

## 4. Social and Political Movements

Read out the news in a local newspaper.

Movement against child marriage has been successful to a great extent and the extent of child marriages have reduced by 50%. The workers in this movement worked very consciously.

Workers from the movement against dowry also helped them. Now there is a need to start a drive against malnutrition, because poverty and malnutrition are two important problems to be taken on priority basis.

- In the above newspaper item different movements are included. Can you explain their meaning?
- This news deals with different subjects. Are movements related to only one issue?
- If different movements cooperate with each other will they be more effective?

In the last chapter we got information about the national and regional parties. Political parties compete for political power. They win elections and try to resolve the problems of the common men. Political parties generally adopt a comprehensive perspective. They cannot concentrate on just one particular issue. From public cleanliness to space research, they have to take into consideration all matters from national perspective and take decisions. Political parties are expected to have a programme for the problems of all sections of the society. Political parties adopt policies taking into consideration the interests of all – farmers,

labourers, businessmen, women, youth, and senior citizens.

### Why movements?

All the people in the society cannot participate in political parties and contribute to social welfare. Some people focus on a particular issue and pursue it. They organise people and try to pressurise the government to resolve that issue. They constantly follow up on the issue, build public opinion about it and thereby put a pressure on political parties and the government. This type of organised activity is called a movement. Organised activity is the essence of any movement.

Such movements are very important in a democracy. Different social problems come under discussion through these movements. The government then has to pay attention to such problems. Leaders and activists of the movement provide necessary information about those issues to the government. This information is very useful for the government while making policies.

Some movements aim at opposing a particular decision or policy of the government. The right to protest is considered an important right in democracy. However this right needs to be used patiently and responsibly.



### Can you tell?

Which movements in India are actively working for rehabilitation of the displaced and to secure their livelihood?

### What is a movement?

- A Movement is a collective action. People's active participation is expected in the movement.

- A Movement can be formed when people come together in the interest of a particular issue, for eg. Pollution can be a single issue for which a movement can be created.

- A movement has a particular social objective or a focussed problem. For eg. Movement against corruption aims at ending corruption.

- Movements have a leadership. Leadership keeps the movement active. Objectives of the movement, programme of action, strategy of agitation are decided by its leaders. A strong leadership makes movement effective.

- Movements have organisations.

Without an organisation, it becomes difficult to follow up the issues. For eg. Farmer's organisation works for farmer's movement.

- Any movement requires public support. People should feel connected to the issue that is undertaken by the movement. Movements have a programme of action which help them to shape public opinion.

#### Discuss.

Generally the movements are devoted to one particular issue but have an ideology behind them. For example movements against child marriage, dowry believe in values of democracy, women empowerment and social equality. Sometimes some movements gradually get transformed into political parties.

**Read the following dialogue and write a paragraph on it.**





### Can you find out?

- Which movement in India led to the filing of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) and the Judiciary had to give a decision regarding PIL?
- Name the movements started by Mahatma Gandhi, Mahatma Phule, Sant Gadge Maharaj, and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar.

### Discuss.

On which issues does the 'Son of the soil' movements in India insist?



### Do this.

Collect the news in the newspapers about the movements such as Andhashraddha Nirmulan Movement, movement to stop the pollution of rivers, movement against female foeticide, Not in My Name, etc.



### Do you know?

- Civic problems need not originate only in the social sphere. They can emerge from any section of the society. In India, especially in Maharashtra, many social reform movements were started and society started getting modernised.
- Our struggle for independence was also a social movement.
- The issues like protecting rights of the citizens, right to vote, minimum wages, and economic security are the focus of political and economic movements. Swadeshi movement is an important economic movement.

## Important movements in India

**Tribal movement :** In the pre-independence period, the British government deprived tribal people of their right to livelihood on forest resources.



**Birsa Munda**

There was a Tribal uprising in Kolam from Chota Nagpur, Gond from Orissa, Koli, Bhilla and Ramoshi from Maharashtra, Santhal and Munda from Bihar. The tribal struggle has continued since those years. Tribals in India face several problems. One major problem is that they are denied right over forests. The main demand of the tribal movement is to accept their right over forests. They should be allowed to collect products of forests and also should have a right to cultivate on forest land.

### Farmers movement in India :

Farmers movement in India is an important movement. During the British period, farmers started getting organised due to anti-agriculture policies of the British colonial government. You must be aware of farmers movements in Bardoli, Champaranya and movements against revenue collection. The farmers movements were inspired by the thoughts of Mahatma Phule, Justice Ranade and Mahatma Gandhi.

Due to some reforms in agriculture (tenancy laws, laws relating to tilting of the land etc) the farmers movement slowed down. After the Green Revolution, the farmers movement became more active and effective. Though Green Revolution aimed at increasing agricultural production and achieving self-sufficiency

in food grains, it did not benefit the poor farmers. The farmers were now divided into rich farmers and poor farmers. Dissatisfaction among the poor farmers led to the beginning of farmer's movement.

