental organisations have played an instrumental role in shaping global environmental consciousness. Mass mobilisations and advocacy efforts significantly influenced landmark developments such as the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972), the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992), and the Paris Agreement (2015).⁴ These movements have not only shaped treaty negotiations but have also enhanced transparency, public participation, and accountability in international environmental governance.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

2.1 Meaning and Definition of Environmental Movements

Environmental movements are collective social actions aimed at protecting the environment from degradation and promoting sustainable use of natural resources. These movements arise when communities, civil society groups, or transnational actors mobilise to challenge environmentally harmful practices, policies, or projects, often in response to state inaction or corporate exploitation.⁵ Unlike isolated protests, environmental movements are sustained efforts grounded in shared ecological concerns, ethical values, and demands for environmental justice.

Scholars define environmental movements as part of broader social movements, characterised by organised collective behaviour seeking social change outside conventional political institutions. In the environmental context, these movements seek to influence law making, policy formulation, administrative decision-making, and judicial interpretation. They operate at multiple levels local, national, and international and often

bridge the gap between grassroots activism and formal legal frameworks.⁸

Environmental movements thus function not merely as oppositional forces but as norm creators, contributing to the evolution of environmental values such as conservation, sustainability, and inter-generational equity.⁶

2.2 Evolution of Environmental Movements: From Conservation to Sustainability

2.2.1 Early Conservation-Oriented Movements

The earliest environmental movements focused primarily on conservation and preservation of forests, wildlife, and natural landscapes. These movements were largely reactive, responding to deforestation, over-exploitation of resources, and loss of biodiversity.⁷ In India, traditional community-based conservation practices such as sacred groves and customary forest management reflected early environmental consciousness, even before formal environmental laws were enacted.

At the international level, early conservation movements influenced the establishment of national parks and wildlife protection regimes, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These movements laid the foundation for environmental protection as a public concern rather than a purely economic issue.⁸

2.2.2 Anti-Development and Rights-Based Movements

With the expansion of large-scale development projects such as dams, mining, and industrial infrastructure, environmental movements began to adopt a rights-based approach. These movements challenged development models that prioritised economic growth at the cost of ecological destruction and displacement of indigenous and marginalised communities.

Movements such as the Narmada Bachao Andolan in India highlighted the intersection of environmental protection, human rights, and social justice. The emphasis shifted from mere conservation to questioning the legitimacy of development policies and demanding participatory decision making, rehabilitation, and accountability. This phase significantly influenced judicial reasoning, particularly in public interest litigation relating to environmental governance.⁹

2.2.3 Contemporary Sustainability and Climate Justice Movements

In recent decades, environmental movements have increasingly focused on global environmental challenges such as climate change, ocean pollution, and biodiversity loss. These movements emphasise sustainability, climate justice, and shared global responsibility.¹⁰ Youth led movements, indigenous activism, and transnational advocacy networks have emerged as powerful actors in shaping environmental discourse and policy at international forums.

The shift towards sustainability reflects recognition that environmental issues transcend national boundaries and require coordinated global responses. Environmental movements now engage with international institutions, influence treaty negotiations, and utilise international law as a tool for advocacy and accountability.

2.3 Characteristics of Environmental Movements

Environmental movements possess certain defining characteristics that distinguish them from other forms of social mobilisation.

First, they are issue-specific yet interconnected, addressing concerns such as deforestation, pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss while recognising their interrelated nature.¹³ Second, these movements often rely on non-violent methods, including protests, petitions, public awareness campaigns, and legal action through public interest litigation.

Third, environmental movements emphasise public participation and community involvement, challenging top-down decision making processes. This participatory nature aligns with principles of environmental democracy and access to justice.¹¹ Finally, environmental movements frequently adopt a scientific and ethical framework, using ecological data alongside moral arguments to legitimise their demands.

2.4 Environmental Movements and Civil Society

Civil society plays a central role in the organisation and sustenance of environmental movements. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), grassroots collectives, academic institutions, and media platforms act as intermediaries between affected communities and state institutions.¹² Through advocacy, litigation, research, and public engagement, civil

society actors amplify environmental concerns and ensure sustained pressure on policymakers.

In India, civil society engagement has been instrumental in expanding the scope of environmental governance through public interest litigation and policy advocacy. The judiciary has often relied on inputs from environmental groups and expert committees, reflecting the influence of civil society on environmental decision-making.¹⁸ At the international level, NGOs enjoy observer status in environmental treaty negotiations and contribute to agenda-setting and monitoring compliance.

