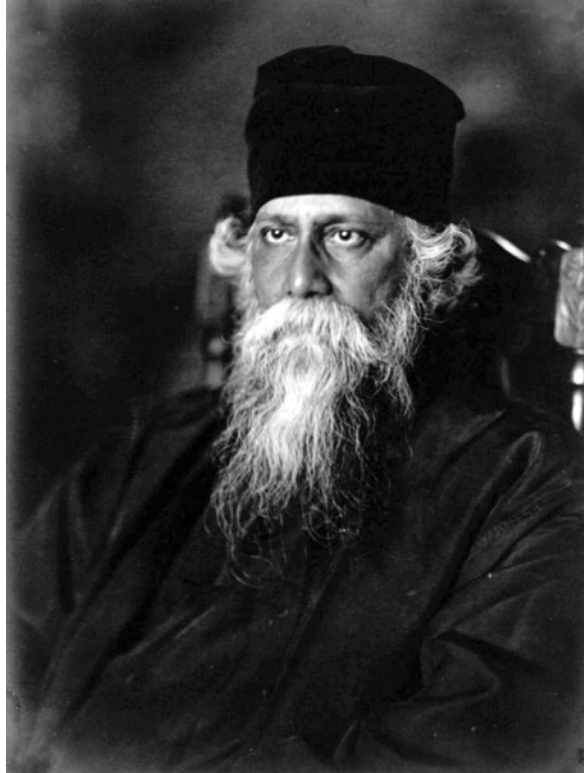




RABINDRA BHARATI UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR DISTANCE & ONLINE EDUCATION



Self-Learning Materials

for

M.A. (POLITICAL SCIENCE)

(Under CBCS)

Semester
3

C.E.C
3.1

Units
1-8

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Social Movements in India

Contents

Unit 1. Human Rights Movements	1-12
Unit 2. Women's Movements	13-28
Unit 3. Dalit Movements	29-42
Unit 4. Tribal Movements	43-51
Unit 5. Ethnic Movements	52-62
Unit 6. Regional Movements	63-76
Unit 7. Peasants Movements	77-89
Unit 8. Trade Union Movements	90-100

Human Rights Movements

Contents

- 1.1 Introduction**
- 1.2 Definition and Origin of the Concept of Human Rights**
- 1.3 Place of Human Rights under the Constitution and Indian Laws**
- 1.4 Phases of Human Rights Movements in India**
 - 1.4.1 Pre-Independence**
 - 1.4.2 Anti-Congress Resurgence (1946-1969)**
 - 1.4.3 Civil Liberty Phase (1970s)**
 - 1.4.4 Democratic Rights phase (1980s & 1990s)**
 - 1.4.5 Human Rights Phase (Late 1990s and onwards)**
- 1.5 Challenges for Human Rights Movements in India**
- 1.6 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 1.7 Suggested Readings and References**

1.1 Introduction

In a broad sense, human rights are a set of beliefs about equal and inalienable rights of all human beings essential for their well-being and for maintaining inherent human dignity. In the national context, human rights focus on the relationships between individuals, institutions, and corporations and society, specifically government, for ensuring respect to all humans. While it is true that the ideal of human rights in terms of values of dignity and equality of all members of the human race can be found in almost every culture and civilization, religion, and philosophical tradition, it is equally true that these have been snubbed by rulers and governments till forced to do otherwise by the citizenry or by international dynamics.

The developmental history of human society has shown that social, economic, and political progress helps to develop an appropriate base for the concept of human rights, which in turn plays a critical role in developing a human rights consciousness. The vigor of the human rights environment in a country depends on the vision of the decision makers, strength of the society, depth of the law, vibrancy of the institutions, and use of discretionary powers by the state (Haragopal and Jagannatham, 2009).

The human rights environment takes shape when people are constantly vigilant and courageous to stand for one's own rights and the rights of others. Thus human rights movements play a significant role to shape the human rights environment of a country and overall condition of the society. This is why we should learn about the human rights movements.

1.2 Definition and Origin of the Concept of Human Rights

Throughout much of history, people acquired rights and responsibilities through their membership in a group – a family, indigenous nation, religion, class, community, or state. Most societies have had traditions similar to the “golden rule” of “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” The Hindu Vedas, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, the Bible, the Quran (Koran), and the Analects of Confucius are some of the oldest written sources which addressed questions of people's duties, rights, and responsibilities.

However, in the modern era, the human rights were first defined by the Scottish philosopher John Locke “as absolute moral claims or entitlements to life, liberty and property.” Prof. Harold Laski defined human rights as “those condition of social life without which no man can seek in general to be at his best.”

In India, for the purpose of application, human rights has been defined in the following way in the Protection of Human Rights Act (1993) : “Human rights mean the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India”

Thus, human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death. These rights are indispensable for the maintenance of dignity and status of the human person. They can never be taken away, although they can sometimes be restricted.

The Magna Carta of 1215, the English Bill of rights the 1689, the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, the American Bill of Rights of 1791, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789 and the Atlantic Charter of 1941 are some of the historical landmarks which has contributed to the development and elaboration of the ideas of Human Rights. Yet many of these documents, when originally translated into policy, excluded women, people of color, and members of certain social, religious, economic, and political groups. Nevertheless, oppressed people throughout the world have drawn on the principles these documents express to support revolutions that assert the right to self-determination.

The contemporary idea of human rights emerged stronger after World War II. The first documentary use of the expression ‘Human Rights’ is found in the Charter of the United Nations which was adopted at San Francisco on 25th January ,1945. However, the most significant stage in the history of Human Rights is the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*

was unanimously adopted by the United Nations on 10th December, 1948. The declaration was proclaimed as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. The declaration set forth the human rights and fundamental freedom to which all men and women without distinction everywhere in the world are entitled.

With the goal of establishing mechanisms for enforcing the UDHR, the UN Commission on Human Rights proceeded to draft two treaties: *the adopt International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)* and its optional Protocol and the 1966 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*. Together with the Universal Declaration, they are commonly referred to as the International Bill of Human Rights. The ICCPR focuses on such issues as the right to life, freedom of speech, religion, and voting. The ICESCR focuses on such issues as food, education, health, and shelter. Both covenants trumpet the extension of rights to all persons and prohibit discrimination. In addition to the covenants in the International Bill of Human Rights, the United Nations has adopted more than 20 treaties further elaborating human rights. These include conventions to prevent and prohibit specific abuses like torture and genocide and to protect especially vulnerable populations, such as refugees, women and children.

The UDHR and other documents lay out five kinds of human rights: economic, social, cultural, civil, and political. Economic, social, and cultural rights include the right to work, the right to food and water, the right to housing, and the right to education. Documents like the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which was adopted by India in 1976, protect these rights. Conventions like the Convention on the Rights of the Child safeguard the economic, social, and cultural rights of specific groups. On the other hand, civil and political rights are a class of rights that protect individuals' freedom from infringement by governments, social organizations, and private individuals. They ensure one's entitlement to participate in the civil and political life of society and the state without discrimination or repression.

1.3 Place of Human Rights in the Constitution and Indian Laws

After independence in 1947, Indian leaders, greatly influenced by the UN Charter and the pledge to promote universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, took on the task of writing the Indian Constitution. India declared itself a secular, socialist, and democratic republic although the word socialist and secular were incorporated in the constitution in 1976. But there existed inherent asymmetries between post-colonial India's goals and the traditionally heterogeneous, stratified civil society due to religion, race, language, tribe, caste, spatial location, and gender. Rule of law, universal adult franchise, division and balance of powers between legislature, executive and judiciary, and fundamental rights stated in the Indian Constitution became the chief tenets of Indian democracy as they had the potential to broaden the social base around citizens' rights.

India's written constitution provides a unique combination of justiciable and non-justiciable rights. The first generation of human rights consisting of civil and political rights such as right to life, religion,

expression, press, association, mobility, were included in the enforceable fundamental rights given in part III of the Indian Constitution. Most of the second generation of human rights, social, economic, and cultural including education, employment, livelihood, just and fair work conditions, food, housing, health, welfare, and social security measures for women, children, tribals, and minorities, were placed in the non-justiciable part IV of the constitution, as directive principles of state policy.

Paradoxically, free India had carried forward some of the institutions from the colonial rule, such as the civil and criminal procedure code, the penal code of 1860, including the preventive detention acts and provisions. This set of citizens' rights together with the legal strictures (old and new) constitutes the present human rights discourse framework in India.

If one does a quick review of the Indian laws and the discretionary powers of the state, we find that some legislations have stayed since the mid-1950s and appear to be anomalies in the democratic system, namely, The Preventive Detention Act since the advent of independence, Punjab Security Act 1955, Assam Disturbed Areas Act 1955, and the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act 1958 (AFSPA). Often these laws have been criticized on the grounds that these are draconian and secondly, violate the very principles based on which the nation has been created. These Anti-laws have often incited incidents of abuse by the governments and parties wielding excessive power at the centre. These repressive laws have led to an outright violation of human rights which are conferred by the Constitution of India. The current law in India enacted to tackle terrorism of all kinds is known as the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). UAPA was enacted in 1967 and was amended in 1972, 1986, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2019 to tackle terrorism.

1.4 Phases of Human Rights Movement in India

1.4.1 Pre-Independence

There is a distinctive division between efforts made on human rights issues in colonial India and in sovereign India. In the colonial era, the British government made a handful of attempts to protect the vulnerable groups at the behest of Indian social reformers and leaders. In 1829 the practice of Sati was outlawed in British territories. In 1929, the Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed, prohibiting marriage of minors less than 14 years of age.

The history of people's efforts to ensure civil liberties in India goes back to 1936 when Jawaharlal Nehru founded the Indian Civil Liberties Union (ICLU) with Rabindranath Tagore as its president. The main goal of ICLU was to establish that the Indians had the right to oppose the government. ICLU set a pathway for citizens' movements including investigations in cases of political imprisonments, police brutalities, and autocratic restrictions on freedoms and raising consciousness. Rights were articulated by ICLU not only as guarantees against the arbitrary state action that was so much a part of British colonial rule, but also as the means necessary to achieve a more just and egalitarian socio-

economic order. However, activities of ICLU were short-lived and the organisation died down even before independence.

The strategy of ICLU was a derivative of the conceptual distinction between the natural rights tradition and the positivist tradition of articulating rights. In the former, rights are envisaged as inalienable, having their origins in nature, while in the positivist tradition 'rights not only originate in the action of the state, but are also entirely dependent on it for their existence. The state is the source and arbiter of rights and can therefore legitimately even take them away in certain rare and well specified situations.

1.4.2 Anti-Congress Resurgence (1946-1969)

The civil liberties movement had revival during 1946-1952. The country was going through the transitional process from a colony to a sovereign, independence, electoral democracy. This time, the target of the civil liberties movement was the Congress, which was accused by the communists and Hindutva nationalists of trying to suppress voices of opposition.

In 1946, the Bengal Civil Liberties Committee was formed which was backed by Communist Party of India. The Madras Civil Rights Union (MCLU) was founded in 1947. The Bombay Civil Liberties Union conducted a provincial conference in 1948. In 1949, an all India civil liberties conference was held in Chennai at the initiative of MCLU. The All India Civil Liberties Council, which was a wing of the Servants of India Society, Pune, had held the All India Civil Liberties Conference for four straight years during 1949-52. Thereafter these organisations gradually lost steam. This phase was primarily initiated by the Communist Party of India (CPI) and it worked primarily for the comrades who came under state repression and persecution. Unfortunately the Party could not frame more comprehensive policies, nor broaden its base for the civil liberties movement

However, human rights movements centred around non-party human rights organisations began only in the 1970s. According to Prof. Gudavarthy, the human right movements, starting from 1970s has gone through 3 different phases. According to him,

- 1970s marked the 'civil liberties phase' of the human rights movement in India;
- 1980s & 1990s marked the 'democratic rights' phase, and,
- Late 1990s and onwards marked as the 'human rights' phase (Gudavarthy, 2008).

1.4.3 Civil Liberties Phase (1970s)

The formation of non-party human rights association began in 1972 with the setting up of the Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) in West Bengal. It was followed by the Andhra Pradesh Civil and Democratic Rights Association (APCDRA) 1973. Later, APCDRA split, following which one faction formed the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) in 1974 and the other faction founded the Organisation for Protection of Democratic Rights (OPDR) in 1975.

During this period, Jayaprakash Narayan started advocating for forming a broad-based organisation which would work for the preservation and strengthening of democracy in India. In a meeting with Sarvodaya workers in 1972, he expressed the idea that the organisation should consist of all those who cherished democratic values, but were not interested in power politics (Tarkunde 1991). In April 1974, a non-party organisation called the Citizens For Democracy (CFD) was launched by Narayan. CFD was formed with the objective of ensuring independence and autonomy, for purposes of democratic and constitutional functioning, of various institutions such as the judiciary, press, radio, bureaucracy, the office of the President, the Election Commission and the Planning Commission, among others.

However, this experiment of building a pressure group for the more effective and responsive functioning of state institutions was abruptly cut short with the imposition of Emergency in the country on 25th June 1975. Emergency was imposed under Article 352 of the Constitution on the grounds that the 'security and integrity of India was in grave peril due to internal disturbance'. Jayaprakash Narayan and many of his followers were placed under preventive detention. After his release, they felt a need to expand the scope of the CFD in order to protect the fundamental rights of the citizens. During the Emergency (1975–1976), when the executive had uncontrolled powers and the constitution was weakened, another organization was launched by Narayan. Its name was People's Union for Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights (PUCLDR) and this organisation had greater outreach in terms of protecting citizens rights. In 1977, the Committee for Protection of Democratic Rights (CPDR) was founded in Maharashtra and the Association for Democratic Rights in Punjab (AFDR) in 1978.

In October 1976, J.B. Kripalani, in the absence of Jayaprakash Narayan, inaugurated the Peoples Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). The focus of the PUCL, given the immediate context of the Emergency was limited to (a) the restoration of the rights curtailed or eliminated during the Emergency (undoing the preventive detention law, curtailment of the jurisdiction of the courts, censorship of the press, and so on); (b) punishment for those responsible for excesses, through available legal recourse; and (c) safeguards against taking arbitrary recourse to Emergency provisions out of mere subjective considerations.

The PUCL was constituted by political figures and sections close to the Janata Party, apart from the Radical Humanist Association and the professional bodies of lawyers, academics and a few independence Gandhians. More than activism and mass mobilisation, the thrust was upon drawing in eminent personalities who could exert pressure, moral or otherwise, on individuals and institutions. The issue of civil rights, which had political connotations, was considered essentially legal and therefore legal action was often considered the most effective method for making institutions responsive and for protecting the rights of the common people, the citizens of the country. State institutions like the judiciary were considered effective representatives of both civil societal concerns and public policy.

On 23rd March 1977, the Janata Party came to power after the Emergency was lifted. But the human rights movements temporarily lost direction as many important office bearers of PUCL were also members of the Janata Party. Ostensibly there existed no clear and effective distinction between the state and civil society. And since it was institutional reforms and the restoration of fundamental rights alone that was the focus, the need for an independence human rights organisation was no longer felt. In fact, at a national convention held in August 1977, top Janata Party leaders, like Krishna Kant, declared that there was hardly any need for a civil liberties movement as democrats had come to power.

To sum up, the 1970s was the decade when the civil liberties movement took shape in India. The initial trigger was the state's response to the Naxalite movement (1967 onwards) – torture, fake encounter killings and illegal detentions being the key issues – and later the initiative got momentum with the imposition of the Emergency in 1975. The main demands of various civil liberty groups formed at that time were related to ending all inhuman and undemocratic acts of the state, releasing all political prisoners, and the repeal of the draconian laws like Maintenance of Internal Security Act. Of various organizations formed during the 1970s, APDR, APCLC, PUCL, OPDR, CPDR, AFDR and PUDR are still active and considered among the country's leading civil liberties/democratic rights organizations. The steady build-up of institutions, processes, and academic interest over the years transformed political party-based groups' struggle into an ongoing citizen movement. More than opposition to the state and the constitutional framework, it was the everyday misuse of institutions and the violation of procedures that formed the context for the beginning of the post-independence HRM in India. According to Professor Gudavarthy, the "civil society was being mobilised, not to stand outside the state, but to make the state more responsive and recognise its constitutional obligations towards its citizens."

1.4.4 Democratic Rights phase (1980s & 1990s)

The Janata Party government which came into power in 1977 tried to reverse many Emergency-era decrees and opened official investigations into Emergency-era abuses. Although several major foreign policy and economic reforms were attempted, continuous in-fighting and ideological differences made the Janata government unable to effectively address national problems. After a gap of a few years, the Janata Party lost the parliamentary election held in 1980. Under the new government, centralized planning, the use of modern technology and the role of 'experts' and technocrats became integral to governance. These methods were increasingly adopted in the name of maintaining efficiency, achieving 'developmental' goals and preserving the 'unity and integrity' of the nation. Welfarism became the new mode of enhancing state control and disengaging the masses from popular participation in the decision making process.

Many human rights workers, who were ideologically closer to Janata Party, felt the need to revive the organisations like PUCL and broaden membership base. In 1980 itself, a national convention of

civil rights workers converted the PUCL into a membership organisation. The newly revived organisation took the task of drafting a new Prison Act and Jail Manual.

The Indian judicial system has started playing a critical role in defending human rights in 1980s and 1990. The introduction of “public interest litigation” (PIL) in the 1979 generated a more active role for the judiciary and in advancing human rights. The first documented case of PIL was regarding a petition for release of 17 under-trial prisoners who were serving in prison for a period longer than the maximum term for which they could have been sentenced if convicted. The court opined that the bail system that existed in India was biased towards the poor. A system that deprived the poor to be legally represented was considered as unjust and unfair. The case motivated various socially committed citizens and lawyers to raise their voice for the underprivileged and to utilize the wide scope of Public Interest Litigation to get justice. Subsequently, almost 40,000 under trial prisoners were released from different prisons.

During the 1980s, the social base of the state shifted to a newly emerging neo-rich or lumpen class, born largely out of the leakages of the first phase of development. This class included contractors, real estate dealers, liquor traders, rentiers, gamblers, speculators, cinema producers and actors. The rise of the new classes was accompanied by a coercive state which became increasingly evident in the use of force and rampant manipulation of legal procedures. For instance, those set free from preventive detention were often arrested again outside the court premises or at the doorstep of the prisons, on specific charges and brought back to prison. A favourite device of some of the state governments was the implication of individuals in a number of interlocking cases.

One crucial point of departure of this phase of human rights movements from the earlier phase was differentiating between the violence perpetrated by the state and that used by marginalised social groups. Proponents of democratic rights mostly defended violence by marginalised people as a desperate mode to protest against systematic oppression unresolved by the system. Such movements grew out in many states like Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, the North-East and Andhra Pradesh. But the state used armed forces and para-military forces to neutralize armed agrarian movement and nationality movements. In this period, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) was used extensively in Assam, Manipur, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab & Chandigarh. This AFSPA was modelled on an ordinance promulgated by the British in 1942 to suppress the Quit India Movement. AFSPA granted the military wide powers of arrest, the right to shoot to kill, and to occupy or destroy property in counterinsurgency operations. The National Security Act was put on the statute books and then amended twice to make it even more draconian. The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) was enacted in 1985 in the background of the Punjab insurgency and employed widely all the way from Punjab to Andhra Pradesh.

It is now a well-recognised fact that terrorism is also a serious violation of human rights. However, it is also true that whenever Indian security forces sought to deal sternly with extremists, Western countries seized the opportunity to criticize India on the violation of human rights by Indian armed

forces and para-military forces. In addition to the pressure from foreign countries, there was a strong demand from the domestic front as well for the creation of a National Human Rights Commission. All these led the Government to enact The Protection of Human Rights Act in 1993. This Act was meant for “constitution of a National Human Rights Commission, State Human Rights Commissions in States and Human Rights Courts for better protection of human rights and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto”.

This phase also saw the emergence of various other social movements—women’s, Dalits’, regional, minority and environmental movements—apart from the Naxalite and nationality struggles, human rights organisations began to gradually extend their scope to protect the rights of the activists of these movements as well as their political concerns.

1.4.5 Human Rights Phase: Late 1990s and onwards

This phase of the HRM was an attempt to expand its scope by locating the power relations and the consequent human rights violations in civil society and gradually moving towards a political society that engaged with the complex micro-processes of social transformation. This phase was marked by the emergence of the newer and independence organisations which were constituted to locate a ‘democratic space’, not only between the state and the radical political movements, but also between the various conflicting interests within civil society. Examples of two such organisation, Human Rights Forum (HRF) and Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), would be helpful to make the stance of these organisations more clear.

Human Rights Forum (HRF) was born as result of a split in the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC) in 1997. HRF argued that the political structure of the state and the social-economic structures of caste, class and gender had been started to be recognised as oppressive structures, but were yet to assume equal importance, in the eyes of the rights movement. The state–class framework continued to dominate for no cogent reason. But both caste and gender were major sources of not only violent suppression but also routine and insidious denial of rights.

Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), which was also formed in 1997, was open to reflect the voice of large democratic sections of the society which is tired at being reduced to a mute spectator in the game with peoples lives played by the state and the revolutionary parties. CCC questioned the justifiability of Naxalite groups’ claim that all their actions were actions by the people. They also stressed the need to engage with the available ‘democratic’ institutions of the state and civil society, for instance by recognising the opportunities the 73rd Amendment provided for Dalits and women in local governance institutions and therefore the need for periodic elections without violence.

During this period, NHRC started forging formal and informal links with the civil rights groups in the country which has helped to accelerate legal reforms in crucial systems like prisons, elections, police, and judiciary and has initiated the process of bringing in accountability and transparency in

state run institutions. Tremendous pressure put by civil society organizations on Government also brought a new landmark in the human rights movement in India in the form of the Right to Information Act, (RTI) 2005. This Act helped to bring in transparency in governance and ensured citizens' right to know about the real time functioning of the governments and their agencies, to access data on government programs, and to know the rationale for decisions.

Another trend of this period was that many activists and Indian NGOs worked to ensure human rights in cases such as police reform, prison reform and teaching human rights to para-military forces. The NGOs worked hard to take "civil society initiatives" promoting peace, reconciliation and human rights as substitutes for political resolution to conflicts in various states like Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Chattishgarh.

1.5 Challenges for Human Rights Movement in India

It is important to remember that while the intellectual resources of the citizens' constitutional rights was drawn from the western historical experience, the origin of the human rights movement in India was in no sense 'western'. Indian human rights movement and its intellectual discourse have been put to test due to the specific complexities of the political processes in the country as well as due to the distinct historical, social, and cultural situations in Indian states. The residual traditional norms of caste, class and gender inequality, poverty, and lack of education and awareness are major hindrances in popularizing and internalizing human rights and making it into a mass movement.

The character and structure of the human rights community has radically changed since the post-emergency period when India saw the first human rights movement emerge after Independence from British colonial rule. The basic challenge before the human rights movement at that time was to document and expose the various aspects of State terror and State abuse of power. This was a challenge that the Indian human rights movement took up with great deal of political commitment, facing the wrath of the state but maintaining its integrity.

The Indian human rights movement was broadly divided into those who emphasized social and economic rights of the poor and those who stressed on civil liberties of individuals. The first group, largely influenced by communism, focused on what they called "democratic rights"; while the social democrats and liberals focused on the classic first generation rights.

However, Indian human rights movement faced new challenges with the rise of movements for national self-determination in the North-East, Punjab and Kashmir. Indian human rights movement found it difficult to move out of the framework of individual human rights and take up the collective rights of oppressed nationalities living within Indian borders. There was great hesitation about supporting the right to self-determination. The Indian human rights movement functioned very much within the framework of the Indian State's definition of nationalism (Haksar, 2008).

Since the nineties the human rights discourse in India witnessed three kinds of attacks: (a) systematic pressure to take up the human rights violation by non-state actors; (b) the flow of funds from

foreign funding agencies and promotion of 'trade-related-market-friendly human rights' (Baxi, 2008). This is the time the human rights movement started becoming the human rights industry; (c) the attack of the post-modernists and relativists who undermined the basic premise of human rights by emphasizing differences.

The human rights movement also failed to focus on human rights violations in the context of caste and race. It also did not make serious interventions in the area of women's rights violations and patriarchy. However, the professionalising of the non-governmental sector had an impact on finding public space for certain issues and in making work on the issues sustainable. Child labour, AIDS-related work, the area of devolution and aiding women's participation in panchayat institutions, and battling violence against women have found support and sustainability in funding infrastructure development and support. These have existed alongside civil liberties groups and initiatives. But in this process, a large part of the human rights movement got co-opted into the agenda for globalization and the foreign funded NGOs entered into the fray with full-time human rights professionals and human rights institutes. Further, the human rights movement was dominated by upper caste, upper class people and there was not much self-criticism.

The Indian human rights movement has thus become trapped in the liberal democratic discourse based on individual rights. It has also failed to focus on human rights violations being committed as a result of the unfair terms of international trade and the violation of third generation human rights. The effect of these developments was that the human rights movement has become more and more depoliticized.

Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights gives people a right to a just social and international order. The need of the hour for human rights movement is to build an alternative theory of human rights which takes into account collective rights of people and not only individual rights and to focuses on the third generation of human rights violations.

1.6 Self-Assessment Questions

- 1) Discuss how Indian laws simultaneously accommodate rights of citizens and discretionary powers of the state.
- 2) How did the emergency of 1975 influence the Indian human rights movement?
- 3) How does the human rights movement scenario of 'before 1997' phase and 'after 1997 phase' differ ?
- 4) Critically evaluate the response of Indian human rights movements to various challenges.
- 5) Write short notes on : a) UN and Human Rights; b) Human Rights movement before independence.

