

- Name some persons who sacrificed their lives for the nation?
- Why did they sacrifice their lives?

Our country has always remained a torch bearer in every walk of life. The world is busy today, striving hard to save the nature whereas we have been the worshippers of trees since ages. What follows is a famous story about a small village-KHEJARLI in the district of Jodhpur.

It was a warm and sunny morning day of September 1737. Amrita Devi, a Bishnoi woman was busy doing her household duties. Her three daughters namely-Ashu, Ratni and Bhagu were at home, helping her. The men were away working in the fields.



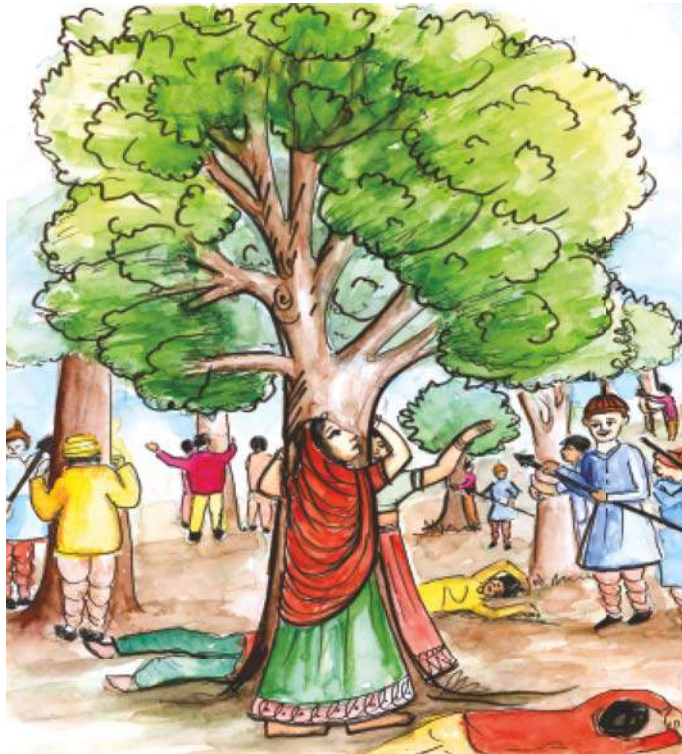
Suddenly, the family heard an unusual uproar outside. Amrita Devi rushed outside to see what the matter was. She saw the King's men in Royal dress commanding the woodcutters to cut down the Khejari trees in that area. The Hakim, Girdhari Lal was supervising the entire action. Khejari trees were worshipped by the Bishnois.



Amrita Devi was dumbstruck with wonder. She wanted to do something to stop the people. But she did not know how to stop them.

Finally, she shouted at the people at the top of her voice to stop felling those holy trees. Nobody heeded to her words. She straightway went to the Hakim to command his men to stop felling the trees. Her all requests were turned down. Even she was pushed out of the tent.

Finding no other way to check these people she ran and clasped one of the khejari trees which the people were cutting. The woodcutters had to stop. The Hakim who had come there asked Amrita Devi to keep her away from their path. But she did not move. The cruel Hakim ordered his men to cut down the trees at any cost even if they had to cut Amrita's limbs. Amrita Devi's limbs were cut down, creating a panic among the onlookers. Her three daughters followed the path shown by their brave mother.



But there was no concession to the tender aged girls. Their limbs were also chopped off. The incident created a sensation in the community. The Bishnois now poured in groups and sacrificed their lives. The event took the form of a massacre as 363 lives were lost.

As the news travelled to the king of Jodhpur, Maharaja Abhay Singh rushed down to Khejarli immediately and stopped his men from doing it.

Maharaja Abhay Singh was grief stricken at the loss of 363 lives of his people. He not only put a permanent ban on the felling of trees in that area but also declared the deceased as martyrs.

He even issued a Royal decree stating that-

- There will be no cutting of green trees in the Bishnoi villages.

- The defaulters will be penalized and prosecuted;
- Even members of the Royal family would not shoot animals there.

Such was the unique sacrifice of Amrita Devi who loved nature at the cost of her life.

