

# Environmental Movements and Important Case Studies

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*“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

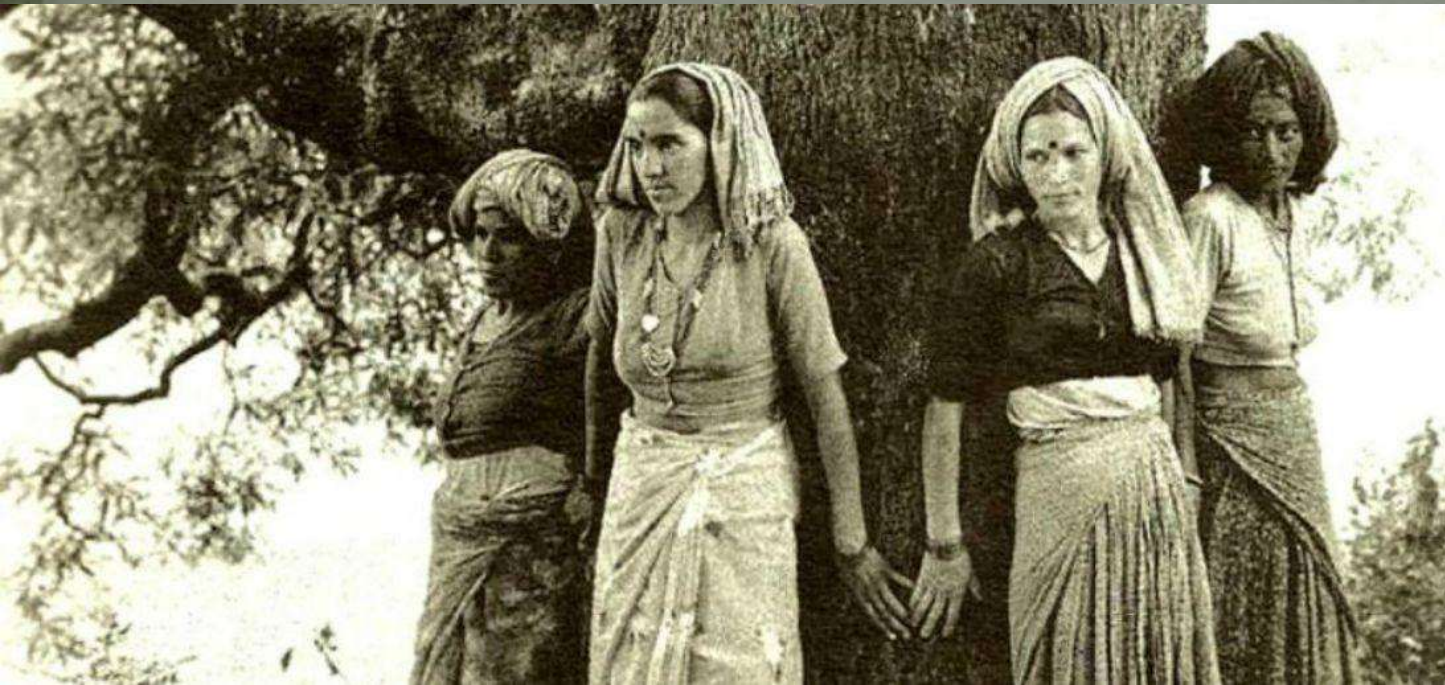
- In 1730, maharajah (king) of Jodhpur sent soldiers to gather **khejri (acacia)** wood from the forest region near the **village of Khejarli**.
- **Amrita Devi** was a female villager who decided to literally hug the trees, and encouraged others to do so too.
- As each villager **hugged a tree**, refusing 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 was inaugurated in 2017.



# 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**.

# Jungle Bachao Andholan



Year: 1982

Place: Singbhum district of Bihar

Leaders: The tribals of Singbhum.

Aim: Against governments decision to replace the natural **sal forest** with **Teak**.

**What was it all about:** The tribals of the Singbhum district of Bihar started the protest when the government decided to replace the natural sal forests with the highly-priced teak. This move was called by many “Greed Game Political Populism”. Later this movement spread to Jharkhand and Orissa



# Appiko Movement



Year: 1983

Place: Uttara Kannada and Shimoga districts of Karnataka State

Leaders: Appiko's greatest strengths lie in it being neither driven by a personality nor having been formally institutionalised.

However, it does have a facilitator in Pandurang Hegde. He helped launch the movement in 1983.

Aim: Against the felling and commercialization of natural forest and the ruin of ancient livelihood.

**What was it all about:** It can be said that the Appiko movement is the southern version of the Chipko movement. The Appiko Movement was locally known as "Appiko Chaluvali". The locals embraced the trees which were to be cut by contractors of the forest department. The Appiko movement used various techniques to raise awareness such as foot marches in the interior forest, slide shows, folk dances, street plays etc.

# Tehri Dam

With a height of 260.5 m (855 ft) Tehri Dam is the tallest dam in India and 12th tallest dam in the world. It is a multi-purpose rock and earth-fill embankment dam on the Bhagirathi River in New Tehri, Tehri Garhwal district in Uttarakhand, India.



The anti-Tehri Dam movement began around the 1980s and continued till 2004. It was led by Sunderlal Bahuguna, who was an environmental activist. The main concern was that the construction of the dam would lead to the displacement of the inhabitants of the village and damage the ecosystem, which was already weak.

This dam has been the object of intense protests from environmental groups and the people of Tehri and surrounding areas. There have been legal battles over the relocation of more than 1 lakh people. Also, environmental concerns have been raised, as the dam is planned in the Central Himalayan Seismic Gap, a major geologic fault zone (this region was the site of a major earthquake in October 1991). Sunderlal Bahuguna is one of the leaders opposed to this project. However, the project has received court clearance despite protests.



# 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.