

A Gandhian in Garhwal

A. Choose the correct answer

1. Why did the shepherd boy shout 'H.N. Bahuguna' as the author's taxi passed him?

c. He was showing his dislike for the rich people coming from the plains

2. Why did the followers of DGSS hug the tress?

b. It was an act of resistance against the commercial exploitation of forest.

3. Why did the boy who Bhatt met on the way to Rudraath break off a plant with his mouth?

c. Because if he broke it off like this the deity would not be offended

4. What is Chandi Prasad Bhatt against?

b. He is against the construction of large dams

B. Answer the following questions in a sentence or two each

1. Why did H.N. Bahuguna come back to Garhwal after decades of self-imposed exile?

A: It was to fight a by-election against his former party, the Congress, that H.N. Bahuguna returned to Garhwal after decades of self-imposed exile.

2. How was Chandi Prasad Bhatt related to the temple of Rudranath?

A: He was born into a family of priests who tended the Temple of Rudranath.

3. How did Chandi Prasad Bhatt support his mother?

A: It was by teaching art to children and then by joining the Garhwal Motor Owners Union as a booking clerk that Chandi Prasad Bhatt supported his mother.

4. Who were the leaders that inspired Chandi Prasad Bhatt?

A: The Sarvodaya leaders Jayapraksh Narayan, Vinoba Bhave and Man Singh Rawat.

5. How did Chandi Prasad Bhatt respond to J.P.'s call for more volunteers?

A: Chandi Prasad Bhatt dedicated himself to the Sarvodaya movement as a response to J.P.'s call for more volunteers. It was a considerable sacrifice because he was now married and had a child.

6. What was the mother organization of the Chiko Movement?

A: The Dashauli Swarajya Seva Sangh, started by Chandi Prasad Bhatt, was the mother organization of the Chipko Movement.

7. What was the response of J.P. and his wife to the work of Bhatt and his followers?

A: J.P. and his wife Prabhavati were impressed by the work of Bhatt and his followers at Gopeshwar. They said they were reminded of the sacrificial heroism that marked Gandhi's own movement.

8. What action of the forest department provoked the DGSS to make an open protest?

A: In 1973, the Forest Department refused to allot the Dashauli Swarajya Seva Sangh a batch of hornbeam trees from which to make agricultural implements but auctioned off the same to a sports company in distant Allahabad. This provoked the DGSS to make an open protest.

9. What was special about the protest at Reni in 1974?

A: The protest at Reni in 1974 was carried out exclusively by women. It was a sign of women empowerment and their ecological consciousness.

10. How did Bahuguna describe the Chipko Andolan?

A: According to Bahuguna, the Chipko Andolan was an economic movement that would subside once its demands were met. On the contrary, its main aim was the fostering of love towards trees in the hearts of humans and safeguarding the hill forests was only the first step towards transforming the relationship between humans and nature.

11. How does the journalist Ramesh Pahari describe Chandi Prasad Bhatt?

A: Ramesh Pahari describes Chandi Prasad Bhatt as simple and modest but firm and determined in ideas. He has fought bigger battles for the removal of social inequalities than for environmental protection.

12. Who was Murari Lal? How was he related to Chandi Prasad Bhatt?

A: The onetime construction worker Murali Lal was a dalit member the DGSM committee and an inseparable associate of Chandi Prasad Bhatt for thirty-five years. It was in Lal's village that the first tree-plantation program was offered.

C. Answer the following questions in about 100 words each

1. Write a short note on the Chipko Movement.

A: The Dashauli Swarajya Seva Sangh, started by Chandi Prasad Bhatt, was the mother organization of the Chipko (from the Hindi *chipko* which means 'to stick') Movement. In 1973, the Forest Department refused to allot the DGSS hornbeam trees to make agricultural implements from, but auctioned them off to a sports company. This made the organization protest. At Bhatt's suggestion, the villagers threatened to hug the trees rather than to allow the loggers in. It was not an economic movement that would subside once its demands were met. On the contrary, its main aim was to reconstruct environment and to foster love towards trees in the hearts of humans. Safeguarding the hill forests was only the first step towards transforming the relationship between humans and nature.