1.7 Suggested Readings

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Women's Movement

Contents

- 2.1 Objectives**
- 2.2 Introduction**
- 2.3 Women Issues and the Notion of Gender**
 - 2.3.1 Definition of Women's Movement**
 - 2.3.2 Types of Women's Movement**
- 2.4 History of the Women's Movement in Colonial Era**
 - 2.4.1 Women and the Nationalist Movement**
 - 2.4.2 Women's Movement in Independent India**
- 2.5 Development of the New Social Movement and the Women's Movement**
- 2.6 Organizing Women and Changing Character of State in the Pre -Globalization Era**
- 2.7 Liberalization, Globalization and Women's Movement**
- 2.8 Summing Up**
- 2.9 Self Assessment Question**
- 2.10 Suggested Reading**

2.1 Objectives

The basic objective of this unit is to familiarise the students with a brief overview of Women's Movement in colonial and post colonial India. The unit starts with a brief introduction about the Women's Movement in India, the reasons behind its appearance with the consolidation of different types of women's interest and their rights. Thereafter, there is a small section about the issue of gender. After wards a small section has been dedicated to the discussion of theoretical issue of women gender. For more clear understanding of Women's Movement in India, some definitional as well as its major types aspects have been discussed. In the next part, the discussion is focused on how Women's Movement appeared in colonial India and how it contributed to the development of the nationalist sentiment. Consecutively, the next part discusses the significant patterns of the trade union movements in post-independence India. The next section discusses about the development

of new social movements since 1970's and appearance of Women's Movement is a new form. The unit further discusses about the issue of organizing women and the changing nature of state in pre globalization era. The last section focuses on the notion of globalization and liberalization and the challenges faced by the Women's Movement.

2.2 Introduction

The situation of women in Indian politics represents the opportunities and constraints that are part and parcel of Indian democracy. Women are playing a key role in numerous spheres of social, political and economic life. Many political parties of India are running successfully under the leadership of many women like Sonia Gandhi, Mayawati, Jaylalthah, Mamata Bannerjee. More than a million women are represented in the three tier Panchyati Raj System. However, most of the women continue to play an effective role in the party or state. Interestingly, women access to power is still mediated by their relationship to male kin, and is often indirect and symbolic. Most of the political parties have little willingness to provide women access to the network and resources that would enable them to acquire the ranks of party hierarchy.

Before the last quarter of the 20th century women's existence did not encompass politics, both in India and other parts of the world. Generally, politics has been considered as a space of masculinity and unsuitable for women. As a consequence, women universally neither have the political authority nor they have access to power. This further reinforces the subordinate status of the women in the question of her entire existence. Apart from politics, gender manifests itself in other areas such as war, power, conflict and decision making which has generally been considered outside the ambit of women's activity. The masculinity is very protective about conservation of 'femininity' and women are also afraid of loss of femininity due to active involvement in politics. Even some women are so much passionate for patriarchy that even today a major portion of women in India think that if they do not abide by guidelines provided by the masculine family structure they are liable to get punished.

The confinement of women in separate space outside the realm of politics was a logical consequence of the division between the public and the private, which lies at the heart of the politics. The public was political and politics is a matter of public which included, government, power, law decision making, and generally covered so called male activities. The private was personal, consisting of the home and family, which encircled around women and their activities. The feudal patriarchal systems considered women as part of private possessions of man; liberal democracy, apprehensive of the encroachment by the state on private freedom, confined the activities of government to the public sphere. In contrary women's activities irrespective of their nature, were considered to be private, personal, non political and hence marginalised. In spite of the expansion of the role of the state, it is only by the means of feminist and Women's Movement that categorical division between private and public came into question and the private merged with the public.

2.3 Women's Issues and the Notion of Gender

Before going into the issue of Women's Movement it is essential to discuss terminological clarification regarding women, gender and women politics equation. In the early years of feminist writings 'women' was the acceptable term, which now seems to have been replaced by 'gender'. Women are considered as an idealized cultural construction of feminine attributes, 'women' in contrast, is concerned as actual people. Like many other social categories such as class, caste, tribe and race, it is interesting to note that the basis of discrimination is biological. However as a social group women are more self-conscious. They know that they are a distinct group from their male counterparts. There are three reasons behind that according to Bandana Chatterjee :

- a) Women as a social category is a biological one than that of a social category
- b) Irrespective of their class, caste, race or religion based social identities they are an all inclusive group where the identity of women is more prominent than that of their other social identities,
- c) Women fail to highlight the male women identity in the society whereas gender is more prominent in addressing the male women relationship is a social construction and the relationship is unequal as well as biased.

The classical understanding of politics is related with the art of state making but in the day to day experience it is based on activity of power. The source of women's awareness and their active involvement in politics was associated with the arrival of feminism and feminist movement across the world. Feminism was the major force which transformed women into a self-conscious social category. Feminist movements helped women prepare the ground of the ideological base, search for their self identity, the issue of gender equality and entry into politics. Feminism appeared both as a multidimensional and open ended concept that have different connotation to different people. However in reality, feminism is both a political ideology and a social movement which envisage an idea for change in the existing socio-political arrangement based on gender equality. Feminism believed that men and women should be considered equal irrespective of their gender identity.

Feminism as an ideology appeared in the west in 1960's and 1970s. But scholars have traced the instances of feminist struggle for equality of voting rights in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. Few of the pioneering works that influenced the feminist thinking are: *A Vindication of the Rights* (1792) by Mary Wollstonecraft, *Fire with Fire* (1993) by Naomi Wolfs, *The Second Sex* (1949) by Simon de Beauvoir. There are different variety of feminism across the Europe and notable among them are : a) Liberal Feminism, b) Socialist Feminism, c) Radical Feminism, d) Ecological Feminism and e) Black Feminism.

Even after limitations the feminist movements appeared in 1970's echoed the voice for gender justice, internationalisation of the issued transformation of the movements. The feminist movement mobilized the women and made them conscious about their rights. It not only structurally changed the distribution of power rather it also changed the attitude and perception about women too. Before going into detailed discussion about Women's Movement in India it is essential to discuss the position of women in Indian society.

2.3.1 Definition of Women's Movement

Scholars have classified Women's Movement according to their theoretical understanding. Some have tried to understand it from the ideological perspective, some scholars tried to understand the question of subjugation, some have tried to categorize them on the basis of theoretical perspective, some divided them on the basis of periods of wave. Raka Ray (1999), in her fascinating empirical study, has identified into the factors responsible for Women's Movements in different regions. She has observed that women's groups—both autonomous and affiliated with the political parties in Bombay give more importance to the issue of violence against women and religious fundamentalism whereas the groups in Kolkata, irrespective of their affiliation, emphasize the issues of poverty and unemployment, consciousness and literacy.

2.3.2 Types of Women's Movement

According to Neera Desai 'the Women's Movement is the organized effort to achieve a common goal of equality and liberation of women and it presupposes sensitivities to crucial issues affecting the life of women. For a concerned action to move towards the objective, there has to be some unifying ideological thread for various units'. Gail Omvedt(1978) categorized Women's Movement broadly into two different types : (1) women's equality movements; and (2) women's liberation movements. The first type may not directly challenge the existing economic or political or family structure, but rather aim at attaining an equal place for women in it, and at abolishing the most open remnants of feudal patriarchy, whereas women's liberation movements directly challenge the sexual division of labour itself. Jana Everett (1979) classifies Women's Movements on the basis of two different ideologies of feminism. They are (1) Corporate Feminism claiming a larger role in politics for women on the grounds that they have a special contribution to make as women; and (2) Liberal Feminism, claiming that the rights of men should be extended to women on the grounds that women are equal to men and thus should have the same rights. Kalpana Shah divides Women's Movements into three categories on the basis of their approach towards explaining women's unequal positions in the contemporary society and ways to liberate them from subjugation. They are: (1) Moderate or Women's Rights Position; (2) Radical Feminism; and (3) Socialist Feminism (1984). Sangari and Vaid make a distinction of Women's Movements into two theoretical categories: (1) modernising of patriarchal modes of regulating women; and (2) democratising of gender relations both at home and the work place. According to them, 'movements by working class and peasant women have a greater potential for democratizing patriarchal power relations than the modernizing movements' (1989: 19). Women's movements in India are also divided into periods or waves (Kumar 1993; Chaudhari 1990; Gandhi and Shah 1991). They are: (1) social reform movements during the freedom movement; (2) the movements from 1947 till 1975; and (3) the movements emerging during and after the International Women's Decade.

2.4 History of Women's Movement in Colonial Era

The origin of the contemporary Women's Movements in India is often traced back to the social reform movement within the Hindu fold in the last century. (Social reform movements among the Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Sikhs, etc. have not received attention from social scientists.) Social reformers like Rammohan Roy, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Behramji Malbari, raised their voices against the prevailing religious and social customs subjugating women. Their influence encouraged the British government to enact certain laws against the sati system, permitting women to remarry, abolishing the custom of child marriage, etc. Efforts were also made to spread education among girls. Some of these issues continue to affect women even in this century. The difference is that till the turn of the last century, very little effort had been made by the reformers to mobilise women for participation in public life in general around the issues concerning them. Political rights—equal franchise and representation in legislatures—for women were demanded by women leaders, who were supported by the Congress party. Women's organisations, such as the Women's Indian Association and the All India Women's Conference (AIWC), came into existence in the 1920s to spread education among the women. These organisations raised similar issues and carried out welfare programmes during the post-independence period. They enjoyed an all-India status with branches in all states. Social reformers, as well as women's organisations, raised women's issues which primarily affected the Hindu ideology, based on the notion of '*sanatana dharma*' Vedic times. Most social reformers believed in the separation of the roles played by the male and female in society. Though they were not against women working outside their homes, they were not in favour of independence careers for women in the wider world. They believed that women should not compete with men in all spheres. The reformers 'continued to demand that women should be pure, firm and self controlled. They should be Pativrata, i.e. devoted and chaste wives who should view the vices of her husband with tolerance'.

Those women's organisations which were offshoots of the social reform movements, share more or less the same ideology. Kalpana Shah observes: The role of the AIWC in the struggle for the liberation of women is negative. In fact, through its programmes the Parishad (AIWC) Women's Movements strengthens the traditional role of a woman as a wife, housekeeper and mother. And despite wishful thinking of the moderate thinkers like Gandhi, woman's role as a wife is not considered to be equal to man's by women themselves. She is asked to perform some of the functions outside the four walls to assist her husband rather than raise her head, to develop her dignity as a human being. They [such women's organisations] have become instruments in spreading an ideology which assigns inferior role to women. They strengthen revivalist values which are oppressive to women. These organisations have lost the zeal even to fight against oppressive social customs. Jana Everett (1979) identifies five factors which have shaped such reformist Indian Women's Movements. These are: (1) the hierarchical caste system; (2) the Hindu religion; (3) the joint family system; (4) Islamic rule and (5) British colonialism. The caste system permits some mobility and tolerance for certain segments of society. Everett argues that the Indian Women's Movement could be seen as an attempt by a previously excluded segment [high status women] to enter the political system. These women do not challenge the existing hierarchical framework—they justify their demands on the grounds of restoring previously held

rights. Because the Indian Women's Movement was composed of high-status individuals, it represented a low level of threat to the stability of the system. Though the Hindu religion assigns a subordinate status to the woman, the religious dualism of the male and female principle (Shakti-Shiva) and also the religious tradition of male-female equality in ancient Vedic times, provide a justification to Hindu revivalists for improving the status of women.

The purdah (curtain) system kept women secluded from men and discouraged them from public participation. It, therefore, gave women a certain sense of solidarity. This ideological implication of purdah 'would tend to shape the goals of early Women's Movement leaders toward corporate ideals (improving women's performance of traditional female roles) and away from liberal ideals (achieving identical rights for men and women)'. However, under British rule, liberal education spread in India. The educated upper-class males encouraged women's education to bridge the gap between the male and the female; and thus enabled Indian wives 'to prepare their sons for western educated milieu'. Jayawardena (1982) argues that the national bourgeoisie emerged to fight simultaneously the imperialist powers, and internally, the feudal structure and ideologies. As a counter to cultural imperialism, male social reformers became convinced that women had to be emancipated from a 'savage' past; so, they raised issues against certain oppressive customs. And they wanted wives who had acquired a 'westernised' education to enhance their image. The goal of the social reformers was to inculcate and entrench the bourgeois norms of monogamy and the nuclear family which are the cornerstones of capitalist development. Romila Thapar observes: 'Women's liberty does not have immediate relevance to the Indian social situation. It is the product of an urbanised middle class with a large number of women trained in professions as a result of expanding educational opportunities whose professional skills are wasted by their having to limit themselves to domestic work'.

Majority of the historical accounts have shown that, the 'social reform movement' made attempts to reform the conditions under which Hindu women lived. Child marriage, early widowhood and sati (the burning of a widow on the funeral pyre of the husband) were some of the oppressive conditions that high-caste Hindu women suffered from. The young widows were often children and were forced to live a life of privation. They had to cover their heads, wear only white, could not adorn themselves with ornaments and had to eat meagre food and cut their hair short to make themselves unattractive. They were seen as bad women and could not take part in any festivities. Some literate women have left us records of what they went through such as Rasasundori devi, or Saroda Sundori Devi. The reform movement was spearheaded by men who, exposed to liberal ideas, considered these conditions as an indictment of their society by colonial rulers and supported passing legislation raising the age of consent for marriage, abolition of sati practice and campaigning for widow remarriage, especially if the women had no children. They also pushed for women's education in a big way.

It is generally assumed that men were the architects of these drives towards emancipation of women, but recent research shows how the wives, daughters, sisters and followers of male leaders were equally in the forefront of the movement. Likewise, it is generally presumed that this awakening was mainly due to colonial encounter of India under British rule and the English language which Lord Macaulay introduced into the Indian education system. His aim was to create a cadre of Indian administrators capable of

replacing the British nationals in India. Ironically, these events also gave Indian leaders exposure to new ideas. The criticism of Indian cultural practices touched a raw nerve among patriotic Indians who wished to reform the system. New research has explored many indigenous movements much before the colonial encounter which sought to move society towards modernity. During the 17th and the 18th centuries, there were parts of India ruled by native states which were outside the British Empire, where such progressive enactments were made. Three such examples of such states were the state of Travancore–Cochin in south-west India, the state of Mysore and the state of Baroda, where women were highly educated and were employed in many professions. There was an organisation called the Brahma Samaj in Bengal and one in north India called the Arya Samaj. They not only promoted education and autonomy for women but introduced free-choice marriages among young couples. Even martial arts were taught to women in Arya Samaj. While the social reformers' zeal to improve the condition of high-caste women was indeed noteworthy, it was, in many ways, a limited reform insofar as women were still confined to their traditional roles as wives and mothers, and education was aimed at making them better wives and mothers, capable of being enlightened partners to their husbands. They did not envisage any public role for women. Mahatma Gandhi drew them into the national movement and legitimised their public role, but this too was mooted in so far as he extolled the essential nature of women as self-sacrificing mothers befitting them for participation in the national movement. As Sangari and Vaid contend, 'Both tradition and modernity have been in India carriers of patriarchal ideologies. As such neither is available to us in a value free and unproblematic sense, nor is either as they are conceptualised'. The social reformers agenda did not include freedom for women outside the patriarchal baggage. Nonetheless, this limited reform paved the way for a future where women could find their own space. One cannot educate women without it leading to critical inquiry about their own lives. By 1860, many women went into professions like teaching and nursing. They became aware of themselves and their predicament. This was the period when more than a hundred autobiographies were written by women, expressing their dissatisfaction on their lack of autonomy. Some wrote of a utopia, imagining a time when women would be in charge, like the book *Sultana's Dream*.

Some wrote a comparison of men's lives and women's lives to demonstrate how women were denied opportunities for self-fulfilment. In north India, the Indo-Gangetic plain has earned the pejorative sobriquet as the 'cow belt' to denote the ultra conservatism of the people there. Yet, in late 19th century, there were many women who wrote in Hindi. Even though their writings, in the form of short stories and essays, evoked the image of Hindu goddesses as icons of female power, there was evident an undercurrent of desire for female autonomy and a burgeoning feminist consciousness. Thus, despite many contradictions, the reform movement was a precursor to an emerging feminist movement. Around this time, radical voices also emerged advocating education for lower castes, and Savitribai Phule was a forerunner in opening schools for educating lower-caste women. The women's studies centre in Pune is named after her. In 1906, a social reformer Dond Keshav Karve, after visiting Japan which had a women's university, was inspired to open a similar university in India. The history of this university is itself a history of the Women's Movement. Karve had earlier begun a small institution to educate widows in Pune. After his visit to Japan, he converted it to a Woman's University offering courses in education, nursing, regional languages, Sanskrit, arts and humanities. In 1916, a mill magnate, Sir

Vithaldas Thackersey, offered a handsome donation which enabled the university to expand. The Woman's University, which was the only one in India at that time, was named after his mother and continues to have the same name (Shreemati Damodar Nathibai Thackersey Women's University; in short, SNDT Women's University). By 1952, it became part of the Maharashtra state university system and shifted to Bombay while retaining a wing in Pune. As a full-fledged university, it offered professional degree courses at bachelor and master's level as well as doctoral level: law, commerce, information technology, pharmacy, business management, in addition to home science and nursing, arts, commerce, humanities as before. It also acquired a new campus in Juhu. In the early 1970s, there was a symposium to decide on what the university should do for women, and thus was established the first Centre for Women's Studies at SNDT Women's University. Two more women's universities came into existence later in south India. SNDT Women's University kept in touch with the Women's Movement; it hosted many conferences and participated in many international conferences. It truly regarded itself as the academic arm of the Women's Movement. However, once women's studies became established, in many universities women's studies had a more diverse history and, in some cases, became purely academic institutions.

2.4.1 Women and the Nationalist Movement

During the national movement encompassing the non-cooperation (1920–21), civil disobedience (1930–31) and Quit India (1942) movements—many women participated, but they were the wives, sisters or followers of male leaders. Rural women participated only during the protest against the salt tax. The movement was predominantly controlled by the middle class. Two contradictory rationales were simultaneously espoused, namely, women's public appearance was justified as they were mothers fighting for 'mother country' and women had equal rights as men. These two contradictions were not resolved. Even today, the right-wing party uses the same rationale, while the mainstream centre party ostensibly treats women as equal to men. In a curious way, the national movement got entangled with the woman's question. In none of the other countries shaking off colonial bondage was there such an entwinement. Between 1917–27, three major women's organisations got established: Women's India Association (WIA); All India Women's Conference (AIWC); and National Council of Women in India (NCWI). At the first AIWC meeting, 7,000 women attended. The AIWC prepared a memorandum seeking the right to vote for women from the British government. The AIWC was also in the forefront for reforms in marriage and property laws concerning women. All said and done, on the eve of India's independence, women were struggling to establish liberal principles with equality as the guiding principle. Unfortunately, the national movement for independence shelved the gender question to be taken later, just as it did for incorporating affirmative action for previously marginalised communities to be addressed after independence in framing a constitution.

2.4.2 Women's Movement in Independent India

One of the negative consequences of colonial rule on Indian women's economic status, as perceived by Gandhi, was the taking away of the traditional occupation of hand spinning of *khadi* (indigenous cotton yarn and dhati) which was a way of earning a living for the women. He launched the *khadi* movement which

meant hand spinning of indigenous cotton yard and rejection of imposed (from Britain) mill-made cotton, which among other things, intended to give back women their means of livelihood. In doing so Gandhi not only saw the significance of harnessing the energies of middle class women for the nationalist cause, but also understood the plight of poor women who were important players in the socio-economic scene. This was an insight that was not immediately perceived and incorporated in state welfare or development policies in post—independence India. Nonetheless, the case of India does not exactly follow the pattern of third world nations mechanically emulating 20th century western models of appropriate and civilized feminine roles and status, as maintained by Jayawardena (1986). The western model of womanhood, and especially Victorian norms of femininity, did indeed influence the roles and education of upper class- women in late 19th and early 20th century India and the social reform movements of the time. But the insights about the socio-economic situation of lower class women and their need for recognition partly emerged from the political experience of the struggle for independence. This was symbolized by Gandhi's call to shun mill-made cloth and return to hand spun *khadi*. Gandhi was unequivocal in his attempt to improve the status of disadvantaged groups. Long before independence he wrote about the need to improve the status of the Indian woman who was, “not only... condemned to domestic slavery but when she goes out as a labourer to earn wages though she works harder than man she is paid less”. His views were strongly worded and inevitably had an impact on the members of the Congress at the time a political organization, which later became the vehicle of India's struggle for freedom from colonialism. Jawaharlal Nehru was also a believer in improving the status of women in the planned economy of independence India and integrating them in the development of the country. He was a protagonist of women's emancipation and viewed women's organizations as needing to not only criticize institutions. such as *pul"dah* (veiling) and marriage laws, that were inimical to the position of upper class women, but also address wider and related questions of economic and political subjugation. He saw that women's organizations would remain alienated from the broader political and economic scenario if they did not link themselves to it. He was critical. for example, of the AIWC as he saw them “functioning in the air, and you will be functioning in little coterie and drawing-room patties”. Nehru also set up a special sub-committee in the National Planning Committee of the Congress party which he chaired in 1939-40. This was to report on the Role of Women in the Planned Economy, as its report was entitled and questioned in very radical terms, even by today's standards, women's roles in every aspect, social, familial, political, legal and economic. However, this remained a little known plan document for many years as its recommendations may have been far too radical for the time, as they had neither emerged from a growing or dynamic Women's Movement, nor were they disseminated at a broad societal level. The Constitution of independent India, adopted in 1950, however, provided many guarantees at a theoretical level for equality of women. Despite the commitments to women's equality, in many cases the constitutional and legal provisions have not only been inadequate, but were interpreted in ways that did not necessarily support gender justice. This was partly because issues relating to women's rights, at the time, were treated in an off-hand, if not frivolous manner. To give just one example here, the constitutional provision of equal pay to men and women was placed as a ‘directive principle of state policy,’ rather than being instituted as law, which implied that it was not justiciable and allowed employers to

discriminate between men and women workers. Finally, it was only in 1975 that the Equal Remuneration Act was passed. It is seen, however, that barring a few exceptions, the concern for gender equality, as inherited from the reform movements of earlier decades, was minimal. The critical consciousness gained during the freedom struggle was, to a great extent, lost, even from the analyses of modern historians, and what occurred subsequently was a “regression from some of the norms developed during the Freedom Movement”. The modernisers of the reform and the nationalist movements rejected caste hierarchy with considerable vigour, but did not really extend the concept of equality to women. Instead they followed the traditionally dominant highest caste *model* of gender role ideology for women among their following. This again was largely in consonance with the ideas of Victorian womanhood, which thanks to colonial *rule*, increasingly influenced subsequent generations of upper middle class Indians. The dominant messages for women’s roles, as reflected in government sponsored programs, continued *to* be those of feminine caring, first within private familial spaces, and then extended to public spheres of welfare provision. This is evident in the nature of the programs that were set up for the benefit of women or which sought their tangential involvement in the 1950s. These were focused on women in private maternal and familial caring roles. The organizational structure that coordinated these efforts was the Central Social Welfare Board, started in 1953, and funded activities of voluntary organizations or NGOs (non-governmental organizations) working in the fields of ‘social welfare,’ which subsumed women and their needs. Government-run programs, for example, the Community Development Programs launched in 1952, sought mainly to promote agricultural development and some welfare services, especially for women and children. Other programs started about this time included the *mahila mandals*, or women’s groups to serve as village-level forums for organizing women and the Welfare Extension Project, which provided services for health, arts and crafts training and health/nutrition education. Some of these programs failed because they lacked funds and possibly as they did not always address the actual needs of poor women. The underlying bias of most of them was a middle class one, which viewed women as housewives, while they were actually gainful agricultural workers. In the first twenty years after independence the major concerns were for overall economic growth. This was followed by another decade which witnessed an increased concern for equity and poverty alleviation. Gender issues were subsumed in poverty related concerns and programs specifically aimed at women and were limited in scope and resources. It is only in the last two decades or so that it has been recognized that, though women constitute an overwhelming number among the poor, socio-economic development is structurally biased in favour of men.

2.5 Development of the New Social Movement and the Women’s Movement

For the moment a brief review of the Women’s Movement can be taken about how and why the movement started during 1970’s. To understand the temporal importance it is essential to understand and acknowledge the significant role played by the United Nations, which in 1971 provided the mandate to several countries to critically assess the status of women. Rather than answering this call by merely enumerating some pre-conceived and stereotypical notions about Indian women being worthy of veneration

and enjoying a status equal to that of men, an effort was made by a few policy makers at the time to actually discover what the status of women in India was. This led to a major exercise in action research, carried out by the specially appointed Committee for the Status of Women in India (1974) in a project sponsored by the Indian government and the Indian Council of Social Science Research, and performed by an interdisciplinary team of academicians, both men and women. The path-breaking report of the CSWI, entitled “Towards Equality” continues even today to be a source of inspiration, information and direction for women’s studies researchers, activist groups and policy makers in the country. The research for and writing of this report was in itself a major eye-opener for many of the persons who were involved in its writing as well as others who thereafter began to look at the women’s question in a new light. In some instances, it endangered their lives and professions considerably. The year 1975 was therefore, something of a watershed in the development of government policies and programs for women in India. The CSWI’s report presented the generally disadvantaged position of women, evident in a declining sex ratio, lower life expectancy for women than for men, higher infant mortality for female children, high maternal mortality, declining female labour force and adaptation and higher illiteracy rates for women. There was also some progress in the field of research and data collection and notably in the growth of women’s studies as a discipline. The Indian Council of Social Science Research initiated programs for research on women. The national data collection agencies (the National Sample Survey Organization and the Census of India) were directed by the Planning Commission to collect information on women’s work through redefined techniques. Advances in awareness and policy led to the formulation of programs targeted at women, in addition to existing programs in the social sectors, such as, primary and adult education, maternal and child health and nutrition services. The Sixth Plan (1980-1985), for the first time in the planning history of India, included a chapter on Women and Development. This emphasized economic independence for women, access to health care and family planning. Special inputs and components for women were devised within existing development and training programs, for example, the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas, linked to the existing Integrated Rural Development Programme. Some pre-existing women’s programs, e.g., the *mahila mandal*, were utilized for a newer purpose which recognized the economic role of women in greater measure. Others focused on poverty alleviation, training or employment generation and added on targets for reaching a certain percentage of women beneficiaries. Still others were started specifically for women’s employment, training, skill development, literacy, credit and development. The Department of Women and Child Development was set up in 1985, within the Ministry of Human Resource Development to coordinate programs for women or inputs within wider development schemes at a national level. Many other events took place. the most significant - and all-encompassing - being the beginning of the Women’s Movement are known today.

