During the activist phase of Chipko in the 1970s, the courage and vigilance of Uttarakhandi women saved many forests and earned them a hallowed place in the history of the global environmental movement. Most prominent amongst these women was Gaura Devi who led the first all-women action to save their community forest in March 1974. As a widow with no formal education, Gaura Devi would nevertheless assume leadership of the village Mahila Mangal Dal and work tirelessly on behalf of her community long beyond those fateful few days when the axemen were chased away. Her example would be repeated by countless women who would come to form the backbone of the Chipko movement.

**Wangari Muta Maathai** is a Kenyan environmental and political activist. Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement, an environmental non-governmental organization that focused on the planting of trees, environmental conservation, and women's rights. In 1984, she was awarded the Right Livelihood Award, and in 2004, she became the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for “her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace.” Maathai was an elected member of Parliament and served as Assistant Minister for Environment and Natural Resources in the government of President Mwai Kibaki between January 2003 and November 2005.

**Saalumarada Thimmakka** is an Indian environmentalist from the state of Karnataka, noted for her work in planting and tending to banyan trees along a four-kilometre stretch of highway. Her work has been honoured with the National Citizen's Award of India. A U.S. environmental organisation based in Los Angeles and Oakland, California called Thimmakka's Resources for Environmental Education is named after her.
Ex.1. Answer the following questions with reference to the context.

Ref.I. ‘One woman whom future generations in Uttarakhand are not likely to forget is Gaura Devi who has mobilised the women of this region to protect their natural heritage.’

Q.1. From which excerpt are these lines taken?
Ans. The above lines are taken from ‘Women of the earth.’

Q.2. Who is Gaura Devi?
Ans. Gaura Devi is a woman from Uttarakhand who had no formal education and assumed leadership of the village Mahila Mangal Dal, working tirelessly to save the community forest, long beyond those fateful days when the axemen were chased away. She was a leader of the Chipko Movement, best known for its tactic of hugging trees.

Q.3. Why are the future generations not likely to forget her? How was the Chipko Movement carried out?
Ans. The future generations are not likely to forget her because she was the first to lead an all women campaign for the Chipko Movement in March 1974 which resulted in leaving behind undestroyed forests for the future generations. The women of Uttarakhand used to hug the trees of the forest to prevent them from being cut down. When the axemen arrived, Gaura Devi stood in their way and declared: “The forest nurtures us like a mother; you will only be able to use your axes on it after you have used them on us first.” This is how the Chipko Movement was carried out.

Q.4. What was the significance of this movement led by Gaura Devi?
Ans. The Chipko Movement helped to prevent commercial timber harvesting.

Ref.II. ‘A wise person once said that forestry is not about trees. It is about people. No one has realized this more than the women of the Uttarakhand region.’

Q.1. Where do these words appear?

Q.2. How have the women of the Uttarakhand region realized that forestry is not about trees, instead it is about people?
Ans. Through the Chipko Movement, the women of the Uttarakhand region realized that forestry is not about trees, instead it is about people. They realized that the people are the only ones who can come together to put a stop to destroying forests.
Q.3. What life mission did the women of Uttarakhand adopt?
Ans. The women of Uttarakhand have made it their lifetime mission to leave undestroyed forests for their children and grandchildren.

Ref.III. “My inspiration partly comes from my childhood experiences.”

Q.1. Who said these words? Write a few lines about her.
Ans. Wangari Maathai said these words. She is an African, born in Nyeri, a political leader who founded the Green Belt Movement in Kenya in 1977. Being able to pursue higher education she worked her way up through the academic ranks thus becoming head of the veterinary medicine faculty, a first for a woman in any department at that university. She became the first African woman and the first environmentalist to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004.

Q.2. Why did she say these words?
Ans. Wangari Maathai said these words as part of her acceptance speech for winning the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize.

Q.3. What did the speaker witness while growing up in Kenya? What were the consequences faced by the people of Kenya?
Ans. While growing up in Kenya, Wangari Maathai witnessed forests being cleared and replaced by commercial plantations which destroyed the local biodiversity and the capacity of the forests to conserve water.

Q.4. Who, according to Wangari Maathai are the other people whose work is honoured by the Nobel Peace Prize?
Ans. According to Wangari Maathai, the Nobel Peace Prize acknowledges the work of countless individuals and groups across the globe who worked quietly and often without recognition to protect the environment, defend human rights and ensure equality between women and men. Thus by doing so, they have planted the seeds of peace.

Ref.IV. “When we started the Green Belt Movement, I was partly responding to the needs identified by rural women.”

Q.1. Who does ‘I’ refer to in this excerpt?
Ans. ‘I’ refers to the first African woman environmentalist, Wangari Maathai.

Q.2. What were the needs identified by the rural women?
Ans. The needs identified by the rural women were lack of firewood, clean drinking water, balanced diets, shelter and income.
Q.3. What did the rural women recount?
Ans. The rural women recounted that unlike in the past they were unable to meet their basic needs. This was due to the degradation of their immediate environment.