2.5 Environmental Movements, Democracy, and Governance

Environmental movements are closely linked to democratic governance. They enhance transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness by challenging opaque decision-making and demanding access to information and participation.¹³ These movements often emerge where democratic institutions fail to adequately address environmental concerns, thereby acting as corrective mechanisms within governance systems.

The principle of environmental democracy, which includes access to information, public participation, and access to justice, finds expression in both national legal systems and international instruments.¹⁴ Environmental movements have played a crucial role in operationalising these principles by mobilising citizens and invoking legal remedies against environmental harm.

2.6 Limitations and Criticisms of Environmental Movements

Despite their contributions, environmental movements face several limitations. Critics argue that some movements lack organisational coherence, long-term strategy, or technical expertise. Others point to issues of representation, where elite-driven movements may marginalise local voices. Additionally, environmental movements often encounter resistance from powerful economic and political interests, limiting their effectiveness in influencing policy outcomes.

At the international level, disparities in power between developed and developing countries raise concerns regarding equity and fairness in global environmental activism. Nevertheless, these limitations do not undermine the broader significance of

environmental movements as catalysts for legal and policy reform.¹⁸

CHAPTER 3

ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Evolution of Environmental Movements in India

Environmental movements in India have developed within a unique socio-legal context shaped by colonial forest policies, post-independence development planning, and constitutional commitments to social justice. Unlike purely conservationist movements in the West, Indian environmental movements have often emerged as people-centric struggles, combining ecological concerns with livelihood protection, indigenous rights, and democratic participation.¹⁵

Post-independence industrialisation and large infrastructure projects such as dams, mining, and power plants triggered widespread environmental degradation and displacement. In response, local communities, civil society organisations, and environmental activists mobilised against environmentally destructive practices, giving rise to organised environmental movements.¹⁶ These movements played a crucial role in compelling the Indian State to recognise environmental protection as an essential component of governance and constitutional responsibility.

3.2 The Bishnoi Movement: Early Environmental Consciousness

One of the earliest examples of environmental protection in India can be traced to the Bishnoi Movement of the eighteenth century. The Bishnoi community of Rajasthan is historically known for its deep ecological ethics rooted in religious and cultural traditions. In 1730, members of the community sacrificed their lives to protect Khejri trees from being felled by royal forces.³

Though not a modern environmental movement in the legal sense, the Bishnoi movement reflects indigenous environmental values that prioritised conservation, sustainable living, and coexistence with nature. This early resistance underscores that environmental consciousness in India predates formal environmental legislation and continues to influence contemporary environmental thought and activism.⁴

3.3 The Chipko Movement: Forest Conservation and Community Rights

The Chipko Movement of the 1970s is regarded as a landmark environmental movement in India. Originating in the Garhwal region of present-day Uttarakhand, the movement involved villagers particularly women embracing trees to prevent commercial logging. The movement was a response to state policies that favoured commercial exploitation of forests over the subsistence needs of local communities.

The Chipko Movement successfully brought national attention to issues of deforestation, ecological imbalance, and community rights over forest resources. It directly influenced forest policies and led to a temporary ban on commercial felling in the Himalayan region. More importantly, the movement contributed to the evolving discourse on sustainable development, highlighting the interdependence between environmental conservation and livelihood security.

From a legal perspective, the Chipko Movement strengthened the demand for participatory forest governance and influenced subsequent judicial interpretations recognising the ecological value of forests.²¹

3.4 The Silent Valley Movement: Biodiversity Protection

The Silent Valley Movement in Kerala represents a significant struggle for biodiversity conservation. The movement emerged in opposition to a proposed hydroelectric project that threatened the Silent Valley tropical rainforest one of the richest biodiversity hotspots in India.¹⁷ Environmentalists, scientists, and civil society groups mobilised against the project, emphasising the irreversible ecological damage it would cause.

The sustained public campaign ultimately led to the cancellation of the project and the declaration of Silent Valley as a National Park. This movement demonstrated the power of scientific evidence combined with public mobilisation in influencing environmental decisionmaking. It also highlighted the role of expert knowledge and environmental impact assessments in shaping policy outcomes.¹⁸

Legally, the Silent Valley Movement reinforced the importance of precautionary approaches in environmental governance and informed future environmental clearance processes.