2.6 Organizing Women and Changing Character of State in the Pre Globalization Era

The Women’s Movement is largely represented by women’s organizations, some of which are linked to each other through networks at regional and city levels. Some share common agendas while others work in relative isolation from one another. The state should also be represented as a stakeholder on the map of the

Women's Movement in so far as it attempts to mobilize women's groups and implement policies that are intended for women's development at regional and local levels. The state's response to women's organizations has been fairly complex, and as Shanna puts it, is "... at times ambivalent and one can discern contradictory impulses". While in some parts of the country the government has responded quite favourably to demands made for gender sensitization programs, in other regions it has been unresponsive. Alternatively, one arm of the government may fund a women's program, while another may try to thwart it, for example, an awareness generation programme against alcoholism in Himachal Pradesh was supported by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, but was opposed by the State Revenue department which earned substantial amounts from liquor sales. Given the interventionist role of the Indian state, as outlined in the preceding pages, it seems relevant to acknowledge that it has acted as an activist on behalf of feminist goals, such as women's empowerment. This is the question about "... embedding gender issues in national policy agendas and giving advocates for the advancement of women permanent access to arenas of power," as articulated by Stetson and Mazur in assessing what they call "state feminism". The women's groups and organizations have been important instruments in the emergence and growth of the Women's Movement. and remain significant in the contemporary scenario as well.

They have a long history, emerging and proliferating right from the dosing decades of the last century. While their objectives and membership patterns have varied, these have provided women avenues of collectively avoiding their concerns, advocacy, and doing something for themselves and for others. An important function has been that of articulating and making demands of the government on specific issues as they arise and for the setting up of appropriate policies and programs by the State. This process goes back to the 1950s when the AIWC's demands were to some extent included in the Indian Constitution. This is not to say that the process of articulating demands- and more significantly, getting them accepted as part of state policy and implementation- is easy but constitutes part of the struggle of the Women's Movement. There are a range of organizations within the Women's Movement and these have adopted different styles in responding to the State and in the nature of their work. A broad classification that has been attempted has the following types: a) women's organizations connected to political parties; b) autonomous women's groups; c) grassroots organizations; d) women's research and documentation organizations; and e) women's development organizations. These may be supportive, mediatory, or adversarial in their responses to the government. A question that may be asked in this context is, what is the role of these organizations in promoting critical consciousness whereby women are empowered to take decisions and to seek gender equality? The 'welfare' approach to women wherein they are conceived of as beneficiaries or recipients of programs, is being questioned and to some extent supplanted by a developmental and participatory approach, incorporated by the newer grassroots NGOs, as also in some government sponsored programs for women. There are many regional variations and several models of grassroots organizations employ "agitational" or "developmental" approaches, whereby the distribution of power and resources is negotiated (Sharma, 1991- 92 29). The objective of these organizations, since the mid-eighties, is often termed as "empowerment.' It is thus implied that they give power and capacity to perform, delegate authority, ensure mass participation and legal rights. The importance of adoption in the development scales of these organizations is contrasted with earlier top-

down and trickle-down development approaches. While questions about the success of these organizations are often raised, and which does hinge on the degree to which the concepts are shared by grassroots women, it is seen that poor, and often, illiterate women exposed to some amount of mobilization show great potentialities, receptiveness and capacities. This experience is well illustrated in the work of organizations such as the Self-Employed Women's Association or SEWA in Gujarat, the CWDS' project with tribal women in Bankura district in West Bengal. and the Working Women's Forum in Madras. Some groups and programs that were first organized, at the behest of government, include for example, the *mahila mandal*, the Women's Development Programme and the Mahila Samakhya Project. The first, started in the 1950s, represented the welfare approach, yet created institutions with potential for influencing women at the grassroots level. More recently, *mahila mandal*, facilitated by non-governmental organizations, have been known to mobilize women on local issues that tied up with national priorities, for example, URMUL in Rajasthan has assisted the *mahila mandal* in Suin village, one of 22 others in the district, to mobilize low caste, rural women to organize and seek means of livelihood for themselves and act as vigilantes in their communities, for example, by setting up and running a fodder farm and ensuring that schools are properly run, respectively.

The Women's Development Programme (WDP) was initiated in six districts of Rajasthan state in 1984 and may be termed as an overtly developmental or feminist purpose of empowering women through information, education and training. It thereby aimed at creating the conditions for facilitating the participation of women in development programs rather than implementing specific projects. The program sought to generate an attitudinal change among and towards women, from one of compassion and welfare to that of equality between men and women. The Mahila Samakhya Project, started by the government in 1989, was partly modeled on the WDP, first in three states of the country and subsequently in others. Its experience illustrates that poor women can be empowered to run participatory and self-help programs for themselves. The project seeks to facilitate women's access to development activities by providing a platform for collective discussion, decision-making and action. In the long run it aims to lead to their education for equality and empowerment.

The role of government sponsored programmes for women is similar to that of non-governmental organizations; they both act as intermediaries that mobilize poor women to take collective action on socio-economic issues, while facilitating their empowerment. Most of these efforts include a cadre of professionals, who provide inputs for training, research, fund raising and so on. There have been experiences in which the middle-class professionals tend to assume managerial positions and promote the dependence of poor women, but there is increasing awareness for the fostering of reciprocal and participatory processes within organizations and projects for women's empowerment. Whether these are always successful or not is a question that has been raised in many contexts, but we do know that at least the rhetoric of participatory development is here to stay. There is scope for strategically directing these concepts in favour of empowerment and the other objectives of the Women's Movement, and towards clouding or evading women's issues, which may happen in some instances.

During 1975–85, progressive women's organisations began, for the first time, to identify patriarchal social structure as the cause of women's oppression. At the same time, many lower-caste and tribal women also

began to organise themselves both against upper castes and against male dominance in their own communities. A kind of loose federation evolved to fight on a common front. Central to the women's engagement with politics was the realisation that the left parties did not link patriarchy and class exploitation. Two studies, *A Decade of the Women's Movement in India* and *A Space within the Struggle*, give us a glimpse of the varied mass movements in which women were involved. There were student protests; textile workers' strike; railway workers strike; and fisherwomen's protest against foreign trawlers which came into our coasts to catch fish because they threatened the livelihood of traditional fishing communities; and protest against missile testing range in Odisha. Throughout, in many such movements, the women's organisations appealed to the state for redress. In 1979, some incidents of custodial rape of young women by the police triggered the emergence of groups that were not affiliated to any political party. These were called autonomous organisations. A forum against rape was organised which later converted itself to Forum against Oppression. In 1980, a new law was passed against rape and amended in 1983, but without many recommendations of women's groups being incorporated. The basic strategy was to take recourse to law but given the strength of patriarchy, not only among the security forces but also within sections of the judiciary, and in broader society, law did not deter offences against women. Many young women, soon after marriage, were tortured or even killed or driven to suicide for non-fulfilment of dowry demands. An anti-dowry law was passed with many organisations rallying against dowry harassment by a bride's in-laws and husband. Later, when modern technology like amniocentesis was used to detect sex of the foetus and a female foetus was aborted, a central law was passed in 1990 to deter this, and medical units allowing this test were penalised. In all these events, there was a united front of women's groups.

2.7 Liberalization, Globalization and Women's Movement

The Women's Movement prepared an alternative document for the Beijing conference in 1995 to counter the government's version. By the 1990s, increasingly, women participated in programmes of 'gender and development' and made policy interventions. Some saw this as co-optation by the government. Perhaps it was, but it did bring in women's issues into the policy-making bodies. Though it is described by many scholars as fragmentation, it was more diversification, with women's groups fighting on many fronts—environment, forest-dwellers rights, against displacement of people and loss of their lands in construction of big dams and loss of agricultural land by the setting up of special economic zones (SEZs) to promote export industries. These oppositions arose with the advent of so-called liberalisation which threw open the economy to both market forces and foreign trade.

2.8 Summing Up

- Women were generally treated as sub-human category throughout the world and patriarchy dominated Indian society, which was not an exception.
- Voice against the exploitation of women appeared during the colonial era by pioneering socio-religious reformers like Rammohun Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Swami Vivekananda.

- The issue of gender raise the question of rights of women.
- The objective of the Women’s Movement is to raise their voice against women identity and to fight for the question of women’s rights.
- During the late colonial period women started to organize themselves under various associational and organizational umbrella.
- During the nationalist struggle women had many women sacrificed their lives and fought the battle in forefront but majority of them are either unknown or lesser known.
- After independence many constitutional promises were made but in reality exploitation and oppression against women rose against women day by day.
- Women’s movement were not unilateral in nature rather they varied in both content and mode of actions.
- Since 1970’s due to growth of new social movement Women’s Movement reappeared in the main stream. Opening of women’s studies center in various institutions of academic repute played a very crucial role.
- The role of state also changed on the issue of women.
- The appearance of globalization came with new threats to women and their organizations and they are facing some fundamental challenges to life and livelihood in the neo liberal world.

2.9 Self Assessment Questions

Now that you have read this unit, please go through the following questions, and find out how many of them can be answered by you. If you see that you have been able to answer less than 50% of them, please go back again to the top, to the relevant portion of this unit, and read again carefully. If you have any queries or require any clarification on this unit, please ask your teacher during the PCP (Personal Contact Programme).

- a) Discuss the issue of women and gender.
- b) How do you define the women movement ?
- c) Discuss with some details of the major variants of Women’s Movement in India.
- d) Write a brief note about trade union movements in colonial India.
- e) Analyse the significant patterns of trade union movement in independent India.
- f) Write a note on the issue of organaizing women and changing character of state.

2.10 Suggested Reading

- (a) Basu, A. (2010). Gender and Politics. In N. G. Jayal & P. B. Mehta (Eds.), *The Oxford Students Companion to Politics in India* (pp. 168-180). Oxford University Press.
- (b) Chatterjee, B. (2001). Women and Politics in India. In R. Chatterjee (Ed.), *Politics India: The State Society Interface* (pp. 351-386). South Asian Publishers.
- (c) Khullar, M. (1997). Emergence of the Women's Movement in India. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 3(2), 94-129.
- (d) Krishnaraj, M. (2012). The Women's Movement in India: A Hundred Year History. *Social Change*, 42(3), 325-333.
- (e) Neera, D. & Thakkar, U. (2001). *Women in Indian Society*. National Book Trust.
- (f) Roy, R. (1999). *Fields of Protest: Women's Movement in India*. University of Minnesota Press.
- (g) Shah, G. (2004). *Social Movements in India: A Review of Literature*. Sage.

Dalit Movements

Contents

- 3.1 Objectives**
- 3.2 Introduction**
- 3.3 Understanding the term Dalit**
- 3.4 Dalit movements in India**
 - 3.4.1 Root Cause of Dalit Movement**
 - 3.4.2 Dynamics of Dalit Movement:**
 - 3.4.3 Emergence of Dalit consciousness during colonial period**
 - 3.4.4 Post independence experience**
- 3.5 Constitutional and legal provisions**
- 3.6 Conclusion**
- 3.7 Self assessment questions**
- 3.8 Suggested readings**

3.1 Objectives

This module will try to emphasis on the followings after introducing the theme of the topic –

1. Understanding the term Dalits
2. Dalit movement
 - 2.1 Root cause of Dalit movement
 - 2.2 Dynamics of Dalit movement
 - 2.3 Emergence of Dalit consciousness in the colonial period
 - 2.4 Post independence experience
3. Constitutional and legal provisions to protect the rights of the Dalits
4. Conclusion
5. Self assessment questions
6. Suggested readings

3.2 Introduction

India is a highly stratified society, in context of ethnicity, caste, class, religion, gender etc. The plurality of Indian society has many flavours. The beauty within the plurality is the source of unity and integrity of the nation. However such stratification has posed severe challenge to the entire social fabric of Indian society. Sections of the society, like Dalits, adivasis or women, have been systematically subjected to oppression and discrimination followed by age old caste 'hierarchical' tradition, i.e. Varnashrama, which caused this exploitation within the Hindu society. Since centuries, in each and every sphere of the society, this hierarchy has been the root cause of oppression for the Dalits. They have been subjected to a life of poverty and humiliation. Dalits have to live a life with indignity and inequality. Thus the idea of dignity and equality which can be regarded as the foundation stone of the Dalit Movement in India. The movement can be marked as a protest to the age-old atrocities committed against them.

3.3 Understanding the term Dalit

Dalits have been cruelly exploited by the professed upper castes. Some said they insulate outside the Varnashrama theory and were referred to as outcasts in pre-independents India. Others said, the group of people who assume to be in the last level of castes in the Varnashrama Theory can be called Dalit. However, despite many debates it can be said that they are not able to live with full dignity. Historically they have been living outside the village depending on lower level of occupation, and lived as untouchables.

There are different connotations of the term 'Dalit'. The term 'Dalit' as defined by the 1972 Manifesto of the Dalit Panthers can notes, 'Members of scheduled castes and tribes, neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women and all those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion.' So the word Dalit, therefore, represented a strong coalition and unity of the oppressed masses.

According to some Dalits are the people coming under the category of 'Scheduled castes'. Though, this would obviously be a narrow reading of the term. It cannot be better understood keeping in mind the tragic example of Rohith Vemula. One's caste identity in India is shaped by the father's caste, and not that of the mother's; after all, we are largely a patriarchal society. Though Vemula was declared a Backward Caste, and not a Scheduled Caste, by a committee constituted by the government after his death, he was a staunch Ambedkarite and a self-declared Dalit.

As stated by different scholars, this is the traditional definition. With slight changes, however, the term 'Dalit' would mean not only one category of caste, it means the people who are exploited economically, socially, politically and in all the spheres of life, by the traditions of the country. By tradition would mean the 'Brahmanical Indian tradition' prevailing in the country for centuries. A Dalit does not believe in God, religion

as propagated by the Hindu scriptures and religious texts, as because it is these traditions only that have made them slaves.

A Dalit is the person who has the realization of the sorrows and struggles of those in the lowest stratum of the society. The Dalits are actually the Depressed Classe of Indian society. Dalit is one who believes in equality, who practices equality and who combats inequality. A Dalit is the believer of Humanism—the ultimate ideology of human beings. The real symbol of present Dalit is ‘Change and Revolution’. Therefore, any individual from any caste category (including the Brahmin), will be considered a Dalit given the fact that the person is depressed and exploited, aspire to attain equality through change and revolution, being the firm believer of the ideology of ‘Humanism’.

Debate over the using of the term Dalit is well known. “Pankaj Meshram of Maharashtra’s Amravati district, who is a member of the Mahar Dalit/Scheduled Caste community in Maharashtra, felt the word is derogatory. In the year 2018, he appealed to the Bombay High Court, which agreed with him. In the same year, the Gwalior bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court wanted the government to stop using the word Dalit. In 2008, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes held the same view.

However, the usage of the word Dalit has been the subject of a minor debate within the community, especially since Ambedkar in his writings mostly used the word ‘untouchables’, which was outlawed by the Constitution. It is a word that has come from the community. It is a word that embraces and owns the identity of being oppressed, and is thus empowering. A community calls itself broken to remind everyone else who has broken them – a strong statement against a casteist society. It is a word that the community uses to rebuild itself in the face of continuing oppression, untouchability, humiliation, poverty, violence and discrimination.”

3.4 Dalit movements in India

As stated earlier the domination of the upper caste can be regarded as the root cause of Dalit movements in India. The movement is a struggle that tries to counter the socio-economic, cultural and political supremacy of the upper castes. It is also a movement of the educated and conscious people that desires for justice through the speeches, literary works, dramas, songs, cultural organisations and all the other possible measures.

So seeking equal space and justice with all other castes of the Hindu society is the motto of the movements. Based on social equality, the main objective of the Dalit Movement was to establish an equitable just society in India.

3.4.1 Root Cause of Dalit Movement

Dalits share a common condition of exploitation and oppression by the so called upper castes of the Indian society. Historically one can find that the root cause of such exploitation is the formation of the ‘Caste System’. Since the Aryan followed by Vedic age, the beginning of the Brahmin domination led to Dalit exploitation. Many religious texts depicted a Brahmin as prophet. Whether he is learned or imbecile the

Brahmins must be respected, even if they indulge in a crime. Is it the devised institution of Varna and thereby caste, and the supremacy of Brahmins which by to exploitation of dalits. In her seminal work Dalit Visions, Gail Omvedt equated Hinduism with Brahmanism. Hinduism is constructed in order to hide the discriminatory social practices of Brahmanism under a religion to be considered as the religion of the country. This should be obeyed without any question. The caste ideology is founded in the twin religious doctrines of Karma and Dharma. And that it was the basic duty of every individual to maintain Dharma which was to retain the social structure based on the Varnasrama Theory. Manu, Kautilya emphasized on retaining the Caste structure as the basic structure of Indian society that cannot and should not be changed. This means that the Brahmins should stay at the top of the pyramid and the Dalits at the bottom. Social mobility was not allowed that time.

As per the popular culture or myth on re-birth, there are two deliberations. Firstly, the Dalits should accept the exploitation done against them as the result of their own deeds of past birth. They should consider that they committed some bad deeds due to which they are facing such kind of oppression. Secondly, even if they are exploited in this birth, they should not protest, which will provide them a good life in the next birth after re-birth. This is how the exploitation on dalits evolves over the time.

Following are the major reasons that can be regarded as the (root) causes of Dalit movements –

- As a result of constant hatred being generated since centuries from the barbaric activities of the upper castes of India.
- They were deprived of higher training of mind and were denied social-economic and political status.
- The division of labour and absence of social mobility led to their inequality and exploitation.
- As already mentioned earlier, for centuries, dalits were excluded from the mainstream society and were only allowed to pursue menial occupations.
- Access to city life was not allowed. They were pushed to the outer areas of villages whereas the mainland was occupied by the upper castes.
- Many of the atrocities were committed in the name of religion like system of Devadasi or pouring of molten lead into the ears of a Dalit who happened to listen to some mantra.
- To retain the stronghold on people, education was monopolized.
- This made the Dalits rise and protest against the inhuman practices and demand for basic rights of equality.
- With the introduction of western language, and with the influence of the Christian missionaries, the Dalits began to come across the ideals of equality and liberty and thus began the Dalit Movement in modern times.
- Educated Dalits began to talk about the problems of the poor and about exploitation and humiliations from the upper castes.
- They also got a fillip through British policy of divide and rule.

- Improved communication network, new system of education, new administrative system, rule of law threw open equal opportunities for all dismantling social barriers.
- Deprivation of resources at every sphere of social, economic and political lives, led to a state of immense oppression and degradation.
- They were deprived of the three basic needs of society –food, shelter and clothing. Deprived of food, they filled their stomach with stale pieces of food and dead animals as if they were not humans.

3.4.2 Dynamics of Dalit Movements

The strategies, ideologies, approaches of Dalit movements varied from leader to leader, place to place and time to time. The ‘Dalit consciousness’ came to the fore in different forms and shades. Thus, some Dalit leaders followed the process of ‘Sanskritization’ to elevate themselves to the higher position in caste hierarchy. They tried to adopt established cultural norms and practices of the higher castes. They adopted Brahman manners, including vegetarianism, putting sandalwood paste on forehead, wearing sacred thread, etc. Imitation of the high caste manners by Dalits was an assertion of their right to equality. Thus Dalit leaders like Swami Thykkad (Kerala), Pandi Sunder Lai Sagar (UP), Muldas Vaishya (Gujarat), Moon Vithoba Raoji Pande (Maharashtra) and others tried to adopt established cultural norms and practices of the higher castes.

Imitation of the high caste manners by Dalits was an assertion of their right to equality. Treating Dalits as outside the fourfold Varna system, and describing them as ‘outcastes’ or ‘Panchama’ gave rise to a movement called Adi-Hindu movement. Thus, certain sections of Dalit leadership believed that Dalits were the original inhabitants of India and they were not Hindus. That Aryans or Brahmins who invaded this country forcibly imposed untouchability on the original inhabitants of this land. They believed that if Hinduism was discarded, untouchability would automatically come to an end.

They believed that if Hinduism was discarded, untouchability would automatically come to an end. Dalits began to call themselves Adi-Andhras in Andhra, Adi- Karnataka in Karnataka, Adi-Dravidas in Tamil Nadu, Adi-Hindus in Uttar Pradesh and Adi-Dharmis in Punjab. Dalits also followed the route of conversion with a purpose of getting rid of untouchability and to develop their moral and financial conditions. A good number of Dalits were converted to Christianity, especially in Kerala. Some of the Dalits, especially in Punjab were converted to Sikhism.

They are known as Mazhabis, Namdharis, Kabir Panthis etc. Dalits also got converted to Buddhism. Dr. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism along with his millions of followers at Nagpur in 1956. As a protest against Hinduism some of the Dalit leaders founded their own sects or religions. Guru Ghasi Das (MP) founded Satnami Sect. Harichand and Guruchand Thakur (Bengal) founded Matua Sect. Ayyan Kali (Kerala) founded Sadha Jana Paripalan Yogam (SJPY) and Mangu Ram (Punjab) founded Adi Dharam.

Attempts were also made to organize Dalits politically in order to fight against socio-economic problems. Dr. BR Ambedkar demanded adequate representation for Dalits in the legislatures and the

Government of India Act, 1919, which provided for one seat to the depressed classes in the central Legislative Assembly. The Poona Pact of September 1932 provided for reservation of seats for depressed classes out of general electorates sets.

3.4.3 Emergence of Dalit consciousness during colonial period

The subaltern communities of India began their movement in India with their basic demand for justice and equality because they struggle to combat exploitation and inequality in society. The inhuman and barbaric practices committed against the Dalits, led them to protest against the caste –based hierarchical system of India, that has divided Indian society on the basis of caste or Varna system, class (Brahmin have Vs non–Brahmin have nots) and other related stratification.

Untouchability, as indicated above, has always been considered as social evil. Since long efforts had been made to eradicate it. Religious and social, reformers like Buddha, Ramanuja, Ramanand, Chitanya, Kabir, Nank, Tukaram and others, made great efforts to eradicate it as far as possible.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule formed the Satya Shodak Mandal in 1873 with the aim of liberating non-Brahmins from the clutches of Brahminism. Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur started Satya Shodak Mandal in 1912 and carried forward the movement started by Phule. In the pre- independence period, the Dalit movements comprised of a strong non-Brahman movement against Brahmanism in Maharashtra. The Adi Dravidas movement in Tamil Nadu, Shri Narayan Dharma Paripalan movement in Kerala, Adi Andhras, movement in Coastal Andhra and the like. Phule tried to formulate a new theistic religion. Jyotirao Govindrao Phule was known for his struggles to uplift lower castes. This society was established by him in 1873 He belonged to Mali caste; he faced exploitation and humiliation. These circumstances led him to turn against caste inequalities. He criticized Brahmins and the congress party due to its ignorant attitude towards weaker sections. The main aim was to free Shudras and Ati Shudras from suppression. This movement condemned Brahmins for being mediators between God and his followers. Phule believed that no one can become an intermediary in religious matters. He wanted the representation of all classes in local bodies and services. The movement emphasized education for a social change and revolution. For the same, he opened many educational institutions. He was also elected as a member of the Poona Municipal Committee in 1876 and honored with the title of ‘Mahatma’ in 1888. The efforts led to the scope of reservation for underprivileged and weaker sections in the Constitution.

The religious reformers of the 19th century were influenced by the work of Christian missionaries in India. The Brahma Samaj (1828), the Prarthana Samaj (1867), the Ramkrishna Mission, and the Arya Samaj (1875) are the examples of such institutions founded with a view to fight against social evils practiced by the caste Hindus. The Brahma Samaj and the Arya Samaj, and other social organizations by propaganda, education, and practical measures, did much to secure the social, religious and cultural equality to them.

The Shri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam Movement is also an important pre-independence movement. It was founded in Kerala in 1903 under the leadership of Shri Narayana Guru. He faced

humiliation in various forms because he belonged to a backward Ezhava caste. The caste constitutes 26% of the total Kerala's population. The problem of traditional caste hierarchy was prevailing and people suffered from many humiliating causes. It was against the conflict between depressed class and upper-class people. Moreover, the common thing here also was suppression caused by the Brahmins. He took a motive called 'SNDP Yogam'. Several issues like government employment, biased temple entry, education, political representation, etc. were taken out under this act. The movement brought transformations in social positions and helped in bringing social mobility. He studied many religious and marital rituals and simplified them. Wrapping up his every beneficial step he gave one slogan "one religion, one caste, and one God for mankind".

There was a lack of representation of non – Brahmins. India was fighting against the colonial rule but on another side, a real fight continued for the liberation of weaker sections. In the Madras presidency, they were left illiterate and not allowed in various public places. The political scenario was dominating with no job security for backward class masses. In 1916, nearly 30 essential non-Brahmin leaders took a stand and formed South Indian Liberation Federation (SILF) which was popularly famous as Justice Party. It released a very crucial document known as non-Brahmins manifesto in December 1916 that later formed the basis for Dravidian Movement. Tamil Nadu gained many advantageous results from the Justice Party and shaped its social and political justice. Moreover, the party was not male dominating because it played a vital role in promoting women to contest elections. It paved a way for Muthulakshmi Reddy to designate as a first woman legislator. Nair claimed that this movement also affected north India. The party formed a new faith among people about political scenes.

Comparatively, South India faced more violent movements than north India. The position of Brahmins in southern parts was discriminatory and high. Organizations like Arya Samaj in North India helped these areas to be united and equal to a great limit. The self-respect movement broke out in 1925 by Ramasamy Nacker. It was started to uplift Dravidian people and it exposed Brahmins tyranny and those ways through which high-class people were controlling every authority. This movement holds the ideas of equal human rights. He wanted to advocate a separate Dravida Nation. He also backed the creation of Pakistan because this might help in creating a Dravida nation. The basic dogma for this separatist idea was that the lower classes and non – Brahmins were facing a lot of heinous issues. It would help them to get rid of these difficulties. He wanted that nation as an egalitarian society. His principal motive was to remove every religious motto which justifies ill practices and evils. His ideas were violent and he urged every non – Brahmin to boycott Brahmin ceremonies. Then this Dravidian movement later got involved in politics and formed DMK that was supported by backward and Dalits of Tamil Nadu.

Dr. Ambedkar, on his part turned to Buddhism. In Tamil Nadu, non- Brahmin movement tried to claim Saivism as an independent religion although both Ayyapan proclaimed no religion, no caste and no god for mankind. All the above movements led to, some extent, the social upliftment of Dalits.

The establishment and consolidation of the British Raj gradually but radically changed the political, administrative, economic and social fabric of India. The new set up in theory decried the caste, color and creed prejudices and attempted to re-mould the Indian society on the principles of competition and

individualism, liberty and equality. It encouraged the dissemination of the rational, liberal and humane ideas of the West.