Appropriate price for agricultural products, agriculture to be treated as an industry, implementation of the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission, debt relief, debt cancellation, national policy for agriculture are some of the demands of the farmers movement.

Shetkari Sanghatana, Bharatiya Kisan Union, All India Kisan Sabha are some of the important farmers organisations in India.



#### Do this.

Name the policies started by the government for the welfare of farmers and landless labourers.

**Labour Movement :** Labour movement in India emerged in the background of industrialisation. Textile industry, railway companies were established in India in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1899 railway workers went on strike for their demands. However, the first organisation for resolving the issues of workers was established in 1920. This organisation is known as All India Trade Union Congress.

In the post-independence period labour movement started working more



#### Do this.

Collect the information about acts related to workers passed in post independence times with the help of internet.

effectively. In 1960s and 1970s labour movement organised several agitations. But from 1980s labour movement started getting disintegrated. Globalisation has affected the labour movement to a great extent.

In India, workers are facing different problems. Unstable employment conditions, contract labour, financial insecurity, absence of legal protection for workers, unlimited working hours, insecurity at the workplace, health hazards are some of the problems.

**Women's movement :** In the pre-independence period, progressive men in



**Savitribai Phule**

India initiated the women's movement. The women's movement aimed at eliminating injustice against women and ending their exploitation, help them to lead a respectful life and participate actively in social life.

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Raja Rammohan Roy, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Savitribai Phule, Maharshee Dhondo Keshav Karve, Pandita Ramabai, Ramabai Ranade took initiative in ending the practice of Sati and child marriages. Reforms such as widow remarriage, women education and right to vote to women were possible due to the



**Ramabai Ranade**

work of these reformists. After independence, the Constitution gave equal rights to women in all fields. In spite of this women were not treated equally in several fields. During this period women's

movement aimed at freedom of women. The movement demanded that the women should be treated as human beings.

In the latter period, women participated to a great extent in the movements against corruption, caste discrimination and religious extremism which made them aware of injustice against their own selves. Women started taking initiative in Organising against injustice. In India women's movement is not homogeneous in nature. However women's movements at various levels are taking up the issues like women's health, social security, financial independence, and empowerment. Today women's movement face the

Dr Rajendra Singh also known as 'Waterman of India' has brought Water revolution in Rajasthan. He became famous because of building



**Dr Rajendra Singh**

thousands of 'Johad' in Rajasthan. He revived rivers in the desert of Rajasthan. He formed an organisation – 'Tarun Bharat Sangh' which worked for building eleven thousand Johad in hundreds of villages. All over India he started a campaign for water conservation, revival of rivers, forest conservation, and wild life conservation. His social movement is active for last 31 years. He won the Stockholm Water Prize, an award known as the 'Nobel Prize for water'.



### **Environment Security**

challenge of equal education for women and giving women a status and prestige as human beings.

**Environment movements :** We are aware that environmental degradation is a serious problem at national and international level. At the international level several movements are working to stop the deterioration of the environment. We see a significant international cooperation in this field.

In India many movements are working on different aspects of environment. The environment movements are taking up issues like protection of bio-diversity, protecting different sources of water, protection of forests, green belt, pollution of rivers, use of chemicals and their ill effects etc.



**Consumer movement :** Consumer movement emerged in India after the Consumer Protection Act came into existence in 1986. This movement has a broad objective. The movement believes that each member of the society is a consumer. Due to the changing nature of social and economic system consumers face different problems. Adulteration, increased cost of items, frauds in weight

and measures are some of the problems. The consumer movement works to protect consumers from such type of frauds.

The movements increase the participation of people in public life. The post 1980 movements are called neo-social movements as their nature is

different from the earlier movements. These movements are issue-based. It means they try to organise issue based mass movements.

In the next chapter we will study challenges before democracy.



### Exercise

#### 1. Choose the correct option from the given options and complete the sentences.

- (1) ..... is the main demand of farmers movement.
  - (a) Right to cultivate on the forest land
  - (b) To get the right price for agricultural product
  - (c) Protection of consumers
  - (d) Building of dams
- (2) To increase agricultural production and become self-sufficient with regard to food grains ..... was initiated.
  - (a) Water revolution
  - (b) Green revolution
  - (c) Industrial revolution
  - (d) White revolution

#### 2. Explain the concepts.

- (1) Tribal movement
- (2) Labour movement

#### 3. Answer the following questions in brief.

- (1) Explain the activities/role/functions of environmental movement.
- (2) Explain the nature of farmers movement in India.
- (3) For which reforms were the women's movement in the pre-independence period fighting?

#### 4. State whether the following statements are true or false. Give reasons for your answer.

- (1) Movements are important in a democracy.
- (2) Movements do not need a strong leadership.
- (3) Consumer movement came into existence.

#### Project

- (1) Collect the news in the newspapers about various activities of social movements.
- (2) Write a report on movements in your area which are working to resolve general problems.
- (3) Prepare a format of a complaint you will submit under consumer protection act if you are cheated in purchase of vegetables or grains.

