

Environmental Movements and Important Case Studies

“A chopped head is cheaper than a felled tree.”

- Amrita Devi

BISHNOI MOVEMENT

- The Bishnoi faith is a religious offshoot of Hinduism founded on **29 principles**, most of which promote **environmental stewardship**.
- The religion was founded by **Guru Maharaj Jambaji** in **1485 AD** in the **Marwar (Jodhpur)** desert region of western Rajasthan, India.
- He banned cutting down green trees and killing birds or animals.
- Bishnois are famous for cultivating lush vegetation, caring for animals, and collecting drinkable water.



BISHNOI MOVEMENT

- **Principles of Bishnoi philosophy relevant to environmental protection**
 - To be compassionate towards all living beings.
 - Do not cut the green trees, save the environment.
 - To provide a common shelter for goat/sheep to avoid them being slaughtered.
 - Don't sterilize bulls.
 - Feed and protect wildlife.

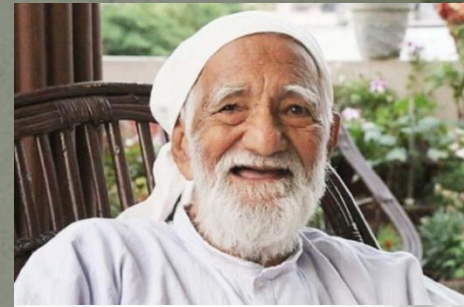
BISHNOI MOVEMENT

- In 1730, maharajah (king) of Jodhpur sent soldiers to gather **khejri (acacia)** wood from the forest region near the **village of Khejarli**.
- **Amrita Devi** was a female villager who decided to literally hug the trees, and encouraged others to do so too.
- As each villager **hugged a tree**, refusing to let go, they were beheaded by the soldiers.
- This voluntary martyrdom continued until **363 Bishnoi villagers** were killed in the name of the sacred Khejarli forest.



CHIPKO MOVEMENT

- Chipko movement (Chipko andolan): A nonviolent social and ecological movement by rural villagers in India in the 1970s, aimed at protecting trees and forests slated for government-backed logging.
- The movement originated in the Himalayan region of Uttar Pradesh (now Uttarakhand).
- Inspired by Bishnoi movement
- The main objective was to protect the trees on the Himalayan slopes from the axes of contractors of the forest.
- Led by Sundarlal Bahuguna, Gaura Devi, Sudesha Devi



NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN

- The movement first started in 1985 as a protest for not providing proper **rehabilitation and resettlement** for the people who have been displaced by the construction of **Sardar Sarovar Dam**.
- Later on, the movement turned its focus on the **preservation of the environment and the eco-systems** of the valley.
- Led by Medha Patekar



NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN

- Activists also demanded the height of the dam to be reduced to **88 m** from the proposed height of **130m**. World Bank withdrew from the project.
- In **October 2000**, the Supreme Court gave a judgment approving the construction of the **Sardar Sarovar Dam** with a condition that height of the dam could be raised to **90 m**.
- The project is expected to be fully completed by **2025**.



SILENT VALLEY MOVEMENT

- The **Silent Valley** is one of the last undisturbed rain forests and tropical moist evergreen forests in India.
- It is located in the Nilgiri Hills, Palakkad District in Kerala, South India.
- 16 bird species and 34 species of mammals in Silent Valley are threatened.
- Over 128 species of butterflies and 400 species of moths live here.



SILENT VALLEY MOVEMENT

- The Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) proposed a **hydroelectric dam** across the Kunthipuzha River that runs through Silent Valley.
- In **February 1973**, the Planning Commission **approved the project**.
- Several NGOs strongly opposed the project and urged the government to abandon it.
- In **January 1981**, Indira Gandhi declared that **Silent Valley will be protected**.
- In **November 1983** the Silent Valley Hydroelectric Project was **called off**.
- In **1985**, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi formally inaugurated the **Silent Valley National Park**.

Role of an individual in conservation of natural resources

- Switch off lights, fans and other appliances when not in use.
- Use solar heater for cooking your food on sunny days.
- Use minimum amount of water for all domestic purposes.
- Built rainwater harvesting system in your house.
- Grow different types of plants, herbs, trees and grass in your garden and open areas.
- Don't use more fertilizer and pesticides. Use nature manure to the crops.
- Don't waste the food instead give it to someone before getting spoiled.