The new polity, the new administrative framework, the new judicial system, the new forms of land tenure and taxation, the new patterns of trade, the new education system, and the network of communications stressed the spirit of equality. A new environment emerged in the society where the process of westernization and sanskritization got brewed up; the consciousness for positive rights was created, the general awareness took a new turn culminating in farreaching political and sociological changes.

Among the depressed classes also rose intellectuals, distinguished of whom was Dr.Ambedkar, who struggled to secure for them the social recognition and human rights. The all India Depressed Association and the All India Depressed Classes Federation, the principal organizations of these classes, initiated a movement to improve their conditions. They aimed at improving their miserable economic conditions, and to spread education among them. They worked to secure for them the rights to draw water from public wells, admission to the schools, and to the use of roads; and enter the public temples. The Mahad Satyagrah for the right of water led by Dr. Ambedkar was one of the outstanding movements of the untouchables to win equal social rights.

Attempts were also made to organize Dalits politically in order to fight against socioeconomic problems. Dr. Ambedkar formed the independent Labour Party in 1936. He tried to abolish the exploitative Khoti system prevailing in Kokan part of Maharashtra, and Vetti or Maharaki system a wage free hereditary service to the caste Hindus in the local administration. He tried to convince the Government to recruit the Mahars in Military. Ultimately he became successful in 1941 when the first Mahar Regiment was formed.

With the growing process of democratization Dr. Ambedkar demanded adequate representation for Dalits in the legislatures and in the administration. Government of India Act, 1919, provided for one seat to the depressed classes in the central Legislative Assembly. In 1932, British Government headed by Ramsay Macdonald announced the 'Communal Award'.

The award envisaged separate electorate for the Depressed Classes. Mahatma Gandhi went on a historic fast in protest against Communal Award especially in respect of depressed classes. The issue was settled by famous Poona Pact, September 1932. It provided for reservation of seats for depressed classes out of general electorates sets.

The All India Harijans Sevak Sangh founded by Gandhi in 1923 started numerous schools for the Harijan including residential vocational schools. The Congress Government after coming to power in various States under the Government of India Act 1935 did useful work in restoring to the depressed classes their rightful place. The Congress Government in Bombay passed, the Bombay Harijan Temple Worship (Removal of Disabilities) Act enabling the trustees to admit the Harijans to the temples.

Free education of the Harijans, from the primary class to the university level was introduced by the C.R and Bihar and Congress Governments in their respective Provinces. The rulers of states like Travancore, Indore, Aundh and Devas, took the initiative in throwing open all state temples by proclamation to the untouchables.

3.4.4 Post independence experience

The Dalit movement have gained momentum in the post-independence period. Although with the introduction of western language, and with the influence of the Christian missionaries, the Dalits began to come across the ideals of equality and liberty and thus began the Dalit Movement in modern times. The frustrated Dalit minds when mixed with reason began confrontation against the atrocities of Brahmanism. The educated Dalits, gradually began to talk about the problems of poor and about exploitation and humiliations from the upper castes without any hesitation. They tried to explain to the other illiterate brothers about the required change in the society. Dalit Movement gave rise to the birth of many writers and journalists. A new group of thinkers emerged among Dalit community. Many writers through their writing made the people aware of exploitation carried on by the elite section of the society. To enforce the provisions of law more strictly, the Untouchability (Offences) Act (1955) was passed to fix penalties for not observing the law. Besides, to enable the Harijans overcome their backwardness, they were provided with special educational facilities. The Union and the State Governments now spend huge sums of money on their advancement and on projects to remove untouchability. In consequence of these provisions; there has come about a distinct change in the status of Harijans. There are now thousands of Harijans working in the central and State Governments. They hold high positions in the administration. At selection levels too, special consideration is shown to the Harijan candidates. They now actively take to the profession of Law, Medicine and Engineering.

In politics too they have gained a balancing position. They have the benefit of the reservations of seats in all elected bodies from the village panchayat to Union Parliament. They are now, not only in a position to sway the local balance of power one way or the other but also affect the political developments, at the centre.

However if one look into the fight of Mahars of Maharastra and role of Republican party the it would be easy to understand the background of such developments. Mahar is an untouchable caste that was very downtrodden and passive in Maharashtra. Their villages are on the outskirts of Maharashtra and they constitute 9% of the population. The movement gave a very clear picture of their situation. GB Walangkar was first to fight for their sake. He used media to show their grievances. He strongly critiqued and denounced the idea of religion and caste to validate certain wrong practices. The formation of All India Scheduled Caste Federation was another landmark in the history of Dalit mobilization. After this, the Republican Party was formed in 1957. The party stood for the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the Dalits. It became famous in UP and Maharashtra. By this time, the Mahar movement was already triggered. All these situations helped in forming an anti – Brahminical ideology and advocated the total rejection of caste.

Later in 1957, the Republic Party of India was formed which described themselves as “Ambedkarites”. RPI was limited to Uttar Pradesh. This period was also marked by horrendous atrocities against Dalits. Violence against Dalits was infressed in Khairlanji, Kawelwada, Dulina, Bhagana through burning, murdering and raping Dalit women without any fear of punishment. In the background of such brutal violence, the Dalit

Panthers emerged in 1972 in Maharashtra. Inspired by the Black Movement, the Dalit Panthers was formed by a group of educated Mahars in order to lead the movement. The name was taken from the Black Panther movements in the USA. This organization was influenced by several Marxist ideas therefore the agendas are revolutionary. The initial ways were violent. After a certain period, devices like literature, debates and discussions were being used to show rage and anger against the Hindu caste system. It helped in creating a new turn in the politics of Maharashtra. It is very crucial in the history of Dalit movements. It also created situations to bring renaissance in Marathi literature.

They fought over two battles – at the symbolic level against caste Hindu peasants who committed atrocities against Ati – Shudras. This movement was led by intellectuals, poets and writers like Namdeo Dhasal, Raja Dhale, JV Pawar and Arun Kamble whose “anti-establishment poetry” published in magazines like “Vidrohi” gave powerful descriptions of the oppression of Dalits and their revolutionary struggle for change.

The most fundamental factor responsible for the rise of Dalit Panthers was the repression and terror under which the oppressed Dalits continued to live in the rural area. There was a wave of new socio-religious movements in India during the 1970s. these movements helped in bringing secular balance. However, these didn't only stick to Dalit people but open to other castes and communities also. The organizations like Radha Swami Satsang movement, Dera Sacha Sauda were formed as a result. Dalit people are still supporting these organizations.

Further, the 1980s marked the emergence of the strongest post-independence Dalit organization under the tutelage of Kanshi Ram who founded BAMCEF. After this Kanshi Ram took a qualitative leap forward and founded the Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS4) in 1981. He campaigned with highly impressive ten wings and catchy slogans. Within a span of three years, the DS4 was transformed into a full-fledged political party which was now known as the Bahujan Samaj Party launched on Ambedkar's birthday in 1984. BSP tried to construct the Dalit – Shudra unity through his emphasis on the term “Bahujan”. According to Anand Teltumbde in “Republic of Caste”, Kanshi Ram's comparison with Ambedkar can be misleading but it may surely be said that Kanshi Ram emerged as the strongest and most creative leader in the post – Ambedkarite Dalit Movement “. Ambedkar statues were erected and Periyar Melas were organised. Along with this Periyar's “Ramayana: A true reading “ was promoted which was banned since 1969 in Uttar Pradesh.

Caste became an important determinant in Indian politics but until the 1980s the Dalit question remained subsumed within the nationalist agenda of development. According to Sudipto Kaviraj, the mainstream elite political leadership took a clear position against giving the issue of caste any legitimate importance. But seeing this scenario, BR Ambedkar clearly opined in response to Nehru's ambivalent attitude towards caste in the following words – “You cannot build anything on the foundation of caste. You cannot build up a nation, you cannot build up a morality. Anything you build upon the foundation of caste will crack and never be a whole”.

Ambedkar laid down the values of equality, liberty, fraternity in the Indian Constitution and also abolished untouchability. In his last years, he converted to Buddhism and resigned from the ministerial position when the Hindu Code Bill was rejected.

Another important juncture was marked by the emergence of caste associations. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph looked at caste associations as agents of modernity in a traditional society like India. Rajni Kothari, in “Caste in Indian Politics” argued that the consequences of caste – politics interactions are just the reverse of what is stated. It is not politics that gets caste-ridden but it’s caste that gets politicised. The Dalit movement was strengthened by the literary movement of Dalit writings by important scholars like Bama, Imaiyam, Alakiya, Periyaram, Punita Panthiyan, Kancha Illaiah. The Dalit movement cannot be limited to any fixed time period. It is an ongoing revolution which shall continue till the annihilation of the caste system. The caste system has only manifested in different manners but carries in it the same hostile attitude towards the lower castes, hence the Dalit movement becomes all the more important in the contemporary times where human rights and development have been the discourses across nations. The myth of a free neo-liberal market that supporters of globalisation propound is inherently a flawed idea to remove caste. The “social – Darwinist ethos” required to survive in the neo-liberal economy simply would deny the weak and oppressed as they lack monetary and socio-cultural capital. The privileged castes favoured the “free market” offered by liberalisation reforms because it assured them their domination without any moral baggage. Many caste – Hindus could see India shining globally as a restoration of the ancient “Hindu” glory which was hitherto blocked by appeasing the “less – deserving”. Another important task is to break the myth of economic development of the nation as directly beneficial to the Dalit community. Thorat et al (2012) provide empirical evidence on how in the neoliberal economy, caste discrimination in job applications is rampant and unceasing. Caste consciousness is still maintained by caste – profession linkages. Majority of policy work is still administered by Brahmins and Kshatriyas head the “masculine armed forces”. Vaishyas have accumulated wealth through modern-day business. Scavenging, sanitation and filthy works are structurally relegated to Dalits. Prasad and Kamble make a path-breaking argument where they show that Dalit entrepreneurs tend to succeed in the modern sectors – buildings, tunnels, bridges etc. But these enterprises are an extension of the traditional (brick and mortar sector) in which Dalits have operated for ages.

In 2016, Rohith Vemula, a Dalit PhD scholar at the University of Hyderabad, died by suicide. Between 2016 and 2021 itself, India lost several students belonging to Dalit and Bahujan communities to suicide as a result of caste-based discrimination. That elite Indian higher educational institutions practice caste-based discrimination is nothing new. But Vemula’s death sparked a political movement. “Rohith Vemula’s dream,” Anand Teltumbde wrote, “of becoming a science writer like his idol, Carl Sagan, ended abruptly at the altar of caste.” Academic and political movements have been initiated by many civil society activists or political parties. Eminent scholars like Dr. Kancha Illaiah or Prof. Gopal Guru point out that the social structures and political directions are affected by these deaths. Socio-economic, cultural and political dynamics must be accommodative to curb such menaces.

3.5 Constitutional and legal provisions

India has taken several steps to prohibit these steps through constitutional provisions, guarantee, legislative enactments, and policy measures. A number of specific provisions have been incorporated in the Constitution, safeguarding specifically the social, economic educational and political rights of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, including the protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, the Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 and the Employment of Manual Scavenger and Construction of Dry Latrine (Prohibition) Act, 1993 etc., and its national commission.

Article 46 lays down Directive Principles and special call in education and economic interests and the Constitution guaranteeing fundamental rights and such provisions protecting minority. Article 14 guarantees the right to equality before law, or equal protection of laws, and Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race and caste etc., and further in Articles 330 to 342 makes provisions for safeguarding interests of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. There are major constitutional safeguards for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Article 15 – Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth.

Article 15 (4) – Empowers the State to make special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Article 16 – Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment but special provision for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Article 16 (4) – Empowers the State to make any provision for reservation regarding appointment of post in favour of any backward class of citizens which in the opinion of the State is not adequately represented in the services under the State.

Article 17 – “Untouchability” is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of “untouchability” shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 19 – Protection against ... in human beings and forced labour relevant to distances of bounded labour among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Article 25 – Freedom of conscience and profession, practice and propagation of religion – entry into temples of Hindu religious institutions of a public character.

Article 29 – Protection of interests of minorities religion, race, caste, language, no bar to admission in educational institutions.

Article 35 – Legislation to give effect to the provisions relating to fundamental rights.

Article 38 – State to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of people.

Article 243 – D – Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in panchayats.

Article 244 and 399 – Administration of Scheduled Caste areas and tribal area and control of the union over the administration of Scheduled Castes areas and the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes.

Article 330 – Provides for reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha.

Article 332 – Provides for reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the State Vidhan Sabhas (Legislative Assemblies).

Article 335 – Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services posts.

Article 338 – National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Article 341 and 342 – List of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Each of these sections begins with an introduction so as to highlight some of the issues related to the matter presented there in. We have presented the major constitutional safeguards for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This is given to reiterate the fact that the demand of the Scheduled Castes for special provisions is in line with the directive of the Constitution of India.

3.6 Conclusion

In independent India when one wakes up in the morning with the news that one dalit stoned to death to unfurl the Tri-colour to celebrate the independence day, or there are two types of plate, one for higher caste children and other for lower caste, in a Government school to serve the mid-day meal, or a dalit groom allegedly beaten up and in forcibly alighted from a horse in his wedding procession put subjected to casteist slurs, or a dalit lynched to death by the higher caste hindu, he or she have to thing are we indendent yet? What so ever this is not depicting the true plural or multicultural India. There are so many other instances one can cite to negate those incidents. Judiciary is also playing a pro active role, police much engages into protecting the Constitutional values. But we the people of India should protect our nation by protecting the basic flavor of the nation. Only then we could end such exploitation and discriminative horrific acts.

3.7 Self assessment questions

1. Write a brief note on the complexities of the term of Dalit in India.
2. Examine the causes of the development of the Dalit movements in India.
3. Analyse the dynamics of Dalit movements in India.
4. Discuss the basic premises of Dalit movements in India during colonial period.
5. Evaluate the nature of Dalit movements in independent India.
6. Describe the Constitutional and legal provisions that are available in India to protect the rights of the Dalits.

3.8 Suggested readings

- (a) Ambedkar, B. R. (1891-1956). *Annihilation of Caste: An Undelivered Speech*. Arnold Publishers. 1990.
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- (e) Omvedt, G. (1994). *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*. Sage.
- (f) Kamble, B. (2008). *The Prisons We Broke*. Orient Blackswan.
- (g) Shah, G. (2004). *Social Movements in India: A Review of Literature*. Sage.
- (h) Chakravarti, U. (2018). *Gendering Caste: through a feminist lens*. Sage.
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Tribal Movements (আদিবাসী আন্দোলন)

বিষয়সূচি :

- 4.1 পাঠ উদ্দেশ্য
- 4.2 ভূমিকা
- 4.3 আদিবাসী আন্দোলন: উদ্ভব ও বিস্তার
- 4.4 আদিবাসী আন্দোলন: মূল দাবীসমূহ
- 4.5 ভারতে আদিবাসী আন্দোলনসমূহ: সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিক্রমা
 - 4.5.1 সাঁওতাল বিদ্রোহ
 - 4.5.2 ঝাড়খন্ড আন্দোলন
- 4.6 মূল্যায়ন
- 4.7 মূল্যায়ন নিমিত্ত প্রশ্নাবলী
- 4.8 সাহায্যকারী গ্রন্থপঞ্জী

4.1 পাঠ উদ্দেশ্য

আলোচ্য পাঠটির মধ্য দিয়ে শিক্ষার্থীরা ভারতের আদিবাসী আন্দোলন সম্পর্কে একটা সামগ্রিক ধারণা লাভ করতে পারবে। বিশেষ করে আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের সংজ্ঞা বৈশিষ্ট্যসমূহ যেমন জানতে পারবে ঠিক তেমনই আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের উদ্ভব ও বিস্তার সম্পর্কে জ্ঞান লাভ করবে। এছাড়াও ভারতের কয়েকটি উল্লেখযোগ্য আদিবাসী আন্দোলন সম্পর্কে বিশেষ ভাবে ধারণা অর্জন সম্ভব হবে।

4.2 ভূমিকা

ভারতের মোট জনসংখ্যার প্রায় ৮.৬ শতাংশ হল আদিবাসী সম্প্রদায়ভুক্ত। ২০১১ সালের জনগণনা অনুযায়ী ভারতে তফসিলি উপজাতিভুক্ত জনগণের সংখ্যা ১০,৪২,৮১,০৩৪ জন, যার মধ্যে গ্রামীণ এলাকায় বসবাস করেন ৯,৩৮,১৯, ১৬২ এবং শহরে বসবাস করেন আনুপাতিক হার উল্লেখযোগ্য, তার মধ্যে রাজস্থান, গুজরাট, মধ্যপ্রদেশ, অন্ধ্র, বিহার, ওড়িশা প্রভৃতি রাজ্যের কথা উল্লেখযোগ্য। পশ্চিমবঙ্গেও উপজাতীয় মানুষরা মোট জনসংখ্যার প্রায় শতকরা ছয়ভাগ। উপজাতীয় মানুষরা নিজ নিজ রাজ্যের অর্থনৈতিক ও সামাজিক জীবনে বিশেষ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে। ভারতের রাজনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রেও উপজাতীয়দের সমস্যাগুলোকে আজ আর এড়িয়ে যাওয়ার সুযোগ থাকছে না। (ঘোষ ১৩৩৫ বঙ্গাব্দ/ চতুর্থ মুদ্রণ ২০১৮, ৭-৮)।

সিকিমের দিকে চোখ রাখলেও আমরা উপজাতীয় সম্প্রদায়ের সংখ্যাধিক্য লক্ষ্য করি। এরা কোনও সমধর্মীয়

(Homogeneously) সমাজ নয় বরং বিষমধর্মীতা (Heterogeneously) এখানে লক্ষণীয়। তাই এদের দাবী-দাওয়া ও বিবিধ এবং আন্দোলনের ক্ষেত্রেও নানা রকমফের দেখা যায়। ভারতের রাজনৈতিক আঙিনায় দীর্ঘদিন ধরে, শোষিত ও অবহেলিত মানুষেরা নানাভাবে তাদের দাবী-দাওয়া তুলে ধরেছেন। এই জনগোষ্ঠীগুলির জাতিসত্তার প্রশ্ন, ভাষা ও সাংস্কৃতিক বিকাশের প্রশ্ন, শিক্ষা ও স্বাস্থ্যের প্রশ্ন, সামাজিক মর্যাদার প্রশ্ন—এসব নানা প্রশ্ন দেখা দিয়েছে এবং তা নিয়ে রাজনৈতিক আন্দোলন সংঘটিত হয়েছে। আমরা সামগ্রিক ভাবে ভারতীয় পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে উপজাতি সম্প্রদায়গুলির আন্দোলনের বৈশিষ্ট্য, উদ্ভব ও বিবর্তন এবং কয়েকটি পরিচিত ও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ আন্দোলনকে এখানে সংক্ষেপে আলোচনা করব।

4.3 আদিবাসী আন্দোলন: উদ্ভব ও বিস্তার

ভারতের আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের উদ্ভব ও বিস্তার এর সঙ্গে ভারতীয় আদিবাসীদের স্বকীয় পরিচয়ের প্রশ্ন ওতপ্রোত ভাবে যুক্ত। বেশ কিছু গবেষক মনে করেন যে সামাজিক সচলায়ন তত্ত্বের নিরিখে উচ্চবর্গের ব্যক্তিগণ ও বুদ্ধিজীবীরা নানাভাবে আদিবাসীদের পরিচয়ের নির্মাণ ও দাবী-দাওয়া জনিত বিষয়গুলিকে দমিয়ে রাখতে চেষ্টা করেন তাদের শ্রেণীর কায়েমি স্বার্থ রক্ষা করতে। সাম্প্রতিক সময়ের গণতান্ত্রিক নির্বাচনী রাজনৈতিক ব্যবস্থার হাত ধরে আদিবাসীদের সক্রিয় ভাবে বিভিন্ন সুযোগ ও দাবী জানানোর মধ্য দিয়ে আন্দোলন সংগঠিত হয়। তবে আদিবাসীদের পরিচয় ও জীবন যাত্রার প্রকারভেদ আন্দোলনেও নানা অভিমুখ সূচীত করেছে।

তপসিলি উপজাতি বলতে ভারতের সংবিধানের ৩৪২ অনুচ্ছেদে প্রদত্ত ক্ষমতা মারফৎ মহামান্য রাষ্ট্রপতির জারি করা বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুসারে নির্দিষ্ট তপসিলে (Schedule) অন্তর্ভুক্ত আদিবাসীদের বোঝায়। উল্লেখ্য যে সব আদিবাসী গোষ্ঠীই তপসিলে অন্তর্ভুক্ত হয়ে থাকে। যাদের সংখ্যা হয় ৬১৬। এদের মধ্যে সংখ্যাধিক্যে প্রধান হল ভীল, গন্ড, সাঁওতাল, ওঁরাও ও মীনা। (চট্টোপাধ্যায় ২০১০; ১১৩)

সমাজতাত্ত্বিক বি. কে. রায় বর্মণ তাঁর “Challenges and Responses in Tribal India” নামক নিবন্ধে ভারতে আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের বিস্তারের ক্ষেত্রে সাধারণ বৈশিষ্ট্যগুলি আলোচনা করেছেন। তাঁর অভিমত অনুযায়ী ভারতের আদিবাসীরা বিভিন্ন সময়ে বিবিধ চ্যালেঞ্জের সন্মুখীন হয়েছে। নানাবিধ আর্থ-সামাজিক, রাজনৈতিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক কারণে আদিবাসীদের মধ্যে অস্থিরতা দেখা দেয়। এই অস্থিরতার কারণ স্থান, কাল ও পাত্র ভেদে বিভিন্ন। ফলে প্রতিক্রিয়াও বিভিন্ন। এ প্রসঙ্গে তিনি আদিবাসীদের আট ধরনের প্রতিক্রিয়ার উল্লেখ্য করেছেন :

এক, বাসভূমির স্বাতন্ত্র্য বা গোপনীয়তা বিপন্ন হওয়ার আশংকার জবাবী প্রতিক্রিয়া। (Response to threats to the privacy of habitat)

দুই, সম্পদে হস্তক্ষেপ ও নিয়ন্ত্রণের বিপদের আশঙ্কায় জবাবী প্রতিক্রিয়া। (Response to threats to access to and control of resources)

তিন, সামগ্রিক মিথস্ক্রিয়ামূলক ব্যবস্থায় সাবেকি ভূমিকাসমূহের ভঙ্গনের বিপদের আশঙ্কায় জবাবী প্রতিক্রিয়া। (Response to disruption of traditional roles in the total interaction set-up)

চার, মানুষ ও প্রকৃতির মধ্যে সম্পর্কের নতুন অর্থের জন্য অনুসন্ধান। (Search for new meanings of the relationship between man and nature)

পাঁচ, ব্যক্তি ও সমাজের মধ্যে নতুন অর্থের জন্য অনুসন্ধান। (Search for new meanings of the relationship

between individuals and society)

ছয়, সমরূপতার নতুন সীমান্তের অনুসন্ধান। (Search for new frontiers of identity)

সাত, সম্পদসমূহের নিয়ন্ত্রণের অধিকারের সন্তোষজনক নিয়ন্ত্রণ ব্যবস্থার জন্য অনুসন্ধান (Search for a more satisfactory system of control of resources) এবং

আট, সকল স্তরে ক্ষমতার একটি অধিকতর সন্তোষজনক সাংগঠনিক ব্যবস্থার জন্য অনুসন্ধান। (Search for a more satisfactory system of organization of community power at all levels)

উপরোক্ত কারণগুলির জন্য আদিবাসী সমাজের আন্দোলনের উদ্ভব ও বিস্তার প্রবনতা বি কে রায় বর্মণের লেখনিতে ধরা পড়েছে। তিনি বলতে চেয়েছেন যে আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের ক্ষেত্রে প্রাথমিক তিনটি চ্যালেঞ্জ এসেছে বাইরে থেকে এবং বাকি পাঁচটি প্রতিক্রিয়া এসেছে আন্দোলনের ভেতর থেকে।

কালের স্রোতে আদিবাসী আন্দোলন প্রবাহমান নানা ধরনের প্রবণতা ও পরিবর্তন এই আন্দোলনে লক্ষ্য করা গেছে। কুমার সুরেশ সিং তাঁর *Tribal Society in India: An Anthropological Perspective* শীর্ষক গ্রন্থে আদিবাসী আন্দোলন সমূহকে তিনটি পর্যায়ে বিভক্ত করেছেন। প্রথম পর্যায়টি ১৭৯৫ থেকে ১৮৭০ সাল পর্যন্ত পরিব্যাপ্ত। এই সময়কালের মধ্যে ভারতে সাম্রাজ্যবাদী বিদেশী ব্রিটিশ শাসক গোষ্ঠীর উদ্ভব, বিস্তার ও প্রতিষ্ঠা ঘটেছে। ১৮৬০ থেকে ১৯২০ সাল পর্যন্ত সময়কালে দেখা যায় ঔপনিবেশিক শক্তি নানা অছিলায় শোষণের জন্য আদিবাসীদের বসবাস এলাকায় ঢুকে পড়ে। এবং দেখা যায় যে জঙ্গল ও জমির উপর, আদিবাসীদের চিরাচরিত অধিকারের উপরে বনিক মূলধনের প্রতিকূল প্রভাব পড়ে। তৃতীয় পর্যায়টি ১৯২০ সাল থেকে শুরু করে ১৯৪৭ সালের স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনের সময়কাল পর্যন্ত সম্প্রসারিত যেখানে আদিবাসীরা মূলধারার কৃষক সহ নানাবিধ আন্দোলনে সামিল হয়েছিলেন। স্বাধীনতা উত্তর সময়ে আদিবাসীদের আন্দোলন আরো জোরদার হয়েছে এবং বহুবিধ দাবিদাওয়া উঠে এসেছে যা আমরা পরের পর্বে আলোচনা করব।

4.4 আদিবাসী আন্দোলন: মূল দাবীসমূহ

আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের প্রবণতার দিকে চোখ রাখলে বেশ কিছু অভিনব দাবী ও আন্দোলন পদ্ধতি চোখে পড়ে। আদিবাসীরা মূলত দুর্ভেদ্য এলাকা তথা বনাঞ্চল, পর্বতাঞ্চল, দ্বীপ এলাকাসহ নানাবিধ দুর্গম স্থানে বসবাস করে। কারণ তথাকথিত ভদ্রলোক শ্রেণীর ক্রমাগত আক্রমণের ফলে সমতল এলাকা থেকে ক্রমাগত পিছু হটতে হটতে তারা প্রান্তবাসি হয়ে পড়েছে। তাই প্রাথমিক ভাবে তাদের দাবি থাকে, জল, জঙ্গল ও জমির অধিকার রক্ষার। বি কে রায় বর্মণ (২০০০; ৩২০) মনে করেন, শিল্পায়ন ও বাজার ব্যবস্থার প্রবর্তনের ফলে তারা প্রান্ত প্রদেশে যেতে বাধ্য হয়েছিল। (“Consequent upon the establishment of industrial centre in primitive setting the withdrawal of the indigenous people to more outlying area is a well known phenomenon”.)