3.5 The Narmada Bachao Andolan: Development versus Environment

The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) stands as one of the most prominent and contentious environmental movements in India. The movement opposed large dam projects on the Narmada River, particularly the Sardar Sarovar Dam, citing environmental degradation, displacement of indigenous communities, and inadequate rehabilitation measures.¹⁹

The NBA challenged the dominant development paradigm by questioning whether large infrastructure projects justified extensive ecological damage and social displacement. The movement utilised legal strategies, public protests, and international advocacy to draw attention to environmental justice and human rights concerns.

The legal battle culminated in *Narmada Bachao Andolan v. Union of India*, where the Supreme Court attempted to balance developmental needs with environmental protection.²⁰ While the Court allowed the project to proceed subject to conditions, the case significantly advanced environmental jurisprudence by emphasising environmental impact assessments, rehabilitation obligations, and sustainable development principles.

3.6 Impact of Environmental Movements on Environmental Policy

Environmental movements have contributed to the evolution of environmental policies and regulatory mechanisms in India. Their influence is visible in the enactment and strengthening of environmental statutes, environmental impact assessment procedures, and public participation requirements.²⁶

Movements have also prompted greater accountability in governance by exposing environmental violations and pressuring authorities to enforce environmental laws. However, despite these contributions, the effectiveness of environmental movements remains constrained by bureaucratic resistance, political pressures, and economic priorities.

CHAPTER 4

INDIAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK RESPONDING TO ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

4.1 Constitutional Foundations of Environmental Protection in India

The Constitution of India forms the bedrock of environmental governance in the country. Although the original Constitution did not expressly provide for environmental protection, constitutional interpretation and subsequent amendments significantly influenced by environmental movements have expanded the scope of environmental rights and duties.²¹

The Forty-Second Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976 marked a watershed moment by introducing Article 48A under the Directive Principles of State Policy, mandating the State to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.²² Simultaneously, Article 51A (g) imposed a fundamental duty on citizens to protect and improve the natural environment.²³ These provisions reflect the growing recognition of environmental protection as a collective responsibility shaped by public consciousness and activism.

4.2 Article 21 and Judicial Expansion of Environmental Rights

The most significant constitutional development in environmental law has been the judicial expansion of Article 21, which guarantees the right to life and personal liberty. Through innovative interpretation, the Supreme Court of India has held that the right to life includes the right to live in a clean, healthy, and pollution-free environment.²⁴

In *Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar*, the Court explicitly recognised the right to enjoyment of pollution-free water and air as part of Article 21.²⁵ This interpretation was not developed in isolation; it was shaped by sustained environmental movements and public interest litigations that brought environmental degradation to the Court's attention.

Environmental movements thus indirectly constitutionalised environmental rights by compelling the judiciary to respond to ecological crises and governance failures.

4.3 Statutory Framework Governing Environmental Protection

4.3.1 Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (EPA) is the umbrella legislation for environmental protection in India. Enacted in the aftermath of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, the Act empowers the central government to take measures for protecting and improving environmental quality.²⁶

The EPA enables the government to set standards, regulate industrial activities, and issue binding directions, including closure of polluting units. Environmental movements have frequently invoked the EPA to challenge industrial pollution and demand regulatory action.²⁷

However, the Act's effectiveness is often undermined by excessive executive discretion and weak enforcement mechanisms.

4.3.2 Forest Conservation Act, 1980

The Forest Conservation Act, 1980 (FCA) was enacted to curb deforestation and regulate the diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes. The Act reflects the influence of forest-based movements such as the Chipko Movement, which highlighted the ecological and livelihood importance of forests.¹²⁸

Judicial interpretation of the FCA, particularly in *T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India*, expanded the definition of forests and strengthened conservation measures.²⁹ This case illustrates how judicial activism, inspired by environmental concerns, has reinforced statutory protection.

4.3.3 Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**

The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 aims to protect wild animals, birds, and plants and establish protected areas. Environmental movements advocating biodiversity conservation have played a significant role in strengthening wildlife protection policies and expanding protected area networks.³⁶

Courts have emphasised ecological preservation over developmental interests in wildlife cases, recognising biodiversity as a national and global asset.