Glossary:

supervise	:	to be incharge of something and make sure that everything is done correctly.
entire	:	whole
dumbstruck	:	unable to speak because of surprise.
heed	:	to pay careful attention to someone's advice or warning.
clasp	:	to hold tightly
massacre	:	the killing of a large number of people.
deceased	:	a dead person.
martyr	:	a person killed for his beliefs and principles.
decree	:	an official order.
prosecute	:	to officially charge somebody with a crime in a court.
onlooker	:	a person who watches something that is happening but is not involved in it.
concession	:	the act of giving something or to allow someone to have in order to end an argument.

Activity I**1. Write 'T' for the statements which are true and 'F' for the false ones:**

- i. Amrita Devi was working in the fields when the king's men and woodcutters came to cut down the trees. ()
- ii. Ashu, Ratni and Bhagu had gone to school when Amrita Devi was doing her household work. ()
- iii. Girdhari Lal Bhandari was the Hakim of the king and was the supervisor. ()
- iv. One thousand people were killed by the king's men while saving the khejri trees. ()
- v. Amrita Devi succeeded to stop the men from felling the trees. ()

2. Answer the following questions in brief:

- i. Which trees were being cut down by the Royal people and why?
- ii. Who was the supervisor of the team?
- iii. How many people lost their lives and why?
- iv. How did Amrita Devi protest?
- v. What did Maharaja Abhay Singh do when he came to know about the massacre?

Activity II**1. Correct the misspelt words:**

sarcficie

matrysr

cmomadend
 crule
 masascer

2. Give one word each for the following:

order somebody to do something
 killing of people in a large number
 the opposite to kind in the meaning
 to give away something voluntarily

3. Fill in the blanks with words given in the brackets:

(felled, sacrifice, commanded, cruel, massacre)

- i. Not only Rajasthan but the entire world will remember the great of Amrita Devi.
- ii. The *Jaliawalan bagh Kand* is the event of in the history of India where a number of innocent people were killed.
- iii. Kansa was aking who killed his own sister's children.
- iv. A large number of trees are in the name of development.
- v. It is said that respect is not demanded but it is

Activity III

1. Look at the following sentences:

Her three daughters followed the path shown by their brave mother.
 The Bishnois now poured there in groups and sacrificed their lives.

Now, fill the blanks of the sentences changing the form of the words given in the brackets.

(clasp, hear, shout, cut, declare)

- i. Shanu a strange noise outside her house in the afternoon yesterday.
- ii. The government of Rajasthan has a holiday on Ambedkar Jayanti.
- iii. Raghu's father told Raghu to bring a bucket of water till hethe rope of the buffalo.
- iv. I was surprised at the way Kamal back at his boss.
- v. Narendraall the weeds with his small knife.

2. Change the following sentences into Simple Past Tense.

- i. Hari prepares his food himself.
- ii. The doctor examines the patients one by one.
- iii. Madhur calls his younger sister to help him.
- iv. The watchman keeps a torch while patrolling.
- v. The chairman thanks the guests with a grand speech.

Activity IV

Find out the name of trees in your surroundings.

- which are worshipped.
- which have medicinal values.

Now collect their leaves, flowers and paste them in your scrapebooks and write a few sentences about their uses.

Activity V

This is a poem about cutting down of trees. The poet is trying to persuade a woodcutter not to cut down an old tree. He explains, with great passion, his reasons for wanting the tree to remain where it is. The teacher may divide the whole class into four groups. Each group will be given two stanzas each to read and then recite in chorus as a part of presentation.

Woodman, Spare that tree
Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me,
And I'll protect it now.

That old familiar tree,
Whose glory and renown
Are spread o'er land and sea,
And wouldst thou hew it down?

Woodman, forbear thy stroke !
Cut not its earth-bound ties ;
O, spare that aged oak,
Now towering to the skies !

When but an idle boy
I sought its grateful shade;
In all their gushing joy
Here too my sisters played.

My mother kissed me here;
My father pressed my hand –
Forgive this foolish tear,
But let that old oak stand!

My heart – strings round thee cling,
Close as thy bark, old friend!
Here shall the wild – bird sing,
And still thy branches bend.

Old tree! The storm still brave!
And, woodman, leave the spot;
While I've a hand to save,
Thy axe shall hurt it not.

-George Pope Morris

**Don't destroy the greenery and don't spoil the scenery,
save mother earth**