গভীর পাঠে লক্ষ্য করা গেছে, আদিবাসীরা তাদের জীবনের সহজ-সরল অধ্যায় অতিক্রম করতে পারেনি বরং বিভিন্ন সময়ে তারা বিভিন্ন ধরনের পেষণ ও বঞ্চনার শিকার হয়েছে। ব্রিটিশ ভারতে অরণ্য সংরক্ষণ নীতি প্রণয়নের ফলে আদিবাসীরা অরণ্যের ফল, মূল, জ্বালানি সংগ্রহের ও বসতির অধিকার হারান। অন্যদিকে আবার দেখা যায়, ভূমি রাজস্ব ব্যবস্থায় চিরস্থায়ী বন্দোবস্ত বিধি প্রবর্তনের ফলে উচ্চহারে খাজনা দানের ফলে আদিবাসীরা দ্রুত মহাজনের ঋণ জালে আটকে পড়েন। পরিণতি স্বরূপ তারা দিনমজুর হিসেবে কাজ করতে বাধ্য হয় এবং বহিরাগত ঠিকাদারদের চরম শোষণের শিকার হয়ে

থাকে। ‘দিকু’ তথা বহিরাগতদের বিরুদ্ধে তারা আন্দোলন সংগঠিত করে।

একটু লক্ষ্য করলেই দেখা যায় যে, আদিবাসীদের সাবেকি জীবিকা খাদ্য সংগ্রহ, শিকার, পশুপালন, স্থানান্তর কৃষি এবং পরবর্তী সময়কালে স্থায়ী কৃষিকাজ। ‘দিকু’দের অর্থনৈতিক লোভ-লালসার শিকার হয়ে তারা তা হারাতে থাকে। ফলে তারা তাদের অর্থনৈতিক সুবিধা, সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক ঐতিহ্য রক্ষার দাবী জানাতে থাকে।

স্বাধীনতা পূর্ববর্তী ও স্বাধীনতার পরে সংগঠিত আদিবাসী আন্দোলনসমূহের কারণ হিসেবে কতকগুলি বিষয়কে চিহ্নিত করা হয়। এই সমস্ত বিষয়গুলি হল—জমিজমা বেহাত হয়ে যাওয়া, আদিবাসীদের অধিগত জমি ছলে-বলে কেড়ে নেওয়া, মহাজনদের নানাবিধ ফন্দি ও চড়া সুদের ব্যবসা, জোর করে বেগার খাটানো, নুন্যতম মজুরী না পাওয়া প্রভৃতি। এ সবের বিরুদ্ধে আদিবাসীরা নানা সময়ে আন্দোলন করে। সূত্রাকারে আদিবাসী আন্দোলনসমূহের মূল দাবিগুলি হল—

- ১। উপজাতিদের নিজস্ব অভ্যাস, জীবন রীতি ও সাংস্কৃতিক স্বাভাবিক রক্ষার দাবী।
- ২। বনজ ও কৃষিজ এলাকার রক্ষা।
- ৩। উপজাতিদের ভাষা, সংস্কৃতি, লিপি সংরক্ষণের দাবি দাওয়া পূরণের জন্য উপজাতি গোষ্ঠীগুলি সদা এগিয়ে আসে।
- ৪। প্রকৃতি দেবতার রক্ষা ও তাদের বাসভূমিতে ‘দিকু’দের প্রবেশ রোধের জন্য আন্দোলন।
- ৫। জীবিকা সুরক্ষার জন্য এই জনগোষ্ঠীগুলি দাবী জানায়।
- ৬। আধুনিক গণতান্ত্রিক রাজনৈতিক ব্যবস্থার বিভিন্ন স্তরে তারা তাদের অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ দাবি করে। প্রত্যক্ষ অংশগ্রহণের মাধ্যমে নীতি নির্ধারণ প্রক্রিয়াকে প্রভাবিত করে তারা তাদের দাবি পূরণে সচেষ্ট।
- ৭। বর্তমানে শিক্ষার বিস্তারের কারণে উপজাতিরা রাজনৈতিক সচলায়ন প্রক্রিয়ায় অংশগ্রহণ করে, শিক্ষা ও চাকুরীতে সংরক্ষণের দাবী জানায়।

উপজাতি আন্দোলন বর্তমান সময়কালে শাসন প্রক্রিয়ায় অধিকতর ক্ষমতা লাভের জন্য আলাদা রাজ্যের দাবী কিংবা বিভিন্ন সময়ে তাদের বসবাসকৃত অঞ্চলের জন্য স্বশাসিত পর্যদের দাবি জানায়। সংবিধানের ষষ্ঠ তফসিল ভুক্তির দাবীও তাদের বিভিন্ন আন্দোলনে ফুটে উঠেছে। এই সকল দাবিগুলি বিভিন্ন সময়ে সংগঠিত আন্দোলনে আমরা দেখতে পাই। পরের পর্বে আমরা ভারতে সংগঠিত আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের সংক্ষিপ্ত রূপরেখা তুলে ধরব।

4.5 ভারতে আদিবাসী আন্দোলনসমূহ: সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিক্রমা

ভারতে আদিবাসী আন্দোলন সমূহের একটা সুদীর্ঘ ইতিহাস রয়েছে। উনিশ শতকে ইংরেজদের সঙ্গে ভারতীয় উপজাতি জনগোষ্ঠীর সরাসরি সংঘাতের ক্ষেত্র প্রস্তুত হয় যখন আমরা দেখি বিদেশী শাসকেরা উপজাতীয় কতৃত্বকে অস্বীকার করে তাদের চারণ ভূমিতে ব্রিটিশ কতৃত্ব কায়ম করতে চায়। স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই উপজাতি আদিবাসী জনগোষ্ঠীগুলি ক্ষমতা ও সম্পদ দুই হারাতে থাকে। এর প্রতিবাদ হিসেবে কোল-ভিল-মুন্ডা ও সাঁওতালদের আন্দোলন ইতিহাসের পাতায় স্বর্ণাক্ষরে লেখা রয়েছে। বিশেষ করে ইংরেজ আমলে আদিবাসীদের আন্দোলনে ধর্মীয় উপাদান যুক্ত হয়ে বিদেশী শাসনের উচ্ছেদই হয়ে দাঁড়ায় তাদের মূল লক্ষ্য। আবার অনেক সময় উপজাতিরা ইংরেজ অফিসার এবং উচ্চবর্ণের হিন্দুদের বিরুদ্ধেও সরব হয়েছেন। বিশেষ করে ‘দিকু’দের বিরুদ্ধে আন্দোলন এক্ষেত্রে পরিলক্ষিত হয়।

অনেকে মনে করেন, আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের ইতিহাসের আলোচনা ‘খলভুম আন্দোলন’ থেকে শুরু করা প্রয়োজন

যা ১৭৬৯ থেকে ১৭৭৪ সালের মধ্যে হয়েছিল। পশ্চিম মেদিনীপুর জেলার জঙ্গল মহলের অধিবাসীরা ব্রিটিশ সরকারের অতিরিক্ত ভূমি রাজস্বের বিরুদ্ধে সংগ্রামে সামিল হয় যা ‘চুয়াড়’ বিদ্রোহ নামে পরিচিত। পরে ১৭৯৯ সালে সংগঠিত আন্দোলন ‘পাইক’ বিদ্রোহ নামে খ্যাত যা ১৮১৬ সাল পর্যন্ত অব্যাহত ছিল। এছাড়াও চট্টগ্রাম অঞ্চলে আদিবাসীরা ১৭৭৬ থেকে ১৭৮৭ পর্যন্ত ‘চাকমা’ আন্দোলন করে। দামোদর সিং ছিলেন এই আন্দোলনের অন্যতম নেতা, তিনি তাদের ঐতিহ্যপূর্ণ স্বাধীনতা এবং জমির উপর তাদের চিরাচরিত অধিকার ফিরে পেতে আন্দোলন করেন। এই সময় বিহারে ১৭৭৮ সালে ‘মাল পাহাড়ীয়া’ আন্দোলন সংগঠিত হয়। ১৮৩২ সালে বিহারের সিংভূম জেলায় ‘হো’ উপজাতির জনগণ ‘কোল বিদ্রোহ’ করেন। ১৭৮৪-৮৫ সালে মহারাষ্ট্রে কোলরা অভ্যুত্থান করেন। পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মেদিনীপুর জেলার সাঁওতালরা ১৯২০-২১ সালে অসহযোগ আন্দোলনে সামিল হয়। পশ্চিমবঙ্গের বীরভূম জেলায় ১৮৫৫-৫৬ সালে সাঁওতাল বিদ্রোহ সংগঠিত হয়। ১৮৬০-৬২ সালে উত্তর-পূর্ব ভারতের জয়ন্তিয়া পার্বত্য অঞ্চলের আদিবাসীরা বিদ্রোহ করে। ১৮৮০ সালে কাচানাগারা আন্দোলন করে। ঔপনিবেশিক সময় কালে রাজস্থান, গুজরাট এবং মধ্যপ্রদেশের ভিলরা ইংরেজদের দখলদারির বিরুদ্ধে বেশ কয়েকবার আন্দোলনে সামিল হয়। তার মধ্যে ১৮১৭ এবং ১৮১৯ সালের খান্দেশি আন্দোলন উল্লেখযোগ্য। ১৮৮৫ থেকে ১৯৪৭ সালের মধ্যে গুজরাটের সুরাট জেলার ‘বেদছে আন্দোলন’ এবং ১৮৬৭-১৮৭০ সালের মধ্যে সংগঠিত গুজরাটের ‘নাইকদা’ আন্দোলনও গবেষকদের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেছে। এই সময়কালে ভারতের বিভিন্ন প্রান্তের আদিবাসীরা বিদ্রোহ সংগঠিত করেছেন। এই আন্দোলনগুলির চরিত্র পর্যালোচনা করলে দেখা যায়, আদিবাসীদের অসন্তোষের পিছনে অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রে আঞ্চলিক কারণ সমূহ কাজ করেছে। বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলের আদিবাসীদের মধ্যে অসন্তোষ সৃষ্টির মূল কারণগুলি হল: সঙ্গতিসম্পন্ন হিন্দুদের দ্বারা নির্দয় শোষণ; সামন্ততান্ত্রিক বিবিধ প্রতিষ্ঠান, ব্যাপক ধর্মান্তরিতকরণ ইত্যাদি। ফলে আদিবাসী জনগণের মধ্যে রাজনৈতিক জাগরণের সৃষ্টি হয়েছে এবং তারা রাজনৈতিক প্রক্রিয়ায় অংশগ্রহণ শুরু করেছেন।

আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের মূল রূপগুলি হল পুনঃস্থাপনমূলক (Restorative), সংস্কারমূলক (Reformative), এবং রাজনৈতিক স্বাভাবিকবাদী (Political autonomy/separatist)। প্রথম দুই ধরনের আন্দোলন প্রাক স্বাধীনতাকালে ঘটে থাকে এবং তৃতীয় ধরনের আন্দোলন স্বাধীনতা পরবর্তী ভারতে অনুসৃত হয়ে থাকে। পুনঃস্থাপনমূলক আন্দোলনের মধ্যে সাঁওতাল বিদ্রোহ ও মুন্ডাদের বিরসা আন্দোলন বিশেষ উল্লেখযোগ্য। সংস্কারমূলক আন্দোলনের মধ্যে ওঁরাওদের ভগৎ আন্দোলন বিশেষ উল্লেখযোগ্য। তৃতীয় ধরনের আন্দোলন বলতে সাধারণত একাধিক আদিবাসী গোষ্ঠীর রাজনৈতিক স্বাভাবিক লাভের লক্ষ্যে সংগঠিত ঐক্যবদ্ধ আন্দোলনকে বোঝায়, ঝাড়খন্ড আন্দোলন, নাগা ও মিজোদের আন্দোলন এক্ষেত্রে উল্লেখ্য হয়ে থাকে। (চট্টোপাধ্যায় ২০১০; ১১৪) আমরা দুটি বিশেষ আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের উপর একটু বিশদে আলোকপাত করব।

4.5.1 সাঁওতাল বিদ্রোহ

সাঁওতালরা ছিল কঠোর পরিশ্রমী, শান্তিপ্ৰিয় ও সরল প্রকৃতির মূলত কৃষিজীবী আদিবাসী সম্প্রদায়। মেদিনীপুর, বাঁকুড়া, বীরভূম, মানভূম, ছোটনাগপুর ও পালামৌ অঞ্চলের গভীর বনভূমিতে তারা বসবাস করত। চিরস্থায়ী বন্দোবস্ত হওয়ার ফলে এই অঞ্চল কোম্পানীর রাজস্বের অধীনে আসে। জমিদার ও কোম্পানীর কর্মচারীদের অত্যাচারে তারা এই অঞ্চল ত্যাগ করে রাজমহলের পর্বত ঘেরা অঞ্চলে এবং মুর্শিদাবাদের একাংশের বনভূমি পরিষ্কার করে সেখানে বসবাস ও কৃষিকাজ শুরু করে। তারা এই অঞ্চলের নাম দেয় ‘দামিন-ঈ-কোহী’ বা পাহাড়ের প্রান্তদেশ। এই এলাকার মোট আয়তন ছিল ১৩৬৬ বর্গমাইল এবং এর মধ্যে ৫০০ বর্গমাইল ছিল জমি। ১৮৫১ খ্রিষ্টাব্দের মধ্যে এখানে ১৪৩৭টি গ্রাম গড়ে ওঠে এবং ৮২,৭১৫ জন সাঁওতাল জনগণ এই গ্রামগুলিতে বসবাস করত।

এই অঞ্চলেও তারা জমিদার ও সরকারি কর্মচারীদের অত্যাচারের হাত থেকে রেহাই পায়নি। নানাভাবে তারা সরলপ্রাণ

দরিদ্র সাঁওতালদের শোষণ করতে শুরু করে। ফলে অত্যাচারে জর্জরিত হয়ে সাঁওতাল সম্প্রদায়ের প্রায় ১০০০০ জনগণ ১৮৫৫ সালের জুন মাসের ৩০ তারিখ ভগনাডিহি নামক এক গ্রামে জড় হন। সিধু ও কানু নামের দুই ভাইয়ের নেতৃত্বে তারা স্বাধীন সাঁওতাল রাজ্য প্রতিষ্ঠার ঘোষণা করে। তারা ঘোষণা করল যে, পাপের রাজত্ব শেষ হয়েছে। মহাজনী শোষণ বলে কিছু থাকবে না। এবার থেকে বলদের লাঙলের জন্য এক আনা, মোষের লাঙলের জন্য দু আনা এবং গরুর লাঙলের জন্য দু পয়সা খাজনা দিলেই চলবে। বিদ্রোহীদের সমর্থনে সেই সময় এগিয়ে আসেন কামার, কুমোর, ছুতোর এবং তাঁতিরা। ৭ই জুলাই তারা প্রকাশ্যে বিদ্রোহ ঘোষণা করে। তাদের হাতে কুখ্যাত মহাজন কেনারাম ভকত ও দিঘি থানার অত্যাচারী দারোগা মহেশলাল দত্ত খুন হয়। তাদের হাতে বহু মহাজন ও জমিদার নিহত হয়। অনেকে ঘরবাড়ি ছেড়ে পালায়। তারা পাকুরের রাজবাড়ি দখল করে। সিধু, কানু ছাড়াও চাঁদ ও ভৈরব নামে দু'ভাই এবং বীর সিং, কালো প্রামানিক, ডোমন মাঝি এই বিদ্রোহে নেতৃত্ব দেন। বিদ্রোহীদের সংখ্যা ক্রমে ৫০ হাজারে পৌঁছায়। জীবন মুখোপাধ্যায় লিখেছেন, “প্রথম দিকে ভাগলপুর থেকে মুঙ্গের পর্যন্ত অঞ্চলে তাদের কার্যকলাপ শুরু হয়। বিভিন্ন স্থানে দশ হাজার করে বিদ্রোহী সমবেত হয় ডাক চলাচল ও রেল যোগাযোগ সম্পর্কভাবে ব্যাহত করে। রেল স্টেশন, ডাকঘর, থানা, ইউরোপীয়দের বাংলো, দেশীয় জমিদারদের গৃহ তাদের আক্রমণের মূল লক্ষ্য হয়। আধুনিক অস্ত্র-শস্ত্রে সজ্জিত ব্রিটিশ সেনাদের বিরুদ্ধে সাধারণ তীর-ধনুক ও বল্লম নিয়ে বীর যোদ্ধারা অকুতোভয়ে সংগ্রাম চালিয়ে যায়। ভাগলপুর থেকে মুঙ্গের পর্যন্ত অঞ্চলে কার্যত ব্রিটিশ শাসনের অবসান ঘটে। ক্রমে বীরভূম ও মুর্শিদাবাদের একাংশেও এই বিদ্রোহ বিস্তৃত হয়। তাদের দমনের জন্য একাধিক ইংরেজ সেনাদল প্রেরিত হয় এবং পরাজিত হয়ে ফিরে আসে। শেষ পর্যন্ত ১৮৫৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দের ফেব্রুয়ারি মাসে বিদ্রোহ দমিত হয় এবং ২৩ হাজার বিদ্রোহীকে নিষ্ঠুরভাবে হত্যা করা হয়। সিধু-কানু ও অন্যান্য নেতাদের ফাঁসি দেওয়া হয়, বহু বন্দীর সাত থেকে চৌদ্দ বছর মেয়াদের কারাদণ্ড হয় এবং ছত্রিশটি সাঁওতাল গ্রাম ধ্বংস করা হয়।” অভ্যুত্তান দমন করা হলেও তা ভারতের সমাজ ও রাজনীতির ইতিহাসে এক মাইল ফলক হিসেবে রয়ে গেল। যার রেশ ছিল দীর্ঘদিন জুড়ে।

সাঁওতাল বিদ্রোহের কারণ ও ফলাফল সুদূরপ্রসারী বা পরবর্তী সময়কালের আদিবাসী আন্দোলনগুলিকে নানা ভাবে প্রভাবিত করে। বিদ্রোহের কারণ স্বরূপ সংক্ষেপে বলা যায় যে, মহাজনের অধিক মুনাফা লিপ্সা জনিত শোষণ, সাঁওতালদের ব্যক্তিগত ও বংশানুক্রমিক ঋণগ্রস্ততা, মহাজনের স্বার্থ রক্ষার্থে পুলিশের অত্যাচার ও দুর্নীতি এবং তাদের আর্থিক অক্ষমতার কারণে আদালতে বিচার পাওয়ার ক্ষেত্রে সাধ্যহীনতা। Kalikinkar Datta (১৯৮৯) লিখেছেন, বহিরাগত মহাজন, ব্যবসায়ী প্রমুখের চরম শোষণের কারণে বিক্ষোভ হয়, সেটা থেকে এই আন্দোলনের উৎপত্তি। (It had its origin in the economic grievances of the santals due to the oppression and frauds committed on those simple minded people by Bengali and upcountry merchants and moneylenders). এছাড়াও সেই সময়কালে তাঁদের রমণীরাও নানাভাবে আক্রান্ত হতেন। ফলে সহজ-সরল নিরীহ সাঁওতালরা বিদ্রোহী হয়ে ওঠে।

সাঁওতাল বিদ্রোহ স্থিমিত হলে ব্রিটিশ সরকার বুঝতে পারে যে, স্থানীয় জনগোষ্ঠীকে দমিয়ে রাখা যাবে না। তাই তারা সাঁওতালদের স্বাতন্ত্র্য রক্ষায় সচেষ্ট হয়। স্যার অ্যাসলে ইডেনের নেতৃত্বে সাঁওতালদের সুযোগ-সুবিধা দানের ব্যবস্থা করার জন্য অনুসন্ধান করা হয় এবং এই অনুসন্ধানের প্রতিবেদন সূত্রে ১৮৮৫ সালে ২২শে ডিসেম্বর ৩৭নং আইন অনুসারে ভাগলপুর ও বীরভূমের কিছু অংশ নিয়ে সাঁওতাল পরগণা জেলা গঠন করা হয়। এই জেলাকে সরাসরি নিয়ন্ত্রণের বাইরে রাখা হয়। সাঁওতালদের অপছন্দের আইন ও নিয়ম এখানে প্রযোজ্য হয় না। এছাড়া ১৮৫৬ সালে পুলিশ আইন পরিবর্তন করে গ্রাম প্রধান (মাঝি) ও পরগণা প্রধানের হাতে পুলিশি নিয়ন্ত্রণে ক্ষমতা দেওয়া হয়। এর ফলে সরকারের সাথে আদিবাসী জনসম্প্রদায়ের সরাসরি যোগাযোগ সুনিশ্চিত করা হয়। কোনো মধ্য স্বত্বভোগী থাকে না। এছাড়া ১৮৫৮ সালে কামিন্তী ব্যবস্থারও বিলোপ করা হয়।

অরুণ চৌধুরী (২০১৩) লিখেছেন, সামন্ততন্ত্র বিরোধী ও সাম্রাজ্যবাদবিরোধী সংগ্রামের আওয়াজ ধ্বনিত হয়েছে,

আমাদের দেশের গণতান্ত্রিক সংগ্রামের ইতিহাসে তা এক গৌরবময় অধ্যায়। ভারতের গণতান্ত্রিক বিপ্লবের অসম্পূর্ণ কাজ সম্পূর্ণ করার ক্ষেত্রে সাঁওতাল অভ্যুত্থানের যথেষ্ট গুরুত্ব রয়েছে—সে হিসেবেই এর মূল্যায়ন করতে হবে। আসলে সাঁওতাল বিদ্রোহ ছিল বাইরের ‘দিকু’দের দীর্ঘকালীন শোষণ বঞ্চনার প্রতিবাদ। স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত এই আন্দোলনে কোনও রাজনৈতিক আদর্শ বা সংগঠন ছিল না। এমনকি আধুনিক অস্ত্র-শস্ত্রে সজ্জিত ব্রিটিশ বাহিনীর সঙ্গে লড়ার কোনো আধুনিক অস্ত্র তাদের হাতে ছিল না। শুধু অদম্য মনোভাবে ভর করে তারা আন্দোলন করে। এই অসম আন্দোলনে তাঁদের পরাজয় ঘটলেও পরবর্তী প্রজন্মের কাছে এই আন্দোলন চির প্রেরণার আকর হয়ে আছে।

4.5.2 ঝাড়খন্ড আন্দোলন

ঝাড়খন্ড আন্দোলনের উদ্ভবের পেছনে বহুবিধ কারণের মধ্যে অন্যতম দুটি কারণ হল—(১) অনেকে মনে করেন আদিবাসীদের সম্পূর্ণ স্বতন্ত্র এক গভীর অনুভূতির ভিত্তিতে ঝাড়খন্ড আন্দোলন বিশেষ ভাবে চিহ্নিত। এই আন্দোলনের মৌলিক উদ্দেশ্য হল অ-আদিবাসীদের আর্থনৈতিক শোষণ-পীড়ন থেকে আদিবাসী জন সম্প্রদায় সমূহের মুক্তির ব্যবস্থা। বিশেষ করে ‘দিকু’দের শোষণ-পীড়ন ছিল তাদের কাছে দুর্বিষহ। তারা অসন্তুষ্ট হয়ে আন্দোলন সংগঠিত করে। (২) আবার বেশ কয়েকজন গবেষক, এই আন্দোলনের উদ্ভবের পেছনে কারণ হিসেবে খ্রিস্ট ধর্মের প্রচার ও প্রসারের কথা বলেন। সংশ্লিষ্ট অঞ্চলে খ্রিস্ট ধর্মের প্রচারকদের নানা রকম কল্যাণকর ও জনহিতকর কাজ আদিবাসীদের মনে এক নতুন ধরনের সক্রিয়তা নিয়ে আসে এবং গতিমান শোষণ ও বঞ্চনার স্বীকার থেকে বেরিয়ে আসার ক্ষেত্রে এক নব উন্মাদনা তৈরি করে। আদিবাসী জনসম্প্রদায় সমূহের মধ্যে শিক্ষার বিস্তার; জনস্বাস্থ্য ও চিকিৎসা পরিসেবা প্রদান; সামাজিক কল্যাণ সাধন প্রভৃতি ক্ষেত্রে খ্রিস্টান মিশনারিরা অগ্রগণ্য ও সদর্থক ভূমিকা পালন করে। মিশনারিদের এ হেন ভূমিকা আদিবাসীদের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন ও স্বাধীনভাবে বাঁচার দিকে ঠেলে দেয়। অনেক নেতা প্রাথমিক ভাবে মিশনারি বিদ্যালয়ে পড়ার সুযোগ লাভ করেন আবার উচ্চ শিক্ষার জন্য কিছু আদিবাসীকে বিদেশে পাঠানোরও ব্যবস্থা করে খ্রিস্টান মিশনারীরা। আদিবাসীদের মধ্যে রাজনীতিক সচেতনতা সৃষ্টির ক্ষেত্রেও খ্রিস্টান মিশনারীদের পরোক্ষ অবদান অনস্বীকার্য। আদিবাসীদের উন্নয়নের জন্য ১৯২০ সালে গঠিত হয় ‘ছোটনাগপুল উন্নতি সমাজ’ যার উদ্দেশ্য ছিল আদিবাসীদের সামাজিক ও রাজনৈতিক উন্নয়ন এবং অর্থনৈতিক সমৃদ্ধি। কিন্তু অচিরেই এর মধ্যে এক ভাঙন পরিলক্ষিত হয়। তবে দ্রুত এই অবস্থার অবসান ঘটে আদিবাসীরা ঐক্যবদ্ধ আন্দোলন করেন। যার ফলে ‘আদিবাসী মহাসভা’ তৈরি হয়।