4.4 Environmental Impact Assessment and Public Participation

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) mechanism represents a critical interface

between environmental movements and environmental governance. Introduced under the EPA and formalised through the EIA Notification, 2006, the EIA process mandates prior environmental clearance for certain projects.³⁰

Environmental movements have consistently criticised the EIA process for procedural dilution, inadequate public consultation, and post-facto clearances. Judicial scrutiny of EIA violations reflects the judiciary's responsiveness to these concerns. In *Lafarge Umiam Mining Pvt. Ltd.*

v. Union of India, the Supreme Court underscored the importance of sustainable development and inter-generational equity in granting environmental clearances.³¹

4.5 Judicial Doctrines Influenced by Environmental Movements

4.5.1 Sustainable Development

The doctrine of sustainable development seeks to balance economic growth with environmental protection. The Supreme Court explicitly recognised this principle in *Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum v. Union of India*, influenced by both domestic activism and international environmental norms.³⁹

4.5.2 Precautionary Principle and Polluter Pays Principle

In the same case, the Court adopted the precautionary principle and polluter pays principle, shifting the burden of proof to polluters and emphasising preventive action. These principles reflect the preventive ethos of environmental movements demanding accountability and ecological foresight.

4.6 National Green Tribunal and Specialised Environmental Adjudication

The establishment of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 represents an institutional response to increasing environmental litigation. The NGT provides speedy and specialised adjudication of environmental disputes.³²

Environmental movements have utilised the NGT to challenge environmental clearances, industrial pollution, and regulatory non-compliance. While the tribunal has enhanced access to environmental justice, concerns remain regarding enforcement of its orders and jurisdictional limitations.³³

5.2 Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Global Environmental Activism

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play a central role in international environmental movements. Organisations such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) have been instrumental in raising awareness, conducting research, and lobbying governments and international institutions. These organisations operate independently of states, allowing them to challenge powerful economic interests and expose environmental violations at the global level.

CHAPTER 5

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

5.1 Evolution of International Environmental Law

International environmental law developed largely in response to growing scientific evidence of global environmental degradation and sustained pressure from international environmental movements. Prior to the 1970s, international law addressed environmental issues only incidentally through treaties on navigation, fisheries, or territorial sovereignty.³⁴ The rise of transboundary pollution, nuclear risks, and ecological disasters transformed environmental protection into an autonomous field of international law.

Environmental movements played a catalytic role by internationalising environmental concerns, mobilising public opinion, and compelling states to acknowledge their shared responsibility for protecting the global environment. This interaction between activism, science, and diplomacy laid the foundation for modern international environmental law.

5.2 Stockholm Conference, 1972: Birth of Global Environmental Consciousness

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held at Stockholm in 1972, marks the formal beginning of international environmental law. The conference was strongly influenced by environmental movements and scientific advocacy highlighting pollution, resource depletion, and human health risks.³⁵

The Stockholm Declaration articulated 26 principles, recognising the right to a healthy environment and the duty of states to protect and improve the environment.³⁶ Although nonbinding, these principles shaped subsequent treaty-making and national environmental

legislation. Environmental movements ensured that environmental protection was framed as a matter of human well-being and inter-generational responsibility rather than mere resource management.³⁷

The establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) further institutionalised global environmental governance and created avenues for continued civil society engagement.³⁸

Rio Earth Summit, 1992: Sustainable Development and Participation

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, represents a significant advancement in international environmental law. Environmental movements played a prominent role in advocating sustainable development, equity, and public participation.³⁹

Outcomes of the Rio Summit included:

- * Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- * Agenda 21
- * Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- * United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration emphasised access to information, public participation, and access to justice core demands of environmental movements. Rio thus shifted international environmental law towards participatory governance and integrated environmental concerns with development objectives.⁴⁰

5.4 Climate Change Law and the Paris Agreement, 2015

Climate change has emerged as the most pressing global environmental challenge, prompting intense mobilisation by international environmental movements. Persistent advocacy by climate activists and civil society organisations significantly influenced the evolution of climate change law under the UNFCCC framework.⁴¹

The Paris Agreement, 2015, reflects the culmination of decades of climate activism and diplomatic negotiation. It aims to limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C, with efforts to restrict it to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.⁵⁰ The agreement introduced

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), promoting flexibility and national ownership while encouraging progressive ambition.

Environmental movements have played a critical role in monitoring state commitments, highlighting inadequacies in NDCs, and demanding climate justice, particularly for vulnerable populations and developing countries. However, the agreement's reliance on voluntary commitments raises concerns regarding enforceability and accountability.⁴²

5.5 Principles of International Environmental Law Influenced by Movements

Environmental movements have contributed significantly to the development and consolidation of core principles of international environmental law.

