

Silent Valley Movement

The silent valley is a tropical evergreen forest area located in Kerala. It is one of India's last remaining portions of virgin tropical evergreen forest and is extremely biodiverse.

Environmentalists and residents were outraged when a hydroelectric power project was proposed in 1973.

In 1985, the government was forced to declare it a national reserve forest due to public pressure. It was then named the silent valley national park. This national park is home to the most species of lion-tailed macaques in India, which is also a critically endangered animal.

Save Silent Valley Movement

The Silent Valley is well-known for its rare animal and bird species. Because this forest is lushly forested and has a huge area under vegetation, there is no loud sound in the forest apart from that of some birds and insects, which is why this valley is identified as Silent Valley. This Valley covers a surface area of 90 square kilometers. The Kunthipura river passes through the Silent Valley. This runs for about 15 kilometers and falls from an altitude of 2400 meters. According to mythology, the Pandavas are said to have chosen to settle in the silent valley after losing their empire and land.

- The silent valley movement arose in response to the official statement of the construction of a dam on Kunthipura's upper stream, also called the silent valley project.
- The first survey was conducted by the state government in 1958.
- The dam over the top stream, according to British technicians, can help generate hydroelectricity.
- The planning commission gave its approval in 1973. The project's main goal was to produce 120 megawatts of electrical power and water to yield 240 megawatts of electric power.
- In 1976, a bunch of environmentalists began to oppose the silent valley project.
- A task force was set up under the presidency of the then Vice-President of the World Wildlife Fund India.
- The task force continued to work for over a year and conducted several surveys that recommended that the project be halted.
- The task force's report stated that the project's construction will lead to significant harm to the green cover. It will eventually harm flora and fauna, as well as the water. This will result in high-scale forest disasters.
- This report also advised that in case the government is compelled to construct the dam, then they must also adhere to the 17 recommendations outlined in the given report.
- In 1979, the task force's leader admitted that the initial report was a blunder and made a plea to the government to cease the project entirely.

Outcome of Silent Valley Movement

The silent valley movement played a vital role in saving the valley from biodiversity damage.

The effect that the silent valley movement had is explained below:

- The movement was initiated by Kerala Sasthra Sathiya Parishad (KSSP), which was an NGO along with being Kerala's biggest science organization.
- The proposal to ban the project was welcomed by the state government, and the KSSP began a massive signature campaign to prevent its construction.

- The legislative assembly then approved the project. The KSSP released a guidebook titled "The Silent Valley Movement Hydroelectric Project: A Techno-economic and Sociopolitical Assessment."
- The state government was instructed to abandon the project in 1979 by India's then-prime minister.

Short Note on Silent Valley Movement

The Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) put forward a proposal to build a dam over the Kunthipuzha River, which flows through the Silent Valley in Kerala. The Planning Commission then gave its approval to this project in 1973 in the month of February, at an estimated budget of 25 crore rupees. Quite a few people were worried that the project might dilute 8.3 square kilometers of untouched evergreen forest. Numerous non-governmental organizations firmly condemned the proposal and demanded that the government take it back.

Indira Gandhi announced that Silent Valley would be safeguarded in January 1981 in reply to uncompromising public pressure. The Central government re-examined the matter in the month of June 1983 with the help of a commission presided over by Prof. M.G.K. Menon. The Silent Valley Hydroelectric Project was dropped in November 1983. The Silent Valley National Park was officially inaugurated in 1985 by then-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