১৯৩৯ সালে আদিবাসী মহাসভার সভাপতি নির্বাচিত হন জয়পাল সিং। জয়পাল সিং ছিলেন মূলত অক্সফোর্ডে শিক্ষাপ্রাপ্ত একজন মুন্ডা খ্রিস্টান। তার গণমোহিনী নেতৃত্বে আন্দোলন শক্তিশালী হয় এবং সমগ্র ছোটনাগপুর মালভূমিতে ছড়িয়ে পড়ে। পৃথক ঝাড়খন্ড রাজ্যের বিষয়টিকে ব্যাপকতর ভিত্তিতে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করার জন্য জয়পাল সিং ছোটনাগপুর অঞ্চলে পুরুষাণুক্রমে স্থায়ীভাবে বসবাসকারী কিন্তু ‘দিকু’ হিসেবে বিবেচিত নয় এমন অ-আদিবাসী অধিবাসীদের সহযোগিতার জন্য আবেদন করেন। ১৯৪৯ সালে জামশেদপুরে অনুষ্ঠিত আদিবাসী মহাসভার সাধারণ অধিবেশনে এ বিষয়ে সিদ্ধান্ত গৃহীত হয়। বলা হয় যে মহাসভা মূলত আদিবাসী সংগঠন হিসাবেই থাকবে। তবে অ-আদিবাসী যারা ঝাড়খন্ড তাদেরও সদস্যপদ দেওয়া হবে। এই ভাবে আদিবাসী মহাসভা অধিকতর ব্যাপক গণভিত্তি লাভ করে। জয়পাল সিং আন্দোলন চলাকালে ঘোষণা করেন যে, ঝাড়খন্ড হল আদিবাসী অঞ্চল। অ-আদিবাসী শোষণপীড়করা তাদের অঞ্চল ছেড়ে না গেলে আদিবাসী জনসম্প্রদায়সমূহের সামগ্রিক উন্নয়ন সম্ভব নয়। তারা স্লোগান দেয় যে, ‘ঝাড়খন্ড আমাদের, ডাকাত দিকুদের চলে যেতে হবে’ (ঝাড়খন্ড আবুয়া, ডাকু দিকু সেনোয়া) (মহাপাত্র ২০১১)।

১৯৫১ সালে ‘আদিবাসী মহাসভা’ একটি পুরোদস্তুর রাজনীতিক দল হিসেবে আত্মপ্রকাশ করে। রাজনীতিক দল হিসেবে

এর নামকরণ হয় ‘ঝাড়খন্ড পাৰ্টি’ এবং এর নির্বাচনী প্রতীক হয় মোরগ। প্রথম সাধারণ নির্বাচনে এই দল ৩২টি আসনে প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা করে এবং সবকটি আসনে জয়লাভ করে। বিহার বিধান সভায় গুরুত্ব লাভের পাশাপাশি উড়িষ্যাতেও রাজনৈতিক দিক থেকে তারা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ হয়ে ওঠে। রাজনৈতিক বিকাশের পথে দেখা যায়, ১৯৫৫ সালের জানুয়ারী মাসে ঝাড়খন্ড পাৰ্টির কার্যনির্বাহী কমিটি রাজ্য পুনর্গঠন কমিশনের কাছে একটি স্মারকলিপি পেশ করে। সংশ্লিষ্ট স্মারকলিপিতে আর্থনৈতিক, রাজনৈতিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক প্রয়োজনীয়তার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে পৃথক ঝাড়খন্ড রাজ্য গঠন করার কথা বলা হয়। বিশেষ করে ভৌগোলিকভাবে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ এবং প্রশাসনিক ভাবে পৃথক বিহারের ছয়টি, বাংলা, উড়িষ্যা ও মধ্যপ্রদেশের নয়টি জেলা নিয়ে গঠিত হয়। প্রাথমিক ভাবে রাজ্য পুনর্গঠন কমিশন পৃথক রাজ্য গঠনের দাবীকে বাতিল করে দেয়। ১৯৭৩ সালে ঝাড়খন্ড মুক্তি মোর্চার জন্ম এই আন্দোলনের ইতিহাসে অন্যতম গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অধ্যায়ের সূচনা করে। নেতৃত্বে রইলেন কৃষক নেতা বিনোদবিহারী মাহাতো, শ্রমিক নেতা এ. কে. রায়, ট্রেড ইউনিয়ন নেতা সদানন্দ ঝা এবং আদিবাসীদের ‘গুরুজি’ শিবু সরেন। স্বাভাবিক ভাবে নেতৃত্বের এই বিন্যাসের ফলে একদিকে যেমন আদিবাসী-অনাদিবাসী ঐক্য স্থাপিত হল, অন্যদিকে শ্রমিক-কৃষক সম্পর্কও গড়ে উঠল। মোর্চা বুঝতে পেরেছিল পৃথক রাজ্যের দাবি আসলে জড়িয়ে আছে কৃষক-শ্রমিক শ্রেণির ওপর রাষ্ট্র এবং ব্যক্তিগত মালিকানার শোষণ মুক্তির সঙ্গে। তবে এই আন্দোলনও সময়ের সঙ্গে স্তিমিত হয়ে পড়ে। আশি আর নব্বই এর দশকে আন্দোলন জারি থাকলেও সেই অর্থে বলার মতো ঘটনা, রাঁচি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ‘আদিবাসী ও স্থানীয় ভাষা’ বিভাগের প্রতিষ্ঠা। তাছাড়া বেশ কিছু বুদ্ধিজীবী এই আন্দোলনে যোগদান করার ফলে আন্দোলন আবার প্রাণ পায়। ১৯৯৫ সালে ঝাড়খন্ড এরিয়া অটোনমাস কাউন্সিল (J.A.A.C.) গঠন হয়। ২০০০ সালের ২রা আগস্ট ঝাড়খন্ড বিল পাশ হয় এবং ১৫ই নভেম্বর ২০০০ সালে ঝাড়খন্ড রাজ্যের জন্ম হয়। আদিবাসীদের নিজস্ব সাংস্কৃতিক মানচিত্র রাজনৈতিক মানচিত্রের রূপ নেয়। (ঋত্বিক মল্লিক, ২০১২)

এছাড়াও, নাগা ও মিজোদের আন্দোলন, উত্তর-পূর্বের আদিবাসী গোষ্ঠীগুলির আন্দোলন, চুয়াড় আন্দোলন, মালপাহাড়িয়া আন্দোলন, খারওয়ার আন্দোলন, নেবুলা আন্দোলন, খাসি আন্দোলন, বোড়োদের আন্দোলন সহ বহু আন্দোলন স্বাধীনতার আগে ও পরের ভারতের রাজনৈতিক ইতিহাসের বিবর্তনের ধারায় আমরা লক্ষ্য করি।

4.6 মূল্যায়ন

উপরোক্ত আলোচনার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে বলা যায় যে, বিশেষ কিছু আদিবাসী জনসম্প্রদায়ের আন্দোলন যথেষ্ট শক্তিশালী এবং সংগঠিত। আবার কিছু কিছু একটু দুর্বল প্রকৃতির। তবে ভূমিপুত্র আদিবাসীরা তাদের ন্যায্য দাবি আদায়ে আন্দোলনের মধ্য দিয়ে ভারতীয় রাজনৈতিক আন্দোলনের ইতিহাসে এক নতুন দিগন্ত উন্মোচিত করেছে। যা বর্তমান সময়ে ভোট রাজনীতির যুগে নীতি নির্ধারকদের নানা ভাবে ভাবিয়েছে।

4.7 মূল্যায়ন নিমিত্ত প্রশ্নাবলী

- ১। ভারতে আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের উপর একটি নিবন্ধ রচনা কর।
- ২। ভারতের আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের উদ্ভব ও বিস্তার সম্পর্কে লেখ।
- ৩। ভারতের আদিবাসীদের তুমি কীভাবে সংজ্ঞায়িত করবে?
- ৪। ভারতের আদিবাসী আন্দোলনের মূল দাবীগুলি লেখ।

- ৫। সাঁওতাল বিদ্রোহের কারণ ও ফলাফল লেখ।
৬। ঝাড়খন্ড আন্দোলন সম্পর্কে একটি নিবন্ধ রচনা কর।

4.8 সাহায্যকারী গ্রন্থাবলী

- (a) ঘোষ, সুবোধ (১৩৩৫ বঙ্গাব্দ/চতুর্থ মুদ্রণ ২০১৮) ভারতের আদিবাসী, এন.বি.এ., কলকাতা।
(b) চট্টোপাধ্যায়, কৃষ্ণদাস (২০১০) “আদিবাসী আন্দোলন”, কৃষ্ণদাস চট্টোপাধ্যায় ও অনিরুদ্ধ চৌধুরি সম্পাদিত ভারতের সামাজিক আন্দোলন, লেভাস্ত বুকস, কলকাতা।
(c) বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, সুমহান (২০০৯), সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক নৃবিজ্ঞান, পারুল, কলকাতা।
(d) বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, সুমহান (২০১২), প্রসঙ্গ আদিবাসী, পারুল, কলকাতা।
(e) মল্লিক, ঋত্বিক (২০১২) “ঝাড়খন্ড: স্বপ্নপূরণ না স্বপ্নভঙ্গের কাহিনি”, অনিন্দ্য ভুক্ত (সম্পাদিত) ভারতের বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী আন্দোলন, মিত্রম, কলকাতা।
(f) মহাপাত্র, অনাদি কুমার (২০১১), ভারতের সামাজিক আন্দোলন, সুহদ পাবলিকেশন, কলকাতা।
(g) সেন, শুচিত্রত (২০২০), ভারতের আদিবাসী: সমাজ, পরিবেশ ও সংগ্রাম, বুকপোস্ট পাবলিকেশন, কলকাতা।
(h) Barman, B.K.R. (1984). Challenges and Responses in Tribal India. In M.S.A. Rao (Ed.), *Social Movements in India*. Manohar.
(i) Singh, K.S. (1985). *Tribal Society in India: An Anthropo-historical Perspective*. Manohar.
(j) Singh, K.S. (Ed.). (1982). *Tribal Movements in India*. Manohar.

Ethnic Movements (নুকুল আন্দোলন)

বিষয়সূচি :

- 5.1 পাঠ উদ্দেশ্য
- 5.2 ভূমিকা
- 5.3 নুকুল আন্দোলন: ধারণাগত স্বচ্ছতা
- 5.4 নুকুল আন্দোলন: উদ্ভব ও বিস্তার
 - 5.4.1 আধুনিকীকরণ ও জাতিত্ব তথা এথনিসিটি (Modernisation and Ethnicity)
 - 5.4.2 রাজনৈতিক অর্থনীতি (Political Economy)
 - 5.4.3 আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনা (Relative Deprivation)
 - 5.4.4 নৃতাত্ত্বিকতা এবং সম্পদের প্রতিযোগিতা (Ethnicity and Resource Competition)
 - 5.4.5 প্রবরদের প্রতিযোগিতা (Elite Competition)
 - 5.4.6 অভ্যন্তরীণ উপনিবেশবাদ (Internal Colonialism)
- 5.5 নুকুল আন্দোলনসমূহ: সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিক্রমা
 - 5.5.1 উত্তর-পূর্ব ভারতের নুকুল আন্দোলন
 - 5.5.1.1 নাগা আন্দোলন
 - 5.5.1.2 আসামের নুকুল আন্দোলন
 - 5.5.2 পশ্চিমবঙ্গের নুকুল আন্দোলন
- 5.6 মূল্যায়ন
- 5.7 মূল্যায়ন নিমিত্ত প্রশ্নাবলী
- 5.8 সাহায্যকারী গ্রন্থপঞ্জী

5.1 পাঠ উদ্দেশ্য

এই এককটি পাঠ করার মধ্যে দিয়ে শিক্ষার্থী নুকুল আন্দোলন সম্পর্কে স্পষ্ট ধারণা অর্জন করতে পারবে। তাছাড়া, ভারতের নৃতাত্ত্বিক আন্দোলনসমূহের উদ্ভবের কারণ ও বিস্তার সম্পর্কে ধারণা লাভ করবে। ভারতে নৃতাত্ত্বিক আন্দোলন সমূহের একটি সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিক্রমার মধ্য দিয়ে শিক্ষার্থীদের ভারতের কয়েকটি নৃতাত্ত্বিক আন্দোলন সম্পর্কে প্রাথমিক জ্ঞান লাভ সম্ভব হবে।

5.2 ভূমিকা

ভারত হল একটি বহু ধর্মীয়, বহু সাংস্কৃতিক, বহু ভাষা-ভাষী এবং বহু নৃকুল গোষ্ঠীর দেশ যেখানে বৈচিত্র্যের মধ্যে ঐক্য সর্বাধিক গুরুত্বের সঙ্গে পরিলক্ষিত হয়। ভারতের বিভিন্ন নৃকুল গোষ্ঠী নানাবিধ আন্দোলনের মধ্য দিয়ে তাঁদের অধিকার রক্ষায় আগ্রহী হয়ে উঠেছে। ভারতে বহু উপজাতি ও নৃকুল গোষ্ঠীর বসবাস। আধুনিকীকরণ, কর্মসংস্থান ও শিক্ষার বিকাশের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তাদের মধ্যেও অসাম্য ক্রমশ বেড়েছে। বিশেষ করে অপরিষ্কৃত অর্থনৈতিক বিকাশের মধ্যে দিয়ে আঞ্চলিক ভারসাম্যহীনতা এমন কিছু বিশেষ পরিস্থিতির সৃষ্টি করেছে যা নৃকুল গোষ্ঠীগুলিকে প্রভাবিত করেছে। তাছাড়া পঞ্চবার্ষিকী পরিকল্পনার মধ্য দিয়ে যে সব সুযোগ সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল তার থেকে নৃকুল গোষ্ঠীগুলি আশানুরূপভাবে উপকৃত হয়নি। এর ফলে তাদের মধ্যে অসন্তোষের মাত্রা ক্রমশ বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। আসাম, পাঞ্জাব, উত্তরপূর্বের রাজ্যসমূহ, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ এবং কাশ্মীর রাজ্যগুলিতে ক্রমবর্ধমান নৃকুল আন্দোলন এখানকার সংখ্যালঘু জনগোষ্ঠীর মধ্যে অন্য ধরনের চেতনার উদ্ভব ঘটিয়েছে। ভারতের কিছু নৃকুল আন্দোলন শান্তিপূর্ণ ও গণতান্ত্রিক পথে দাবী জানায় আর কিছু ক্ষেত্রে বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী প্রবণতা পরিলক্ষিত হয়। সারা বিশ্ব জুড়ে নৃকুল আন্দোলন পরিলক্ষিত। বর্তমান সময়ে প্রায় ১৫০ জাতি রাষ্ট্রে চারটির বেশি নৃকুল গোষ্ঠী উপস্থিত। একটা সমীক্ষায় দেখা যাচ্ছে, প্রায় ২৩৩টি সংখ্যালঘু নৃকুল গোষ্ঠী নানা ভাবে সংকটে আছে। তাদের অস্তিত্ব বিপন্ন। রাজনৈতিক কারণে বেশির ভাগ নৃকুল গোষ্ঠী সমস্যায় পড়ে। তাছাড়া রাজনৈতিক সচলায়ন, রাজনৈতিক অংশগ্রহণ এবং রাজনৈতিক ভাবে অন্যান্য গোষ্ঠীর প্রতিক্রিয়ার মধ্য দিয়ে দুনিয়া জুড়ে নৃকুল আন্দোলন বিকশিত হয়ে চলেছে। আমরা নৃকুল আন্দোলনের ধারণা নিয়ে পরের পর্বে আলোকপাত করব।

5.3 নৃকুল আন্দোলনঃ ধারণাগত স্বচ্ছতা

নৃকুল আন্দোলন সম্পর্কে ধারণাগত স্বচ্ছতা তৈরি করতে হলে প্রথমে আমাদের নৃকুল গোষ্ঠী বলতে কি বোঝায়? তা ব্যাখ্যা করা প্রয়োজন। সুদর্শনা সেন তাঁর “নৃকুল আন্দোলন” শীর্ষক নিবন্ধে লিখেছেন যে, “কোনো নৃকুল গোষ্ঠীর সদস্যদের বিশেষ সংস্কৃতি বা উপসংস্কৃতির অংশ বলে বিবেচনা করা হয়। একটি নৃকুল গোষ্ঠীর এমন কিছু বৈশিষ্ট্য থাকে যা তাকে বিশেষ করে তোলে। যেমন—এক ভৌগোলিক উৎস, জাতি, ভাষা, ধর্মীয় চেতনা, আত্মীয়তা, বন্ধনের দৃঢ়তা, একই লোকসাহিত্য, খাদ্য, লোকগাথা, মূল্যবোধ ও ঐতিহ্যের রীতি ইত্যাদি। এই গোষ্ঠীর সদস্যদের মধ্যে আভ্যন্তরীণ বিশেষত্বের প্রতি গভীর মমত্ব তাদের এমন এক পরিচিতি দেয় যা তাদের অন্যান্য গোষ্ঠী ও সম্প্রদায়ের থেকে পৃথক করে তোলে”। এছাড়া গিডেনস লিখেছেন যে, “জাতিগোষ্ঠীর (Ethnicity) অর্থ হল একটি লোকসমাজের সদস্যরা তাদের নিজেদের অন্যান্য গোষ্ঠী থেকে স্বতন্ত্র ভাবে এবং অনুরূপ অন্যান্য গোষ্ঠীগুলিও ভাবে। সুনির্দিষ্ট জাতিগোষ্ঠীর বৈশিষ্ট্যগুলি অন্যান্য জাতিগোষ্ঠী থেকে ভিন্ন, বিশেষত ভাষা, ইতিহাস বা বংশধারা (প্রকৃত ও কাল্পনিক), ধর্ম, পোশাক-আশাক বা অলঙ্কারসজ্জায় পার্থক্য দেখা যায়। জাতিগোষ্ঠীগত পার্থক্য সম্পূর্ণ শেখা আচরণ (wholly learned)। সুতরাং “শাসন করার জন্য” বা “অপারদর্শী”, “বুদ্ধিহীন” এবং এরূপ ধরনের বিশেষণ আরোপ অমূলক”।

অন্য ভাষায় বলা যায়, বাস্তব বা কাঙ্ক্ষিত যে কোনো সাধারণ উৎস থেকে গড়ে ওঠার ধারণাকে ভিত্তি করে মানুষ যখন গোষ্ঠী গড়ে তোলে তখন তাকে নৃকুল গোষ্ঠী বলে। নৃকুল আন্দোলন, ইংরেজিতে Ethnic Movement-এর ধারণা স্পষ্ট হবে যখন এথনিক পরিচয় সম্পর্কে আমরা যথার্থ ভাবে বিশ্লেষণ করব। বর্তমান সময়ের শিক্ষা সন্দর্ভে নৃকুলত্ব একটি জনপ্রিয় শব্দ যা ব্যক্তির উপর আরোপিত। ঠিক যোভাবে ব্যক্তি জন্মের কারণে জাত, ধর্ম ও অঞ্চল পরিচিতি লাভ করে

এবং যতক্ষণ না অন্য কোন পরিচয় অর্জন করতে পারে ততক্ষণ তার উপর অর্পিত পরিচয়ই মুখ্য হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। নৃতাত্ত্বিকতা বা এথনিসিটি (Ethnicity) শব্দটি প্রথম ব্যবহার করেন ফরাসী জাতীয়তাবাদী এবং বিজ্ঞানী জর্জ ভাচে ডি লা পোগ (Gerge Vacher de la Pouge)। ১৮৯৬ সালে নুকুল পরিচয় তুলে ধরতে গিয়ে তিনি একটি জনগোষ্ঠীর প্রাকৃতিক, মনস্তাত্ত্বিক, সামাজিক এবং সাংস্কৃতিক চরিত্র তুলে এনেছেন যা বর্ণ ব্যবস্থা থেকে ব্যবহারিক এবং শারীরিক বৈশিষ্ট্যের দিক থেকে কিছুটা পৃথক। ইংরেজি শব্দ ethnic এর উৎস নিহিত আছে ল্যাটিন এবং গ্রীক শব্দ ethnicus এবং ethnikas এর মধ্যে। এই এথনিকুস এবং এথনিকাস শব্দ দুটির একই অর্থ জাতি বা নেশন (Nation)। শব্দার্থগত দিক থেকে এথনিসিটি তথা নুকুল পরিচয় বলতে মূলত সেই জাতি গোষ্ঠী তথা জন সমষ্টিকে বোঝায় যারা একই রকম প্রথায় আস্থাশীল, নুকুল পরিচয়ে গড়ে ওঠা জাতীয়তা, উপজাতিবোধ, ধর্মীয় বিশ্বাস, সাধারণ ভাষা, একই সংস্কৃতি ও ঐতিহ্যে বিশ্বাসী।

International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences এ নুকুল গোষ্ঠীর সংজ্ঞা দিতে গিয়ে বলা হয়েছে, একটি বৃহত্তর জনসমাজের এক বিশেষ বৈশিষ্ট্য সম্পন্ন গোষ্ঠী যাদের সংস্কৃতি বৃহত্তর জনসমাজ থেকে আলাদা। এই বিশেষ গোষ্ঠীর সদস্যরা মনে করেন এবং তাদের অনুভবে তা ধরা দেয় যে তারা একই বর্ণ তথা জাতি, জাতীয়তা এবং সংস্কৃতির বাঁধনে যুক্ত। ('a distinct category of the population in a larger society whose culture is usually different from its own. The members of such a group are, or feel themselves, or are thought to be, bound together by common ties of race or nationality or culture') অন্যদিকে এ সম্পর্কে অধ্যাপক বিশ্বজিৎ ঘোষ তাঁর "Ethnicity and Insurgency in Tripura" নামক নিবন্ধে লিখেছেন : প্রকৃত কিংবা বানানো পরিচয়ের সচেতনতা তৈরির কিংবা সংস্কারের প্রক্রিয়া নিহিত রয়েছে মূলত এক বা একাধিক সামাজিক, সাংস্কৃতিক, রাজনৈতিক প্রতীক সমূহের প্রাধান্যকারী ব্যবহারের মধ্য দিয়ে। বিশেষ করে, প্রাধান্যকারী গোষ্ঠী বা সম্প্রদায়ের সঙ্গে অন্য গোষ্ঠীর অভিযোজন, সাংস্কৃতিক সমন্বয় সাধন, মিথস্ক্রিয়া, প্রতিযোগিতা এবং দ্বন্দ্ব প্রক্রিয়ার মধ্য দিয়ে পরিচয় তৈরি হয়। ["the process of formation and reformation of consciousness of identity (real or supposed) in terms of one or more socio-cultural-political symbols of domination/subjugation of a group(s) or community by another emerge out of the processes of assimilation, acculturation, interaction, competition and conflict"] টি কে ওম্যান, ম্যাক্স ওয়েবার, রজনী কোঠারী প্রমুখ নুকুল পরিচয় গড়ে ওঠার নানা দিকের উপর গভীরে আলোকপাত করেছেন।

আসলে নুকুল পরিচয় গড়ে ওঠার পিছনে একটা দীর্ঘ মেয়াদি সামাজিক, রাজনৈতিক ও অর্থনৈতিক প্রক্রিয়া যুক্ত থাকে। এই পরিচয় নির্মাণ ও বিনির্মাণ প্রক্রিয়ার মধ্যেই নিহিত থাকে আন্দোলনের বীজ এবং গোষ্ঠীগত ভাবে ভালো থাকার দাবি উত্থাপনের ক্ষেত্রেও এইখান থেকে উঠে আসে। আমরা পরের পর্বে নুকুল আন্দোলনের কারণ, ব্যাপ্তি এবং কয়েকটি বিশেষ আন্দোলনের পরিচয় তুলে ধরব।

5.4 নুকুল আন্দোলন: উদ্ভব ও বিস্তার

গভীর ভাবে চর্চায় দেখা গেছে, কোনো কোনো নুকুল গোষ্ঠী আধুনিকীকরণের কারণে ভীত হয়ে গোষ্ঠী পরিচয়কে আঁকড়ে ধরে তাদের অতীত ঐতিহ্য বাঁচিয়ে রাখতে প্রয়াসী। আবার ভোগ বাদী সমাজ ব্যবস্থায় সম্পদ কুক্ষিগত করার প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতায় জনরাজনীতির পরিচালকগণ নুকুল গোষ্ঠী পরিচয় প্রাধান্য পায় এবং রাজনৈতিক সচলায়ন প্রক্রিয়ার মধ্য দিয়ে রাজনৈতিক অংশগ্রহণ বৃদ্ধি রাজনৈতিক আন্দোলন তৈরি করে। আধুনিকীকরণের বিস্তারের নেতিবাচক প্রভাব ও কোনো কোনো গবেষক মনে করেন ভারতে শ্রেণীকেন্দ্রিক রাজনীতির ব্যর্থতার কারণে নুকুল পরিচয় বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। মূলত

নুকুল-জাতীয়তাবাদের (ethnonationalism) ধারণাকে কেন্দ্র করে নুকুল আন্দোলন তীব্রতর হয়ে ওঠে। নুকুল আন্দোলনের কারণ হিসেবে বলা হয়—

5.4.1 আধুনিকীকরণ ও নৃতাত্ত্বিকতা তথা এথনিসিটি (Modernisation and Ethnicity)