5.5.1 Precautionary Principle

The precautionary principle mandates preventive action in the face of scientific uncertainty. Environmental movements advocating early intervention against ecological harm promoted this principle, which now finds recognition in multiple international instruments.⁴³

5.5.2 Polluter Pays Principle

This principle assigns the cost of pollution prevention and remediation to the polluter. Environmental activism demanding corporate accountability helped embed this principle into international and domestic legal frameworks.⁴⁴

5.5.3 Inter-Generational Equity

Intergenerational equity reflects the ethical obligation to protect the environment for future generations. Environmental movements have championed this principle, influencing treaty language and judicial reasoning at both national and international levels.⁴⁵

5.6 Role of International Courts and Tribunals

International adjudicatory bodies have gradually incorporated environmental considerations into their jurisprudence, often reflecting norms advanced by environmental movements. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has acknowledged environmental protection as a matter of international concern, particularly in cases involving transboundary harm.⁴⁶ Advisory opinions and judgments increasingly recognise

environmental obligations as part of customary international law. While international courts remain cautious, their evolving approach indicates the normative influence of environmental advocacy and scientific consensus.

CHAPTER 6

COMPARATIVE AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES

6.1 Comparative Overview of Environmental Movements

Environmental movements at the national and international levels share a common objective of ecological protection, yet they differ significantly in structure, strategy, and impact. In India, environmental movements are largely grassroots-oriented, emerging from local communities directly affected by environmental degradation.⁴⁷ These movements frequently intertwine environmental concerns with issues of livelihood, displacement, and social justice.

In contrast, international environmental movements tend to operate through transnational networks, international NGOs, and advocacy platforms that engage directly with global institutions.⁵⁷ While Indian movements often rely on judicial intervention and public interest litigation, international movements emphasise agenda setting, norm creation, and treaty advocacy.

6.2 Legal Influence: Domestic versus International Frameworks

At the national level, environmental movements in India have significantly influenced constitutional interpretation and statutory enforcement. Judicial recognition of environmental rights under Article 21 and the development of environmental principles such as sustainable development reflect the judiciary's responsiveness to public activism.⁴⁸ However, domestic legal systems possess stronger enforcement mechanisms compared to international law, including coercive sanctions and judicial review.

International environmental law, by contrast, relies largely on voluntary compliance and soft enforcement mechanisms.⁴⁹ Environmental movements have influenced the development of international norms and principles, but the absence of binding enforcement structures limits their effectiveness. This disparity underscores the structural

weakness of international environmental governance despite growing normative consensus.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The central conclusion of this study is that environmental movements have been normatively successful but operationally constrained. While they have succeeded in influencing legal norms, policies, and judicial discourse, their ability to ensure effective implementation remains limited. Environmental law, both domestic and international, often reflects the aspirations of environmental movements without guaranteeing ecological outcomes.

The research further reveals that environmental governance suffers from structural weaknesses. At the national level, administrative discretion, regulatory capture, and prioritisation of economic development over ecological sustainability dilute the effectiveness of environmental laws.⁵⁰ At the international level, fragmented governance frameworks and the absence of binding enforcement mechanisms hinder meaningful compliance.

Importantly, environmental movements cannot substitute for effective institutions. Judicial activism and public mobilisation, though significant, are insufficient in the absence of strong regulatory capacity, political will, and institutional accountability.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Environmental regulatory authorities must be strengthened through enhanced technical capacity, financial autonomy, and institutional independence. Penalties for environmental violations should be deterrent rather than nominal.

EIA procedures must be made more transparent, participatory, and scientifically rigorous. Postfacto environmental clearances should be strictly prohibited, and public consultations must be meaningful.

Environmental democracy should be operationalised through legal mandates ensuring

access to information, participation in decision-making, and access to justice. Community consent should be central to projects affecting local ecosystems.

While judicial oversight remains important, long-term environmental protection requires efficient administrative governance. Courts should focus on structural remedies and institutional reform rather than case-by-case interventions.

International environmental agreements must move towards stronger compliance mechanisms, including monitoring, reporting, and accountability frameworks. Climate finance and technology transfer should be enhanced to address global inequities.⁶¹

Environmental movements should be protected as legitimate democratic actors. Legal safeguards must ensure freedom of expression, protest, and access to justice for environmental defenders.

Future Role of Environmental Movements

The future of environmental movements lies in strategic engagement with law, policy, and institutions. Emerging trends such as climate litigation, digital activism, and youth-led movements present new opportunities for accountability and innovation. Environmental movements must evolve from reactive protest to proactive governance partnerships while retaining their critical and watchdog functions.

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