

## Social movements:

### a. Tribal, Peasant, Dalit and Women's movements

Introduction: Democracy is not only an instrument for holding periodical elections but also it is an instrument to build a participatory, egalitarian and just order, in which popular sovereignty rests with the people. It is through this system that common people participate in the decision-making process to improve their socio-economic condition. But the present institutional arrangements of the Indian political system are not adequate. So popular demands and discontent are often expressed outside the parliamentary mould through different types of protest and mass mobilisations such as strikes, dharnas, gheraos and bandhs. The masses, particularly the oppressed sections resort to direct action, which is a technique of political action aimed at political change. It is part of an ~~effort~~ effort to transform the power structure. Numerous social groups in India such as the tribal, peasant, Dalit and women have participated in different types of social and political movements over the last few decades.

### Features of Social movements:

Social movements are a variety of collective attempts to bring about a change in the existing social and political structure through institutional and non-institutional means. A movement has a class base and intends to alter the existing social orders and power structure to influence policy.

(9)

decisions and distribution of resources at the national or regional level where it takes place. Most of the movements have an ideology to justify it. collective action takes the shape of a movement only when it is sustained and organised.

There are a variety of approaches and typologies to analyse and classify movements. The Marxist approach focuses mainly on the class character, social base and outcome of the movement. There are other approaches which consider the role of values and ideology as the most important elements in the process of a social movement.

The movements, which aim at a radically different social order, develop an elaborate ideology and plan of action. Such movements are often derived from larger theories of history and society. According to some scholars the presence of ideology distinguishes a movement from the general effort of collective mobilisation and orientation towards change. A strike or示威 becomes an isolated event without an ideology. But all such actions based on ideology or critique of society become an event in the movement.

Another important feature of a social movement is an organisation. For example, all political movements need some kind of organisation that enables certain persons to act as representative and spokespersons. The organisation of a movement can take the form of committees, labour unions or political parties. It is important to remember that the relationship of social movements to

Political parties is very significant. There are different scenarios possible here. A Political Party may spearhead a movement as in the case of the Telangana and Telengana movement. A second scenario could be when a Political party supports several movements workers, Peasants and Women's movements. These could be still a third situation where a political party exerts influence on the movement through its trade union and student wings. Besides, there are many grassroots movements such as the Bharatiya Kisan Union in Uttar Pradesh, Shetkari Sangathan in Maharashtra, Karmgar Aghadi formed by Datta Samant in Bombay and various environmental movements that reject connection with any political party!

The next important feature of a movement, which is closely linked with ideology and form of organisation, are its tactics and strategy. The choice of tactics as well as form of organisation, in turn, is dependent on the political system within which the movement operates and also on the size and speed of the movement and its influence within the political system. Therefore, it is to be noted here that the tactics of a movement may change as the movement grows. It may become less revolutionary and more accommodating as the movement gains in influence. The strategy, which is more generic, of a movement, is essentially influenced by the type of social movement.

## Social Movements

Anti-fascist, Peasant, Dalit and Women's movements

~~These days~~

Tribal Movements: The focus, as per the requirements of the syllabus, should be on such movements in post-independence India. However, a brief discussion would be in utmost fitness of things on the developments in pre-independence India so as to understand the genesis of tribal movements. Many of these struggles were millenial and movements led by tribal leaders who used religious idioms and symbols to mobilise the tribals against economic exploitation and alien penetration. Some of them were directed against the colonial policy of degradation of forests for extraction of timber and other forest products to serve colonial needs. In addition to this, the colonial administration also created conditions in which tribals were dispossessed and alienated from agricultural lands. Colonial penetration paved the way for entry of moneylenders and traders who were eager to take over land belonging to the tribals. Consequently, some of the tribes, for example the Santal, HO, Baoan, Munda and Bhumihi organised struggles against the alienation of their land.

Tribal movements in post-Independence India in contemporary India in different parts of the country many tribal movements have been launched on various social and economic issues. A few of them were survivalist movements

aimed at preserving tribal culture or a response to the disruption of traditional roles in the new set up. ~~to~~ But many of these movements dealt with threats to access and control of resources, threats to privacy of habitat, search for new forms of identity and for a more satisfactory system of organisation of community power at various levels. These tribal movements could be broadly divided into 1) movements for political autonomy, 2) agroecism and frontier based movements, and 3) middle-class movements.

In the north-east frontier, particularly, the Nagas launched a movement to demand a state for the Nagas outside the Indian Union. The Naga National Council, formed in 1946, demanded an autonomous state with confederation states within the Indian Union.

In the frontier regions, some other tribes also launched similar movements in the 1960s. The Mizo National Army, for example, demanded a separate state for the Mizos. The Indian State, in turn, used a combination of cooperation and oppression to contain these movements.

In the second category of tribal movements, the non-frontier tribes have demanded separate districts or states within the Indian Union. The Jharkhand movement and Bodo Land agitation are examples of such movements.

The Jharkhand movement began in the late 1920s. In 1938 the Adivasi Mahasabha and in 1949 the Jharkhand Party were launched. In 1973 a militant tribal organisation

Known as the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) was formed to demand a separate Jharkhand State to end the exploitation of local tribes and Harijans by non-tribals, mostly from the plain regions, and to give preferential treatment to a large number of tribals in government and industries. The JMM movement started as a tribal movement against exploitation by outside landlords and capitalists. But later on it has included the non-tribals of the region as well. So the movement has now turned into a regional movement focusing on economic issues of backwardness and underdevelopment.

No. Now let me give you a few guidelines and suggestions for further readings. My article on "Human Rights of Marginalised Groups ...." which is already uploaded for the BACH-PGSC II Sem students could prove to be very useful for you as well. So I expect you to go through that. Secondly, I have already given you information earlier, regarding a text book on the paper edited by a teacher in Delhi University, Mr. Abhay Prasad Singh. The book is in Hindi and thus suitable to many of you who prefer to write in Hindi medium. Since the college library cannot be accessed now I am sending some pages concerning tribal movements to be uploaded for your use. Third, tribal movements and their suffering cannot be comprehensively understood without a study of the Maoist challenge, which is also another topic in your syllabus. I am sending ~~an~~ an article on this topic to be uploaded, which is published in 'OpenStax' and written by one of my colleagues in Kamla Nehru College.