Q.4. What did Wangari Maathai understand if the environment is destroyed, plundered or mismanaged?
Ans. Wangari Maathai came to understand that when the environment is destroyed, plundered or mismanaged, the quality of life and that of the future generations is undermined.

Q.5. What had the women not realized?
Ans. The women had not realized that meeting their needs depended on their environment being healthy and well managed. They were also unaware that a degraded environment leads to a scramble for scarce resources and may culminate in poverty.

Q.6. How did Wangari Maathai assist communities to understand the reciprocal relationship between a healthy environment and the ability to meet their basic needs?
Ans. In order to assist the communities to understand these linkages, Wangari Maathai developed a citizen education program by which people identified their problems, their causes and the solutions. Thus the people discovered that they are the primary custodians and beneficiaries of the environment.

Q.7. How do the participants discover that they must be part of the solutions?
Ans. On the environmental front the people are exposed to many human activities that are devastating to the environment and societies especially through deforestation, climatic instability and contamination of the soil. Therefore in the process the participants discover that they must be part of the solutions.

Q.8. Through this process what else do the people recognize?
Ans. Through this process the people also come to recognize that they are the primary custodians and beneficiaries of the environment that sustains them.

Q.9. According to Wangari Maathai what challenge are we faced with today?
Ans. According to Wangari Maathai we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops treating its life-support system.

Q.10. What does Wangari Maathai think we are called to do?
Ans. Wangari Maathai thinks we are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own – indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder.

Q.11. For what purpose would Wangari Maathai like to call on young people and why?
Ans. Wangari Maathai would like to call on young people to commit themselves to activities that contribute toward achieving the long term dreams because they have the energy and creativity to shape a sustainable future.
Q.12. What does Wangari Maathai say to the young people?
Ans. Wangari Maathai says that the young people are a gift to the communities and indeed the world and that they are the hope and our future.

Q.13. What was the childhood experience that Wangari Maathai recalled as she concluded her speech?
Ans. In her conclusion, Wangari Maathai reflected on a childhood experience when she would visit a stream next to her home to fetch water for her mother. She would drink water straight from the stream. She tried in vain to pick up the strands of frogs’ eggs, believing that they were beads. But every time she put her fingers under them they would break. Later she saw thousands of tadpoles: black and energetic, wriggling through the clear water against the background of the brown earth. Unfortunately fifty years later, the stream has dried up, women walk long distances for water which is not always clean.

Q.14. What does Wangari Maathai want to restore?
Ans. Wangari Maathai wants to restore the home of the tadpoles and give back to the children a world of beauty and wonder.

Ref.V. ‘While Maathai’s reasons for planting trees were to save Africa and in particular Kenya from soil erosion and deforestation, Thimmakha has a more modest reason.’

Q.1. Who is Thimmakha?
Ans. Saalumarada Thimmakha is a woman from the Magadi taluk of Bengaluru in Karnataka.

Q.2. What is she famously known for?
Ans. Saalumarada Thimmakha is famously known for receiving the Godfrey Phillips Award for planting four hundred saplings along a four kilometre stretch in Hulikal.

Q.3. What did Wangari Maathai and Saalumarada Thimmakha have in common?
Ans. Both women, Wangari Maathai and Saalumarada Thimmakha, planted trees in their surroundings.

Q.4. How were Wangari Maathai’s reasons for planting the trees different from those of Saalumarada Thimmakha?
Ans. Wangari Maathai’s reasons for planting trees were to save Africa and in particular Kenya from soil erosion and deforestation whereas Saalumarada Thimmakha planted trees because she wanted to look after them as if they were her own children.
Ref.VI. “I have never missed having kids, I am proud of these trees. They are my children.”

Q.1. Who said these words?
Ans. Saalumarada Thimmakha, from the Magadi taluk of Bengaluru in Karnataka said these words.

Q.2. What award did she receive and why?
Ans. Saalumarada Thimmakha received the Godfrey Phillips Award for planting four hundred saplings along a four kilometre stretch in Hulikal.

Q.3. What was Saalumarada Thimmakha’s reason for planting trees?
Ans. Saalumarada Thimmakha’s reason for planting trees was so that she could look after the plants like her own children.

Q.4. Why does Saalumarada Thimmakha consider these trees as her own children?
Ans. Saalumarada Thimmakka considers these trees as her own children as shen never had children of her own.

Q.5. Do the trees that Saalumarada Thimmakha planted, belong to her today? How does she still tend to them?
Ans. No, the trees that Saalumarada Thimmakha planted do not belong to her today, but she believes they are her children and she makes it a point to walk along the avenue everyday and caress what she has tended so lovingly.

What adjectives would you use to describe the following people?

- Gaura Devi ________________________________
- Wangari Maathai ____________________________
- Saalumarada Thimmakha ____________________