আধুনিকীকরণের প্রক্রিয়ার সঙ্গে নৃতাত্ত্বিকতা যুক্ত। বিশেষ করে আধুনিকতার নির্ধারকসমূহ যথা, শিক্ষা, মাথাপিছু আয়, নগয়ারণ, রাজনৈতিক অংশগ্রহণ, শিল্পে নিয়োগ ও কাজ, মিডিয়ায় অংশগ্রহণ এর বিষয়গুলিকে যেভাবে রাখা হয় তার সঙ্গে নুকুল পরিচয়ের সাবেকি বোধ এর কিছু দ্বন্দ্ব দেখা যায়। আবার আধুনিকতার প্রাথমিক চর্চাকারীরা সাবেকি সমস্ত চিন্তনকে অস্বীকার করেন এবং মনে করেন যে ব্যক্তির উন্নয়ন তথা প্রগতিতে তা বাধার সৃষ্টি করে। তবে কিছুদিনের মধ্যেই আধুনিকীকরণের তত্ত্বের কিছু অসারতা ধরা পড়ে, দেখা যায় যে শিল্প উন্নত সমাজে সকল সম্প্রদায় সমান সুযোগ-সুবিধা পাচ্ছে না এবং নৃতাত্ত্বিক সংখ্যালঘুদের ক্ষেত্রে সদর্থক বৈষম্যের প্রয়াস সামনে আসে। একদল সমস্ত সুযোগ-সুবিধা ভোগ করে আরও সুখী হয় এবং আরেকদল নানাভাবে সংকটে পড়ে। নতুন ব্যবস্থায় দেখা যায় বেশিরভাগ জনগণ শেকড়হীন হয়ে পড়েন। তারা তাদের সাবেকি জীবন যাত্রার থেকে সরে আসেন অর্থাৎ তাদের তথাকথিত জীবন যাত্রা থেকে তাদের বিচ্ছিন্নতা ঘটে ফলে তারা বিরক্ত হোন। কিছু কিছু ক্ষেত্রে সংগঠিত হয়ে আন্দোলন করেন। যেহেতু নুকুল পরিচয়ের প্রাণ নিহিত আছে সাবেকি নানা অবস্থানকে কেন্দ্র করে তাই ব্যক্তি সর্বদা আধুনিকতার পক্ষে যেতে চায় না। অভিজ্ঞতায় দেখা গেছে আধুনিক রাষ্ট্রও পরিসেবা প্রদানের ক্ষেত্রে তাদের অধিকতর সুযোগ-সুবিধা দিতে অপারগ। বিশেষ করে নুকুল সম্প্রদায়ভুক্ত ব্যক্তির যেহেতু আধুনিকতার বিস্তারের কারণে নানা অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হোন তাই তারা তাদের চিরাচরিত জীবন-যাত্রার বিভিন্ন প্রথা ও রীতিনীতি আঁকড়ে ধরে আন্দোলন সংগ্রামে অংশগ্রহণ করেন।

5.4.2 রাজনৈতিক অর্থনীতি (Political Economy)

নুকুল আন্দোলনের উদ্ভবের পিছনে রাজনৈতিক অর্থনীতি একটা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে। এক্ষেত্রে রাজনৈতিক অর্থনীতির আলোচনায় মার্ক্সবাদী ও উদারবাদী বিশ্লেষণ ধারার তাত্ত্বিকরা দ্বিবিধ মনোভাব পোষণ করেন। এই আলোচনার সবথেকে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ দিক হল আধুনিকীকরণ ও শিল্পায়ন বৃদ্ধির ফলে আঞ্চলিক ক্ষেত্রে বৈষম্য ত্বরান্বিত হয়, ফলে বহুত্ববাদী সমাজ ব্যবস্থায় এক সমাজের সঙ্গে আরেক সম্প্রদায় কেন্দ্রিক সমাজের ব্যবধান বেড়ে চলে। কোন কোন নুকুল গোষ্ঠী লাভবান হয় আবার কেউ কেউ বৈষম্যের স্বীকার হয়ে পড়ে। ১৯৪৫ সালের পরে বিশ্ব ব্যবস্থার যে বিকাশমান্যতা তার হাত ধরে ভৌগোলিক ও আঞ্চলিক ক্ষেত্রে বৈষম্য প্রকট হয়েছে। আমরা উত্তর-দক্ষিণের দ্বন্দ্ব যেমন দেখেছি ঠিক তেমনই জাতি রাষ্ট্রকে কেন্দ্র করে জাতীয় সংখ্যালঘুদের উত্থান দেখেছি। তাছাড়া, পিছিয়ে থাকা জনগোষ্ঠীগুলিও নানাভাবে সংকটে পড়ে। দুনিয়া জুড়ে অর্থনৈতিক কর্মকাণ্ডের বিকাশের হাত ধরে বেশিরভাগ নুকুল গোষ্ঠী নানা ধরনের বৈষম্যের স্বীকার হয়। গত শতকের কাছাকাছি প্রতি কুড়ি বছর অন্তর উন্নয়নের মডেল ধাক্কা খেয়েছে। শিল্পায়ন প্রক্রিয়া বিশ্বব্যাপী বাধাপ্রাপ্ত হয়েছে। উত্তর ঔপনিবেশিক রাষ্ট্র ব্যবস্থা নানা দিক থেকে জটিল আকার ধারণ করেছে। বাস্তবে, উত্তর-ঔপনিবেশিক পুঁজিবাদী উন্নয়ন মডেল তৃতীয় বিশ্বের রাষ্ট্রগুলিতে বৃহৎ অংশে দরিদ্র জনসাধারণ যেমন তৈরি করেছে ঠিক তেমনই প্রাক-পুঁজিবাদী সামাজিক প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলিকে নষ্ট করে দিয়েছে, তার স্থলে মুনাফা কেন্দ্রিক চাষাবাদ, সাবেকি গ্রামীণ অর্থনীতির বুনিয়ে ধ্বংস সহ ভূমিহীন কৃষক তৈরি করেছে। তৃতীয় বিশ্বের দেশগুলিতে ক্রমবর্ধমান অসাম্য, অস্থিরতা রাজনৈতিক প্রক্রিয়াকে প্রভাবিত করেছে এবং আঘাত প্রাপ্ত গোষ্ঠীগুলি সংগঠিত হয়ে নানা দাবি-দাওয়া তুলে ধরে আন্দোলন করেছে। বিশ্লেষণগণ নুকুলগত জাতীয়তার (Ethnonationalism) বিকাশ হয়েছে বলে উল্লেখ করেছেন।

5.4.3 আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনা (Relative Deprivation)

আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনার তত্ত্ব সামাজিক আন্দোলন ব্যাখ্যার অন্যতম গুরুত্বপূর্ণ দৃষ্টিকোণ। নুকুল আন্দোলনের কারণ হিসেবে অনেকে আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনাকে তুলে ধরেন তবে কেউ কেউ আবার তা স্বীকার করেন না। আমরা অতি সংক্ষেপে আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনার ধারণার চর্চার মধ্য দিয়ে নুকুল আন্দোলনে এর ভূমিকা বিশ্লেষণ করব।

সমাজে বিভিন্ন মানুষের প্রত্যাশা বিবিধ প্রকরণের এবং তা পূরণও হয় বিভিন্নভাবে। তবে প্রত্যাশা ও তা পূরণের মাত্রার মধ্যে যদি বেশী ফাঁক থেকে যায় তাহলে হতাশা ও বঞ্চনার জন্ম হয়। এই বঞ্চনাবোধ সমাজের গোষ্ঠী, শ্রেণী ও সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যেও ছড়িয়ে পড়তে পারে। অর্থাৎ এক গোষ্ঠী, শ্রেণী বা সম্প্রদায় মনে করতে পারে যে অন্য কোনও গোষ্ঠী, শ্রেণী বা সম্প্রদায়ের তুলনায় তার সামাজিক প্রাপ্তি কম। এই আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনাবোধ যখন তীব্র আকার ধারণ করে তখন বঞ্চনা অবসানের জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট গোষ্ঠী, শ্রেণী বা সম্প্রদায় আন্দোলনের পথ নেয় এবং সমাজ ও রাষ্ট্রের উপর চাপ সৃষ্টি করে। এভাবে আপেক্ষিক ভাবে বঞ্চনার বোধ আন্দোলন সংগঠনে সহায়তা করে।

বিক্ষোভ ও গণ-আন্দোলনের ব্যাপারে 'আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনা' তত্ত্বের মার্কিন প্রবক্তারা বিক্ষোভ ও গণ-আন্দোলন সম্পর্কিত গবেষণা ও বিশ্লেষণ করেছেন নানাবিধ সমীক্ষার মধ্য দিয়ে। আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনার তত্ত্ব আন্দোলনের অংশগ্রহণকারীদের সচেতনতা ও মতাদর্শগত উপাদানসমূহের উপর গুরুত্ব আরোপের বিষয়টিকে উপেক্ষা করা হয়। এই দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি থেকে প্রতিবাদ আন্দোলন ও বিদ্রোহের উপর গুরুত্ব আরোপ করা হয়। আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনা মতবাদে বৈপ্লবিক আন্দোলনসমূহ ব্যাখ্যা-বিশ্লেষণ করা হয় না প্রসঙ্গত উল্লেখ করা দরকার প্রতিবাদ সবসময় আন্দোলনে পরিণত হয় না। আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনা মতবাদের সমর্থকরা বঞ্চনার উৎসসমূহ সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করেন না। আন্দোলনকে তারা সাময়িক বিচ্যুতি হিসাবে বিবেচনা করার পক্ষপাতী। আন্দোলনকে তাঁরা চলমান প্রক্রিয়া হিসাবে বিবেচনা করেন না। সমাজ বিজ্ঞানী এম এস এ রাও (M. S. A. Rao) এর অধিমত অনুসারে প্রতিবাদ আন্দোলনের শর্ত হিসাবে আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনা দরকার, কিন্তু এটাই সব কিছু নয়।

মার্কিন সমাজবিজ্ঞানী গার (T.R.Gurr) তাঁর *Why Men Rebel* শীর্ষক এক গ্রন্থে আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনা ও সামাজিক আন্দোলন সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করেছেন। অধ্যাপক গারের অভিমত অনুযায়ী বঞ্চনার বিষয়টি মূলত মনস্তাত্ত্বিক। এই কারণে এই সমাজবিজ্ঞানী আর্থসামাজিক কাঠামো সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করেননি। অথচ সাধারণভাবে বিবেচনা করলে বঞ্চনার উৎস হিসাবে আর্থ-সামাজিক কাঠামোর গুরুত্বকে অস্বীকার করা যায় না। আন্দোলনে অংশগ্রহণকারীদের মনস্তাত্ত্বিক চেহারা-চরিত্র এক্ষেত্রে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। এ বিষয়ে দ্বিমতের অবকাশ নেই। কিন্তু সামাজিক আন্দোলনের ক্ষেত্রে মনস্তাত্ত্বিক অবস্থাই সব নয়। আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনার তত্ত্ব বহুলাংশে ব্যক্তিগত বিদ্রোহী কার্যকলাপের আলোচনায় সীমাবদ্ধ থাকে। কিন্তু ব্যক্তিবর্গ রাজনৈতিক উদ্দেশ্য সাধনের জন্য কেন এবং কীভাবে সমষ্টিগতভাবে সক্রিয় হয়, তা অনুধাবন করা আবশ্যিক। সমষ্টিগত কার্যকলাপের কারণ ও প্রকৃতি আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনা তত্ত্বের মাধ্যমে ব্যাখ্যা করা যায় না। এই তত্ত্ব বিদ্রোহী কার্যকলাপ নিয়ে আলোচনা করে। সামাজিক রূপান্তর সাধনের লক্ষ্যে উদ্দেশ্যমূলক আন্দোলনের আলোচনা আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনার তত্ত্ব করা হয় না। এই তত্ত্ব কেবলমাত্র এই রকমেরই আন্দোলন নিয়ে আলোচনা করা হয়। বৈপ্লবিক আন্দোলনের ক্ষেত্রে মতাদর্শ ও রাজনৈতিক দলসমূহ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে থাকে। এ রকম বৈপ্লবিক আন্দোলন আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনা তত্ত্বের আলোচনার পরিধির বাইরে থাকে।

দুই বা ততোধিক গোষ্ঠী আপেক্ষিক শুধু অসাম্যের কারণে আন্দোলন করে বলা যাবে না বরং তাদের মধ্যে দ্বন্দ্ব উপস্থিত হয় যখন উপযুক্ত নেতৃত্ব গোষ্ঠীভুক্ত সদস্যদের মনে বঞ্চনার অনুভূতি জাগরিত করতে পারেন। সম্প্রদায়ভুক্ত বেশিরভাগ সদস্য যখন আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনার অনুভূতিতে চালিত হন তখন আন্দোলন অবশ্যস্বাভাবী হয়ে উঠে।

5.4.4 নৃতাত্ত্বিকতা এবং সম্পদের প্রতিযোগিতা (Ethnicity and Resource Competition)

সম্পদকে কেন্দ্র করে গোষ্ঠী সচেতনতা বেড়ে গেলে সম্পদ দখলকে কেন্দ্র করে প্রতিযোগিতা দেখা যায়। নৃতাত্ত্বিক গোষ্ঠীর সদস্যগণ তাতে অংশগ্রহণ করেন। যে গোষ্ঠী ছিলে, বলে, কৌশলে সম্পদ আহরণ করে তারা খুশি হয় আর যারা প্রতিযোগিতায় পিছিয়ে যায় তারা আন্দোলন করে সম্পদে তাদের ভাগ বুঝে নেওয়ার চেষ্টা করে। রাজনৈতিক ভাবে সক্রিয় নুকুল গোষ্ঠীগুলি শুধু সামাজিক বঞ্চনার জন্য আন্দোলন করে না বরং অর্থনৈতিক দিক থেকে সুযোগ-সুবিধা দাবী করে। যেমন কর ছাড়, চাকরি এবং অন্যান্য ক্ষেত্রে সংরক্ষণ, এলাকার সামগ্রিক আর্থিক কর্মকাণ্ডের উন্নয়ন সহ নানাবিধ অর্থনৈতিক সুবিধার দাবিতে নুকুল আন্দোলন সংগঠিত হয়।

5.4.5 প্রবরদের প্রতিযোগিতা (Elite Competition)

যে কোন সামাজিক আন্দোলনের ক্ষেত্রে প্রবর শ্রেণির অংশগ্রহণ ও প্রতিযোগিতা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়। এই প্রবর শ্রেণি মূলত আন্দোলনের নেতৃত্ব থেকে উঠে আসে। অন্যভাবে বলা যায়, সামাজিক আন্দোলন শুরু করার ক্ষেত্রে প্রবরদের ভূমিকা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তবে অনেক সময় এদের মধ্যকার লড়াই আবার সংকট তৈরি করে। অধিকাংশ আন্দোলনের শুরুর ক্ষেত্রে নেতৃস্থানীয় একজন বা কয়েকজনের সাংগঠনিক ভূমিকা অনিবার্যভাবে দেখা যায়। হাজারে হাজারে মানুষ আন্দোলনে সামিল হয়। প্রাথমিক পর্যায়ে শুধু নয় বরং আন্দোলনের সময়কালজুড়ে একজন বা কয়েকজন প্রবর ব্যক্তি আন্দোলনে নেতৃত্ব দেন। আন্দোলন পরিচালিত করেন নেতারা। উপযুক্ত নেতৃত্বের অভাবে আন্দোলন ব্যর্থ হয়। উদাহরণস্বরূপ বলা যায়, পঞ্চানন ঠাকুরের নেতৃত্বে ‘রাজবংশী-ক্ষত্রীয় আন্দোলন’ শুরু হয়। তিনিই প্রথম এই দাবি উত্থাপন করেন যে, রাজবংশীরা হল ক্ষত্রিয়। এই দাবীকে কেন্দ্র করে তিনি জনসাধারণকে প্রভাবিত করেন এবং আন্দোলন সংগঠিত করেন। গভীর পাঠে দেখা গেছে যে, আন্দোলনে অংশগ্রহণকারীদের মতামত ও বক্তব্যকে নেতৃত্ব গ্রহীত্ব করে। সকল আন্দোলনকারী একসাথে তাঁদের কথা বললে বিশৃঙ্খলার সৃষ্টি হবে। তাই নেতা সংগঠিতভাবে যাবতীয় বক্তব্যকে প্রকাশ করে। পরিস্থিতি এবং বিচার্য বিষয়াদির বিচার-বিবেচনার ভিত্তিতে নেতা নেতৃত্ব দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করেন। আবার অংশগ্রহণকারীদের মতামত ও মতাদর্শকে নেতা একত্রিত এবং গ্রহীত্ব করে। আন্দোলনের নেতৃত্বের স্থায়ীত্বের জন্য এটা আবশ্যিক। অংশগ্রহণকারীদের মতামতকে অগ্রাহ্য করে কোন নেতা কেবল তাঁর মতকে চাপিয়ে দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করলে আন্দোলনের অবক্ষয়ের আশঙ্কা অনিবার্য। আবার সব মতামত তিনি এক সঙ্গে গ্রহণ করলে আন্দোলন মুখ খুবড়ে পড়বে। এই সঙ্গে কোনোও কোনোও গবেষক মনে করেন যে, আন্দোলন আসলে নেতৃত্বের সুবিধা লাভের ক্ষেত্র তৈরি করে। বিশেষ করে, অর্থনৈতিক সুবিধা, সামাজিক মর্যাদা এবং রাজনৈতিক ক্ষমতা লাভের জন্য আন্দোলনের প্রবর গোষ্ঠী নিজেদের মধ্যে প্রতিযোগিতায় লিপ্ত হয়। এথনিক তথা নুকুল গোষ্ঠীর সদস্যরা বেশিরভাগ ক্ষেত্রে শোষিত ও বঞ্চিত হন ফলে তাদের মুষ্টিমেয় প্রবর শ্রেণি নিজেদের স্বার্থে পরিচালিত করে।

5.4.6 অভ্যন্তরীণ উপনিবেশবাদ (Internal Colonialism)

নুকুল আন্দোলনের চর্চায় অভ্যন্তরীণ উপনিবেশবাদ একটি বহুল প্রচলিত ধারণা। একই রাষ্ট্রীয় সীমায় বসবাসকারী প্রাধান্যকারী ও ক্ষমতাসালী গোষ্ঠী দুর্বল সংখ্যালঘু গোষ্ঠীর উপর শোষণ চালায়। বিশেষ করে একটা রাষ্ট্রের কেন্দ্রীয় গোষ্ঠী নানাভাবে যারা প্রান্তে থাকেন তাদের বঞ্চিত করেন। শোষণের মাত্রা নানা দিক থেকে বাড়তে থাকে তখন সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রান্তিক সংখ্যালঘু গোষ্ঠী নিজেদের অধিকার আদায় ও সুখী জীবন-যাপনের জন্য আন্দোলন করে।

এছাড়াও সাংস্কৃতিক ক্ষেত্রে বঞ্চনা, নুকুল গোষ্ঠীর সামাজিক প্রথা ও অনুষ্ঠানগুলিকে অস্বীকার করার প্রবণতাসহ বাহ্যিক শক্তির উস্কানিতে এই গোষ্ঠীগুলি আত্মসচেতন হয়ে আন্দোলন করে। আমরা পরের অংশে ভারতের কয়েকটি নুকুল গোষ্ঠীর আন্দোলন সংক্ষেপে তুলে ধরব।

5.5 নুকুল আন্দোলনসমূহ: সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিক্রমা

ভারতে নুকুল পরিচিতির বহুত্ববাদী অবস্থান দেখা যায়। তা সামগ্রিক ভাবে বৈচিত্র্যময় এবং বহুলাংশে অস্থিতিশীল। তবে নুকুল গোষ্ঠীর সদস্যদের মধ্যে এক ধরনের আবেগমিশ্রিত বন্ধন দেখা যায় ও তারা নিজেদের মধ্যে একাত্মতা অনুভব করেন তাদের সাংস্কৃতিক ঐতিহ্য বাঁচিয়ে রাখার জন্য। বহু নুকুল আন্দোলন উপরে উল্লেখিত কারণের জন্য ভারতের মাটিতে সংগঠিত হয়েছে। আমরা সেগুলির প্রতিনিধিস্থানীয় কয়েকটির আলোচনা করব। তবে এক্ষেত্রে আমাদের একটা বিষয় খেয়াল রাখতে হবে যে, আন্দোলনগুলি যেমন নুকুল আন্দোলনের পর্যায়ভুক্ত ঠিক তেমনই অনেক গবেষক কিছু কিছু আন্দোলনের চরিত্রে একই সঙ্গে নুকুল আন্দোলন, কৃষক আন্দোলন আবার উপজাতি আন্দোলনের উপস্থিতি লক্ষ্য করেন। অর্থাৎ আন্দোলন চরিত্রে অধিক্রমণ (over-lapping) বৈশিষ্ট্য দেখা যায়।

5.5.1 উত্তর-পূর্ব ভারতের নুকুল আন্দোলন

গবেষকরা ভারতের নুকুল আন্দোলন নিয়ে ও উত্তর-পূর্ব ভারতের নুকুল পরিচিতির বহুত্বতাকে নিয়ে নানা ভাবে চর্চা করেছেন। এই অঞ্চলে নুকুল গোষ্ঠীর অবস্থান বৈচিত্র্যপূর্ণ হওয়ার দরুন নানা ধরনের অস্থিরতা দেখা দেয়। পাহাড়ের নুকুল গোষ্ঠী সচেতনতা এবং আন্তঃরাজ্য দ্বন্দ্ব এতটাই প্রকট যে সামগ্রিক ছকে ফেলে এই এলাকার নুকুল আন্দোলন সমূহের চর্চা একটু হলেও সমস্যায়িত। তার সঙ্গে যুক্ত হয়েছে নুকুল আন্দোলনের গোষ্ঠীগুলির উপর বিদেশী শক্তির প্রভাব। এই অঞ্চলের নুকুলজাত উদ্বেগ নতুন কোনও বিষয় নয়। এলাকায় নানা নুকুল গোষ্ঠী বসবাস করে। মূলত সাবেকি কৃষিকাজ এবং শিকারের মধ্য দিয়ে এরা জীবিকা নির্বাহ করে। আধুনিকতার ছোঁয়ায় এদের অর্থনৈতিক, সামাজিক সচলতা ও বিকাশ বাধাপ্রাপ্ত হয়েছে। রাজনৈতিক ভাবে এই উপজাতি সম্প্রদায়গুলি নিজেদের গোষ্ঠী প্রধানের অধিনস্থ। এদের নিজেদের এলাকার পৃথক ভৌগোলিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক পরিচয় বজায় রাখতে এরা সচেতন। এদের কোন রাজার শাসন নেই। উপজাতি ভিত্তিক সাম্যবাদী সামাজিক কাঠামো আর্থ-রাজনৈতিক পরিস্থিতির মূল বৈশিষ্ট্য। উত্তর পূর্ব ভারতে বোরো, নাগা, মিজো ও অহমক এবং ত্রিপুরীত্তরা প্রায় একই কারণে নানান আন্দোলনে शामिल হয়েছে। এই সমস্ত আন্দোলনগুলির লক্ষ্য ছিল বিদেশী শাসকের নিয়ন্ত্রণ থেকে মুক্তি লাভ এবং নিজেদের স্বশাসন গড়ে তোলা। আমরা উত্তর-পূর্ব ভারতে বহু আন্দোলনের অন্যতম প্রতিনিধি স্থানীয় দুটি আন্দোলন নিয়ে এখানে আলোচনা করব।

5.5.1.1 নাগা আন্দোলন

নুকুল আন্দোলনের ক্ষেত্রে নাগাদের আন্দোলন অন্যতম গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। সহজভাবে এই আন্দোলনের প্রেক্ষিত সম্পর্কে বলা যায়, সকল নাগা আদিবাসী বনজ সম্পদ ও শিকারের উপর নির্ভরশীল। নাগা পার্বত্য ভূমির দক্ষিণাঞ্চলের অধিবাসী অনুগামী ও চালসাং আদিবাসীরা পাহাড়ের ঢালে সারবদ্ধ কৃষিকর্মে বিশেষভাবে পারদর্শী। কিন্তু পূর্ব ও উত্তর দিকে বসবাসকারী নাগারা অন্যান্য স্থানান্তর কৃষিতে পারদর্শী। ঐতিহ্যগতভাবে তাদের মধ্যে কোন সমজাতীয় প্রশাসনিক ব্যবস্থা চালু ছিল না। নাগারা আবার বিভিন্ন গোষ্ঠীতে বিভক্ত ছিল। প্রতিটি গোষ্ঠীর পৃথক নামও ছিল। যেমন—অনগামী, সেমা, কোন্যাক

প্রভৃতির কথা বলা যায়। কিন্তু বিভিন্ন গোষ্ঠীকে সাধারণভাবে নাগা বলা হয়। কিন্তু গোষ্ঠীগুলির মধ্যে বিবাদ-বিসংবাদের ইতিহাস সুবিদিত। প্রতিটি নাগা গ্রাম ছিল এক একটি প্রজাতন্ত্র। নাগা গ্রামগুলি ছিল আর্থ-সামাজিক বিচারে এক একটি স্বয়ংসম্পূর্ণ একক। প্রতিটি গ্রামের নিজস্ব আলাদা আলাদা সরকারের উপস্থিতি লক্ষ্য করা যায়। বিদেশী ব্রিটিশ শক্তির আবির্ভাব এবং তাদের পৃথক প্রকৃতির শাসন ব্যবস্থা নাগাদের মধ্যে দুশ্চিন্তা সঞ্চারিত করেছিল। উদীয়মান সামাজিক-রাজনীতিক পরিস্থিতি পরিমণ্ডলের প্রভাব-প্রতিক্রিয়ায় নাগাদের জীবন ধারাগত স্বাতন্ত্র্য এবং পার্বত্য ভূমির উপর প্রথাগত তথা চিরাচরিত মালিকানা বিপন্ন হওয়ার আশংকা দেখা দিলে নাগারা আন্দোলনের পথে পা বাড়ায়। এই আন্দোলনের মূল লক্ষ্য ছিল নিজেদের স্বাতন্ত্র্য স্বাধীকার সংরক্ষণ।

১৮৭৯ সালে কোহিমায় প্রথম নাগাদের আন্দোলনের অভিব্যক্তি ঘটে। ইতিহাসের পাতা উল্টালে দেখা যায়, ১৮৭৬ সালে ব্রিটিশরা কোহিমায় একটি প্রশাসনিক কেন্দ্র গড়ে তোলে। নাগারা তাদের সাবেকি জীবন যাত্রায় অবাপ্ত হস্তক্ষেপের কারণে এই কেন্দ্রের উপর চড়াও হয়। ব্রিটিশরা সমতলবাসীদের সঙ্গে নাগাদের সমভাবে বিচার-বিবেচনা করেছিল। এই সংমিশ্রণের প্রক্রিয়াকে নাগারা সমর্থন করেনি। ১৮৮১ সালে নাগা পার্বত্য জেলা প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়। প্রথম দিকে বাহ্যিক হস্তক্ষেপ কম থাকার কারণে ব্রিটিশদের আধিপত্য নাগারা স্বীকার করলেও তাদের মধ্যে নিরাপত্তাহীনতার বোধ বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছিল। ১৯১৮ সালে ঐক্য ও সংহতির স্বার্থে নাগারা একটি সংঘ প্রতিষ্ঠা করে। উদীয়মান এলিটদের নিয়ে এই সংঘ তৈরি হয় যার শাখা ছিল, মোককচাং নামক স্থানে। সাইমন কমিশনের কাছে এরা একটি স্মারকলিপি জমা দেয়।

