

Bishnoi Movement

The Bishnoi movement was among the earliest groups to campaign for environmental preservation, wildlife protection, and sustainable living. The Bishnoi family are regarded as India's first environmentalists. This movement was the first in the history of environmental movements to embrace the technique of hugging and embracing trees to protect them.

One of the first initiatives for environmental protection is the well-known Bishnoi movement Amrita Devi movement. When Jodhpur's King Abhay Singh was constructing his new palace in the 1730s, he ordered his soldiers orders to clear the trees in the village of Khejarli for wood. Amrita Devi fought for the survival of trees by clinging to them as a sign of protest as she stood against the military. Asu, Ratni, and Bhagu, three of her daughters, supported their mother. The other town residents joined them in standing up for the trees and circling their trunks in support. Without stopping to listen to the people's requests, the soldiers kept felling trees.

The Bishnoi community cultural beliefs, which are reflected in their sect's tenets and advocate the preservation of trees and wildlife, were the primary factor in their opposition to tree cutting. Another factor or a cause of the Bishnoi movement was their reliance on the forest for the source of fuelwood and fodder, which was directly tied to their rural way of life. Bishnoi from Khejarli and nearby villages joined the protest and hugged these Khejri trees one by one to save them from being cut down at the possibility of losing their lives.

In this movement, 363 Bishnois of Rajasthan gave their life to safeguard the Khejri trees in the Rajasthani village of Khejarli. The Bishnoi movement had a profound impact on people's minds and memories, leaving an ever-lasting impression.

Who are Bishnois of Rajasthan?

The Bishnois are a religious sect from India that is strongly committed to protecting the environment, including animals. The group was established in 1485 AD and had 29 tenets, also referred to as the 29 principles as well as commandments that Guru Jambeshwar had taught. Livestock and agriculture are the two main pillars of the Bishnoi community subsistence economy.

They are known by the name Vishnoi and uphold the idea of conserving plants and animals. The Bishnoi people strongly oppose using animal products for entertainment or food. According to their philosophy, every living thing whether an animal or a plant—is sacred and should not be killed by people. Because of their sustainable lifestyle & attention to environmental conservation, they have been referred to as the world's first ecological community because of their sustainable lifestyle and attention to environmental conservation. It is prohibited for community members to cut down trees or go hunting.

The Bishnois of Rajasthan specialise in dairy farming and are well-known for their high-quality dairy products & soap-making abilities. In addition, they grow cotton, jowar, millet, wheat, and bajra.

Origin of Bishnoi Community

By Guru Jambheshwar, the Bishnoism sect was established. To be followed by the sect, he established 29 precepts. Bish is equivalent to 20, while noi is equivalent to 9. Bishnoi means twenty-nine, as a result. The name "BISHNOI" would be given to those who sincerely adhere to the 29 ideals. Western India, particularly Rajasthan, is home to the non-violent Bishnoi community, which worships the environment.

Objectives of the Bishnoi Movement

There were four main objectives of the Bishnoi movement, which are as follows:

- To protect the region's biodiversity by guaranteeing a healthy, eco-friendly social life for the community.
- To encourage proper personal cleanliness, fundamental health, and responsible social engagement.
- Another objective of the Bishnoi movement is to campaign against the removal of such trees and support anti-deforestation movements.
- To protect biological variety and promote responsible animal husbandry.

Success of Bishnoi Movement

Following this incident of the Bishnoi movement, the maharaja issued a stringent royal proclamation prohibiting tree chopping in all Bishnoi villages. The history of Bishnoism, which began around 1730 A.D., is where the idea of embracing trees and tree huggers originated. The Chipko Movement of the 20th century, led by Sunder Lal Bahuguna, was inspired by the Bishnoi movement and sacrifice. Additionally, the governments of Rajasthan & India presented the Amrita Devi Bishnoi Smrithi Paryavaran Award and the Amrita Devi Bishnoi Wildlife Protection Award in recognition of their contributions towards the preservation of nature and the protection of wildlife, respectively.