2. Describe the author's journey to Garhwal.

A: From Dehradun, he boarded a morning bus to Rishikesh and then another to Gopeshwar. The route was redolent with mythology and history, and the landscape

diverse. The bus stayed on the left bank of the Ganga until Devprayag, after which they crossed the divided river to follow the Alakananda. Around noon they reached Srinagar and he had lunch in a bazaar. But then it was discovered that the radiator of the bus had burst and the passengers had to take care of themselves. The author with some others got into a white taxi. They passed a series of hamlets sited on the union of sundry lesser rivers with the mighty Alakananda.

3. Give an account of the work of reconstruction done by the DGSS.

A: The Dashauli Swarajya Seva Sangh emphasized local employment generation through the promotion of weaving, bee-keeping, herb collection and cottage industries that would sustainably use forest products. It was the mother organization of the Chipko Movement. In 1973, the Forest Department refused to allot the organization hornbeam trees to make agricultural implements from but auctioned them off to a distant sports company. This made the DGSS protest. At Bhatt's suggestion, the villagers threatened to hug the trees rather than to allow the loggers in. It was not an economic movement that would subside once its demands were met. On the contrary, its main aim was to reconstruct environment and to foster love towards trees in the hearts of humans. Safeguarding the hill forests was only the first step towards transforming the relationship between humans and nature.

4. How does Ramesh Pahari summarize the work of Bhatt and DGSM?

A: The work of Bhatt and DGSM has been lovingly described in a booklet written by the journalist Ramesh Pahari. From his acquaintance with Bhatt for three decades, Pahari writes of his simplicity and modesty, but also his firmness of ideas and decisions. He quotes a Dalit member of the DGSM committee, Murari Lal, to the effect that Bhatt has fought bigger battles for removal of social inequities than for environmental protection. It was in Murari Lal's village that the first tree-plantation program was organized. This one-time construction worker has been an inseparable associate of Bhatt for 35 years.

5. Describe the local traditions of ecology that Chandi Prasad Bhatt came to know on his way to Rudranath.

A: As a boy, Chandi Prasad Bhatt often visited the family shrine at Rudranath. When he walked through the alpine pasture, he had to take off his shoes, so as not to harm the flowers. In one stretch, there was a ban on spitting and coughing and on anything that might pollute the river below. There were taboos on plucking plants before the festival of Nandasthmi: after which the

restraint was removed, so that the plucking of the now ripened flowers also released their seeds. Once he met a shepherd burning the flowers of the sacred *brahmakamal*. On being questioned, the shepherd answered that he was making antidote for stomach ache and added that he broke off the plant with his mouth, like a sheep, so that the deity would think that it was nature's natural order, rather than the hand of man at work. These events sensitized Bhatt to the local traditions of folk ecology.

D. Answer the following question in about 300 words

1. Write an essay on the life and career of Chandi Prasad Bhatt.

A: Chandi Prasad Bhatt was born in a family of priests. As a boy, he often visited the family shrine at Rudranath. When he walked through the alpine pasture, he had to take off his shoes, so as not to harm the flowers. In one stretch, there was a ban on spitting and coughing and on anything that might pollute of the river below. There were taboos on plucking plants before the festival of Nandasthmi: after which the restraint was removed, so that the plucking of the now ripened flowers also released their seeds.

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In 1964, Bhatt founded the Dashauli Swarajya Seva Sangh. It emphasized local employment generation through weaving, bee-keeping, herb collection and cottage industries. It was the mother organization of the Chipko Movement. In 1973, the Forest Department refused to allot the organization hornbeam trees to make agricultural implements from but auctioned them off to a distant sports company. This made the DGSS protest.

At Bhatt's suggestion, the villagers threatened to hug the trees rather than to allow the loggers in. It was not an economic movement that would subside once its demands were met. On the contrary, its aim was to reconstruct environment and to foster love towards trees in the hearts of humans. Safeguarding the hill forests was only the first step towards transforming the relationship between humans and nature.

As an environmentalist, Bhatt critiqued large dams and called for a synthesis between the practical knowledge of peasants and latest scientific innovations. He demonstrated that women and tribal people had a greater stake in the responsible management of nature than city dwellers.

