

Appiko Movement – UPSC Notes

Appiko Movement is one of the forest-based environmental movements in India. The movement took place in the Uttara Kanada district of Karnataka in the Western Ghats. The story of the movement is that for several decades the forest department had been promoting monoculture plantations of teak after clear-felling the existing mixed semi-evergreen forests.

About Appiko Movement

- In September 1983, women and youth of the region decided to launch a movement similar to Chipko, in South India.
- The movement was named Appiko which means “hug” in Kannada, symbolising protection for the tree.
- The movement was founded and led by environmental activist **Panduranga Hegde**.
- The aim of the movement was to conserve the trees of the Kalse forests in Karnataka.
- Women and youth from Saklani and surrounding villages walked five miles to a nearby forest and hugged trees there.
- They forced the fellers and the contractors of the state forest department to stop cutting trees.
- The people demanded a ban on the felling of green trees.
- The agitation continued for 38 days and this forced the state government to finally concede to their demands and withdraw the order for the felling of trees.
- Like the Chipko, the Appiko movement revived the Gandhian way of protest and mobilisation for a sustainable society in which there is a balance between man and nature.

Background

- In August 1983, the villagers of the Sirsi Taluk of Uttara Kannada requested the forest department not to continue the felling operations in the Bilegal forest under the Hulekal range.
- The forest department, however, did not pay attention to the request of the villagers and the clear-felling of the natural forests by the contractors continued.
- The villagers felt the ill effects of this arrogance on the part of the forest department.
- There was severe soil erosion and drying up of the perennial water resources.

- In the Salkani village of Sirsi Taluk, people were deprived of the only patch of forest left near this and surrounding villages to obtain biomass for fuelwood, fodder, and honey.
- Moreover, the spice-garden farmers of Uttara Kannada, who were critically dependent on leaf manure from the forests, were also badly hit.

Objectives of Appiko Movement

The Appiko movement succeeded in its three-fold objectives, which include:

- Protecting the existing forest cover
- Regeneration of trees in denuded land
- Utilizing forest wealth with proper consideration for the conservation of natural resources.

Effects of Appiko Movement

- The Appiko movement saved the basic life sources for the people, that is, trees like bamboo useful for making handcrafted items which they could sell for earning some money for their livelihood.
- It also saved medicinal trees for their use by the local people.
- Further, the movement created awareness among the villagers throughout the Western Ghats about the ecological danger posed by the commercial and industrial interests to their forest, which was the main source of sustenance.
- Like the Chipko movement, south India's Appiko movement also achieved successful results.