এককথায় বলা যায়, নাগা পর্বতের অধিবাসী জনসাধারণের মধ্যে অসন্তোষ ও অস্থিরতার ইতিহাস অনেক দিনের। সামাজিক-রাজনীতিক প্রক্রিয়াসমূহের সূত্রে তাদের সমস্যাটির সৃষ্টি। ধর্মান্তরিতকরণ, এবং পশ্চিমী শিক্ষা ও মূল্যবোধ চাপিয়ে দেওয়াকে নিয়ে তাদের মধ্যে অসন্তোষ ধুমায়িত হতে থাকে। দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযুদ্ধ পরবর্তীকালে বিশেষত সংশ্লিষ্ট অঞ্চলসমূহে যখন গণতান্ত্রিক প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ প্রবর্তনের প্রক্রিয়া শুরু হয়, তখনই সমস্যা সম্মুখে আসে। ঐতিহ্য এবং আধুনিকতার মধ্যে সংঘাতের সৃষ্টি হয়। সহজাত বিশেষ দক্ষতার রূপান্তর সাধনের প্রক্রিয়া শুরু হয়। তার ফলে জাতীয় ও আবেগতাড়িত বিচ্ছিন্নতাবোধের সৃষ্টি হয়। নৃকুল আন্দোলনের সামগ্রিক প্রবাহ নাগা আন্দোলনে গতি পায়। সুহাস চট্টোপাধ্যায় তাঁর ‘ভারতের বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী আন্দোলন’ নামক নিবন্ধে লিখেছেন যে, “১৯৪৭ সালের ভারতের স্বাধীনতা প্রাপ্তির সময় থেকে নাগা উপজাতি অধুষিত নাগা হিলস্ জেলা এবং অন্য কিছু অঞ্চল ছিল অসম প্রদেশের অন্তর্ভুক্ত। অসমের নাগরিক হিসাবে থাকতে নারাজ নাগাদের একটি অংশ নাগা ন্যাশনাল কাউন্সিল-এর নেতৃত্বে স্বায়ত্তশাসনের দাবিতে জঙ্গি আন্দোলন শুরু করে। চলতে থাকে নানারকম ধ্বংসাত্মক কার্যকলাপ এবং সরকারী কর্মচারীদের ওপর আক্রমণ। ১৯৫৫ সালে ভারত সরকার নাগাদের অভ্যুত্থান দমন করার জন্য সেনাবাহিনী পাঠায়। ১৯৫৭ সালে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার নাগাদের প্রতিনিধিদের সাথে আলোচনার পরে বড়ো রকমের স্বায়ত্তশাসনের অধিকার দিয়ে নাগা হিলস্ জেলা এবং তুয়েনসাঙ ফ্রন্টিয়ারকে একত্রিত করে কেন্দ্রের শাসনাধীন একটি ইউনিয়ন টেরিটরি গঠন করে। কিন্তু নাগা উপজাতির মানুষের কাছে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের এই রাজনৈতিক পদক্ষেপ সন্তোষজনক হয়নি। নাগারা পুনরায় আন্দোলন শুরু করে। তারা আইন অমান্য করার পাশাপাশি ট্যাক্স দেওয়া বন্ধের ডাক দেয়। আন্দোলন ক্রমেই হিংসাত্মক হয়ে ওঠে। সরকারী দপ্তরগুলি এবং সেনাবাহিনীর ওপর আক্রমণ চলতে থাকে। ১৯৬০ সালের জুলাই মাসে নাগা পিপলস্ কনভেনশন থেকে ভারত রাষ্ট্রের একটি স্বশাসিত রাজ্য হিসেবে নাগাল্যান্ড গঠনের দাবি তোলা হয় এবং এই দাবী মেনে নিয়ে ১৯৬৩ সালে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার নাগাল্যান্ড রাজ্য গঠনের কথা ঘোষণা করে। পরের বছর নাগাল্যান্ডে গণতান্ত্রিক পদ্ধতিতে বিধানসভার প্রথম নির্বাচন অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। নির্বাচনী রাজনীতির বিকাশের ফলে নাগা বিদ্রোহে কিছুটা ভাটা পড়লেও নাগা নেতাদের মধ্যে ক্ষমতার লড়াই শুরু হয়ে যায়। পরস্পরের বিরুদ্ধে যুযুধান পক্ষগুলির কার্যকলাপ ভয়ঙ্কর হিংসাত্মক হয়ে ওঠে। প্রতিপক্ষের বিরুদ্ধে সশস্ত্র লড়াই চলতে থাকে। যুযুধান পক্ষগুলি যাতে অস্ত্রসংবরণ করে তার জন্য সরকার প্রচেষ্টা চালায়। কিন্তু তা ব্যর্থতায় পর্যবসিত হয়। শেষ পর্যন্ত রাজ্যে রাষ্ট্রপতি শাসন

জারি হয় ১৯৭৫ সালের মার্চ মাসে। ঐ বছর নভেম্বরে আত্মগোপনকারী যুযুধান নাগা গোষ্ঠীগুলি অস্ত্র সংবরণ করে এবং ভারতের সংবিধান মেনে নিতে সম্মত হয়। কিন্তু নাগাদের একটি ছোটো চরমপন্থী গোষ্ঠী স্বাধীন নাগাল্যান্ডের দাবিতে সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে সশস্ত্র লড়াই চালিয়ে যেতে থাকে। সে লড়াই আজও চলছে”।

5.5.1.2 আসামের নুকুল আন্দোলন

উপজাতি অধ্যুষিত নাগাল্যান্ডসহ চারটি পূর্ণ রাজ্য গঠনের প্রক্রিয়ার সাফল্যে উৎসাহিত হয়ে আসামের অবশিষ্ট অংশে বসবাসকারী বেশ কয়েকটি উপজাতিকে নিজেদের জন্য স্বতন্ত্র রাজ্য গঠন বা স্বাধীন রাষ্ট্র গঠনের দাবিতে বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী আন্দোলন শুরু করতে প্ররোচিত করে। তাদের মধ্যে একটি অংশ দাবি আদায়ের জন্য হিংসাত্মক কার্যকলাপেও লিপ্ত হয়। বর্তমান সময়ে আসাম রাজ্যে হিংসাত্মক ও নাশকতামূলক কার্যকলাপে লিপ্ত জঙ্গি সংগঠনগুলির মধ্যে সবচেয়ে উল্লেখযোগ্য হল ১৯৭৯ সালে প্রতিষ্ঠিত আলফা (ইউনাইটেড লিবারেশন ফ্রন্ট অব আসাম) এবং এন. ডি. এফ. বি. (ন্যাশনাল ডেমোক্রেটিক ফ্রন্ট অব বোডোল্যান্ড)। আলফার লক্ষ্য সশস্ত্র সংগ্রামের মাধ্যমে স্বাধীন আসাম রাষ্ট্র প্রতিষ্ঠা। জোরদার লড়াই চালানোর জন্য আলফা ১৯৮৩ সালে ন্যাশনালিস্ট সোস্যালিস্ট কাউন্সিল অব নাগাল্যান্ডের সাথে এবং ১৯৮৭ সালে ব্রহ্মদেশের (বার্মা বর্তমানে মায়ানমার নামে পরিচিত) কাচিন ইন্ডিপেন্ডেন্স আর্মির সাথে সম্পর্ক গড়ে তোলে। ১৯৯০ সালে আলফার জঙ্গি কার্যকলাপ মারাত্মক আকার ধারণ করে। ঐ বছরেই ভারত সরকার সন্ত্রাসবাদী সংগঠন হিসাবে আলফাকে নিষিদ্ধ ঘোষণা করে। সেই ঘোষণার সময় থেকে ভারতীয় সেনাবাহিনী আলফা জঙ্গিদের মোকাবিলা করে আসছে। বিগত দুই দশকে সেনাবাহিনীর সাথে জঙ্গিদের সংঘর্ষে প্রায় দশ হাজার মানুষ নিহত হয়েছে। এন.ডি.এফ.বি.-এর লক্ষ্যও হল বোডো উপজাতির জন্য স্বাধীন বোডোল্যান্ড প্রতিষ্ঠা। ১৯৮৬ সালের অক্টোবর মাসে প্রতিষ্ঠার সময় এই সংগঠনটির নাম হল বোডো সিকিউরিটি ফোর্স। ১৯৯৪ সালের নভেম্বর মাসে নাম পাল্টে এই সংগঠনটি ন্যাশনাল ডেমোক্রেটিক ফ্রন্ট অব বোডোল্যান্ড সংক্ষেপে এন.ডি.এফ.বি. নামে পরিচিত হয়। ২০০৫ সালের মে মাসে আসাম সরকার এবং ভারত সরকারের সাথে এন.ডি.এফ.বি.-র যুদ্ধবিরতির চুক্তি হয়। আসামে এই ধরনের স্বয়ংশাসিত নুকুল সত্ত্বার প্রকাশ অসমীয়া সমাজের বৈচিত্র্যকে আরো প্রস্ফুটিত করেছে।

5.5.2 পশ্চিমবঙ্গের নুকুল আন্দোলন

পশ্চিমবঙ্গে নানাবিধ নুকুল আন্দোলন সংগঠিত হয়েছে। উত্তর থেকে দক্ষিণ বঙ্গ জুড়ে যে আন্দোলনগুলি বিভিন্ন সময়ে সংগঠিত হয়েছে তার অন্যতম হল—ক) দার্জিলিং জেলার গোখাল্যান্ড আন্দোলন, খ) উত্তরবঙ্গের জলপাইগুড়ি জেলাকে কেন্দ্র করে কামতাপুরী বা থ্রেটার কোচবিহার আন্দোলন এবং গ) দক্ষিণবঙ্গের পশ্চিম মেদিনীপুর, বাঁকুড়া ও পুরুলিয়া জেলার অধিবাসীদের জঙ্গলমহলের নানা দাবী-দাওয়াকে কেন্দ্র করে আন্দোলন। অনুন্নত এলাকার উন্নতির জন্য জঙ্গলমহলে যে আন্দোলন সংগঠিত হয়েছিল তাদের দাবী-দাওয়া পূরণের প্রক্রিয়া চালু হওয়ায় তা অনেকটা প্রশমিত হয়েছে। থ্রেটার কোচবিহারের আন্দোলনও প্রায় স্থিমিত। কিন্তু গোখাল্যান্ডের দাবী নিয়ে আন্দোলনকারীরা মাঝে মাঝেই মাথা চাড়া দিয়ে ওঠেন। আমরা এই আন্দোলনের উপর সংক্ষেপে আলোকপাত করব।

প্রাথমিকভাবে অর্থনৈতিক, সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক ভাবে দমিত হওয়ার জন্য দার্জিলিং জেলার গোখা অধিবাসীরা কিছু সুযোগ সুবিধা আদায়ের জন্য গোখা ন্যাশনাল লিবারেশন ফ্রন্ট তৈরি করে। গোখাদের প্রবর শ্রেণি গোখাদের নুকুল সত্ত্বা তুলে ধরেন। নানা ধরনের বঞ্চনাকে পাথেয় করে অসন্তুষ্ট গোখা জনগোষ্ঠীকে সংগঠিত করতে ডি. এস. গুরুং গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করেন। ১৯৪৬ সালে অল ইন্ডিয়া গোখা লীগের শীর্ষ নেতা ডি. এস. গুরুং সংবিধান রচয়িতাদের সামনে

গোষ্ঠীদের পক্ষ থেকে তাদের গোষ্ঠীকে সংখ্যালঘু স্বীকৃতি দেওয়ার দাবী জানান। অনেকে মনে করেন এটাই ছিল গোষ্ঠীদের নুকুল অবস্থানকে কেন্দ্র করে সচেতন দাবী। পরবর্তী সময়ে নানাবিধ ঘাত প্রতিঘাত পেরিয়ে ১৯৮০'র দশকে গোষ্ঠী আন্দোলন নতুন গতি লাভ করে। সুভাষ ঘিসিং এর নেতৃত্বে গোষ্ঠী ন্যাশনাল লিবারেশন ফ্রন্ট আলাদা রাজ্যের দাবি তোলে। এই আন্দোলনে প্রায় ১২০০ জনের মৃত্যু হয়। এর ফলে ১৯৮৮ সালে দার্জিলিং গোষ্ঠী হিল কাউন্সিল তৈরি হয়। ফলে আন্দোলন তার তীব্রতা হারায়। সুদর্শনা সেন তাঁর “নুকুল আন্দোলন” নামক নিবন্ধে লিখেছেন, “২০ বছর ধরে জি. এন. এল. এফ. শাসনের পর আবার গোষ্ঠীল্যান্ডের দাবি উঠে আসে। সুভাষ ঘিসিং-এর নেতৃত্বের প্রতি আস্থা হারিয়ে ডুয়ার্স ও দার্জিলিং এর মানুষ নতুন করে গোষ্ঠীল্যান্ডের দাবি জানাতে শুরু করে। ২০০৭-এ এক গোষ্ঠী নেতা বিমল গুরুং-এর নেতৃত্বে গোষ্ঠী জনমুক্তি মোর্চা নামে নতুন এক দল গঠিত হলে তারা ২০১০-এর মধ্যে পৃথক গোষ্ঠীল্যান্ড-এর দাবিকে কেন্দ্র করে আন্দোলন আবারও তীব্রতর করে। এরা অহিংস পথে গাড়ীর নশ্বর, দোকানের ঠিকানায় পশ্চিমবঙ্গের বদলে গোষ্ঠীল্যান্ডের বা জি. এল. লিখে দিতে থাকে। এই পরিস্থিতি ক্রমশ হিংসাত্মক হয়ে ওঠে যখন এক মহিলা গোষ্ঠী জনমুক্তি মোর্চা সমর্থককে জি. এন. এল. এফ. সমর্থকরা গুলি করে হত্যা করে। এরপর দাঙ্গা পরিস্থিতি তৈরী হয় এবং ত্রিপাক্ষিক বৈঠকে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার ও গোষ্ঠী জনমুক্তি মোর্চা নেতৃত্বে বসতে রাজি হয়। বর্তমানে গোষ্ঠীল্যান্ডের দাবি থেকে তারা (গোষ্ঠীল্যান্ডের সমর্থকরা) একটুও সরে আসেনি। সিকিমের কতগুলি রাজনৈতিক দল এই দাবির সমর্থন জানিয়েছে। এইভাবে এই আন্দোলন এখনও চলছে”।

5.6 মূল্যায়ন

নুকুল আন্দোলন বর্তমান সময়ের আন্দোলন চর্চার ক্ষেত্রে অন্যতম গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়। পৃথিবীর বিভিন্ন প্রান্তে নুকুল আন্দোলনের নানাবিধ রূপ ও ব্যাপকতা পরিলক্ষিত হয়। বিশেষ করে উত্তর ঔপনিবেশিক রাষ্ট্র ব্যবস্থার বিকাশের হাত ধরে শিল্পায়ন ও আধুনিকীকরণের মডেলে উন্নয়ন করতে গিয়ে রাষ্ট্রগুলি আভ্যন্তরীণ ক্ষেত্রে ব্যাপক অসাম্য ও বৈষম্যের স্বীকার। ফলে বঞ্চিত গোষ্ঠীরা নিজেদের অধিকার আদায়ে আন্দোলনে অংশগ্রহণের মাধ্যমে রাজনৈতিক ক্ষমতা, সামাজিক মর্যাদা এবং অর্থনৈতিক সুবিধা আদায় করে। নুকুল গোষ্ঠীগুলিও সক্রিয় ভাবে আন্দোলন করে। ভারতের ক্ষেত্রে নুকুল আন্দোলন ভারতীয় রাজনৈতিক ব্যবস্থার প্রবহমানতাকে নানা দিক থেকে প্রভাবিত করে চলেছে।

5.7 মূল্যায়ন নিমিত্ত প্রশ্নাবলী

- ১। নুকুল আন্দোলন বলতে কি বোঝায়?
- ২। নুকুল আন্দোলন উদ্ভবের কারণ সমূহ লেখ।
- ৩। আপেক্ষিক বঞ্চনার তত্ত্ব কিভাবে নুকুল আন্দোলন উদ্ভবের কারণ ব্যাখ্যা করে?
- ৪। ভারতের নুকুল আন্দোলনের সংক্ষিপ্ত রূপরেখা দাও।
- ৫। উত্তরপূর্ব ভারতের নুকুল আন্দোলন সম্পর্কে লেখ।
- ৬। নাগা আন্দোলন নিয়ে একটি টীকা লেখ।
- ৭। আসামের নুকুল আন্দোলন সম্পর্কে তুমি কি জানো?
- ৮। পশ্চিমবঙ্গের নুকুল গোষ্ঠীর আন্দোলন সম্পর্কে সংক্ষেপে লেখ।

5.8 সাহায্যকারী গ্রন্থপঞ্জী

- (a) অনিন্দ্য ভুক্ত (সম্পাদিত) (২০১২) ভারতের বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী আন্দোলন, মিত্রম, কলকাতা।
- (b) এস্থনি গিডেনস (২০০১) (ভাষান্তরঃ হিমাংশু ঘোষ) সমাজতত্ত্ব, ভ্রাতৃ সংঘ, বাঁকুড়া।
- (c) কৃষ্ণদাস চট্টোপাধ্যায় ও অনিরুদ্ধ চৌধুরি (সম্পাদিত) (২০১০) ভারতের সামাজিক আন্দোলন, লেভাস্ত বুকস, কলকাতা।
- (d) মহাপাত্র, অনাদি কুমার (২০১১) ভারতের সামাজিক আন্দোলন, সুহৃদ পাবলিকেশন, কলকাতা।
- (e) সজল বসু (সম্পাদিত) (২০১৬) ভারতের সামাজিক আন্দোলন, বুকপোস্ট পাবলিকেশন, কলকাতা।
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Regional Movements

Contents

- 6.1 Objectives**
- 6.2 Introduction**
- 6.3 Regionalism in India**
- 6.4 Causes, characteristics and types of regionalism**
 - 6.4.1 Causes of regionalism**
 - 6.4.2 Characteristics of regionalism**
 - 6.4.3 Types of regionalism**
- 6.5 Major Regional Movements**
 - 6.5.1 Andhra Pradesh movement**
 - 6.5.2 Dravida Nadu movement**
 - 6.5.3 Telangana Movement**
 - 6.5.4 Bodoland movement**
 - 6.5.5 Khalistan Movement**
 - 6.5.6 Gorkhaland Movement**
- 6.6 Suggestive Measures**
- 6.7 Conclusion**
- 6.8 Self assessment questions**
- 6.9 Suggested readings**

6.1 Objectives

Regional movements are the outcome of the notion of regionalism. From this module students could able to learn about—

- i) the notion of regionalism in India,
- ii) causes, characteristics and types of regionalism or reasons for the rise of regionalism,
- iii) important regional movements,
- iv) probable measures to curb the menaces of regionalism.

6.2 Introduction

The political term regionalism is derived from the geographical term region. David Grigg in his seminal article 'The Logic of Regional Systems'(1965) following Berry and Hankin, recognized three types of regions: '(a) The region in general sense in which the region is given apriori. (b) A homogeneous or uniform region is defined as an area within which variations and co-variations of one or more selected characteristics face within some specified range of variability around a norm, in contrast with areas that fall outside the range. Such a region, unlike the first one, but like the functional region, is the result of the process of regionalization and is not given apriori. (c) A region of coherent organization or a functional region is defined as one which one or more selected phenomena or movements connect the localities within it into a functionally organized whole.'

Regionalism is a composite and multidimensional discourse. It can be defined as a feeling of autonomy concerning the special features or characteristics of a region in regard to language, ethnicity and so on so forth. The sense of deprivation and underdevelopment can also be regarded as the impetus of regionalism. Political independence or demand for statehood is the common phenomenon of regionalism. The feelings of regionalism can be derived from the sense of negligence of the ruling government. When the people of a particular region become aware of their special characteristics along with the discrimination and backwardness from the part of the central Government then also the notion of regionalism may become acute. Sometimes political aspirations of many leaders can instigate regional conscience.

Professor Bharati Mukherjee observes, "Regionalism, as such, to be ordinarily defined, is an emotional attachment to a particular region in preference to the whole country, and in some cases, in preference to the constitutional unit of which the region is a part. As a political problematique, one cannot ignore that regionalism has a regulatory role in modern political arrangements. This is particularly true for those that are characterized by comparatively bigger territory, wide cultural diversities, and uneven distribution of natural and national wealth leading to disparities in economic growth among their constituent parts..... As an ideology, regionalism refers to the sentiment of a particular group which identifies itself with a particular territory within a given country and strives for perpetuation and/ or furtherance of its interest."

Some said, "regionalism is an approach to the study of behaviour that emphasizes the geographical region as the unit of analysis, stressing the relationship between human beings and their immediate physical environment. Economic, social, cultural and political organizations are analyzed in terms of their relationships and functions within the geographic region."

Scholars considers "regionalism as a clustering of environmental, economic, social and governmental factors to such an extent that a distinct consciousness of separate identity within the whole, a need for autonomous planning, a manifestation of cultural peculiarities and a desire for administrative freedom are recognized and actually put into effect."

Under this narrative this module will try to underline the basic notion of regionalism in India in the first section followed by the reasons for the rise of regionalism or causes, characteristics and types of regionalism in the second section. In the third section important regional movements will be discussed. And in the last section probable measures will be highlighted to curb the menaces of regionalism.

6.3 Regionalism in India

India is a diversified country. We have many cultures, religion, language, ethnic group/caste, along with the regional (geographical) diversity. The term is regionalism at national level refers to a process in which sub-state actors become increasingly dominant. These actors distinguished in culture, language and other socio-cultural factors. These diversified features including economy, politics, psychology and history can be regarded as the components of regionalism. The sense of negligence or deprivation or, economic inequality and unemployment, political will of many leaders, interventions of outer force, and so on are the major reason of regionalism in India. The goals of regionalism are - demanding separate statehood, secession or more power and autonomy.

So the roots of regionalism is in India's manifold diversity of languages, cultures, ethnic groups, communities, religions and so on, and encouraged by the regional attentiveness by many political aspirants which is fuelled by the sense of regional deprivation. 'For many centuries, India remained the land of many lands, regions, cultures and traditions. To understand regionalism, we need to know various dimensions of the region. Region as a geographical unit, is a delimited form of each other. Region as a social system, reflects the relation between different human beings and groups. Regions are an organised cooperation in cultural, economic, political or military fields. Region acts as a subject with distinct identity, language, culture and tradition. Regionalism is an ideology and political movement that seeks to advance the causes of regions. As a process it plays role within the nation as well as outside the nation i.e. at the international level. At the international level, regionalism refers to transnational co-operation to meet a common goal or to resolve a shared problem or it refers to a group of countries such as-Western Europe, or Southeast Asia, linked by geography, history or economic features. For instance, southern India (the home of Dravidian cultures), which is itself a region of many regions, is evidently different from the north, the west, the central and the north-east. Even the east of India is different from the North-East of India comprising today seven constituent units of Indian federation with the largest concentration of tribal people.' These states distinct features contribute to the feeling of regionalism.

Following Prof. Bharati Mukherjee it can be stated that, in the Indian context, regionalism can be viewed from positive and negative dimensions. 'From the positive angle regionalism embodies a quest for self-identity and self-fulfillment on the part of the domiciles of a region. In negative terms, regionalism reflects a psyche of relative deprivation on the part of people of an area not always viable in terms of rational economic analysis. It is mostly believed that deprivation is purposefully inflicted by the powers.'

6.4 Causes, characteristics and types of regionalism

6.4.1 Causes of regionalism

Regionalism in India is a multidimensional phenomenon as it is a complex combination of geographical, historical, cultural, economic, socio-political- administrative and psychological factors. It is not possible to indicate exactly any particular factor, which has been solely responsible for the phenomenon of regionalism.

Some of the most important the causes of regionalism in India are as follows: (i) Geographical Factor (ii) Historical and Cultural Factors (iii) Caste and Region (iv) Economic Factors (v) Political-Administrative Factors.

- (i) **Geographical Factor:** The territorial orientation based on geographical boundaries relate to the inhabitants of a particular region which are symbolic, at least in the Indian context. The territorial orientation based on geographical boundaries relate to the inhabitants of a particular region which are symbolic, at least in the Indian context. This is more so because of the linguistic distribution along geographical boundaries. The topographic and climatic variations along with differences in the settlement pattern induce in people the concept of regionalism.
- (ii) **Historical and Cultural Factors:** In the Indian scenario the historical or cultural factors may be considered the prime components of the phenomenon of regionalism. People of a particular cultural group derive inspirations from the noble deeds and glorious achievements of the local heroes. There are sudden political and economic realities which can be covered under the gamut of historical and cultural factors. The historical and cultural components interpret regionalism by way of cultural heritage, folklore, myths, symbolism and historical traditions. People of a particular cultural group also derive inspirations from the noble deeds and glorious achievements of the local heroes. Nevertheless, there are sudden political and economic realities which can be covered under the gamut of historical and cultural factors.
- (iii) **Caste and Religion:** Caste system and religion in Indian society play only a marginal role in causing regionalism. When caste is combined with language conflicts or religious fundamentalism, it breeds regional feeling. It leads to dogmatism, orthodoxy and obscurantism. When caste is combined with linguistic preponderance or religion it may cause regional feeling. In the like manner religion is not so significant except when it is combined with linguistic homogeneity or based on dogmatism and orthodoxy or linked with economic deprivation.
- (iv) **Economic Factors:** In the present times, uneven developments in different parts of the country may be construed as the prime reason for regionalism and separatism.

This disparity has caused the feeling of relative deprivation among the inhabitants of economically neglected regions. Uneven development in many parts of the country may be construed as the prime reason

of regionalism and separatism. There are certain regions in the country where industries and factories have been concentrated, educational and health facilities are adequately provided, communication network has been developed, rapid agricultural development has been made possible. But there are also certain areas where the worth of independence is yet to be realized in terms of socioeconomic development. Indeed, the British administration may be held responsible for causing such wide regional variations due to their suitability for the purpose of administration, trade and commerce. But in the post-independence era, efforts should have been made for regional balance in matters of industrial, agricultural and above all, economic development. This disparity has caused the feeling of relative deprivation among the inhabitants of economically neglected regions. It has manifested itself in the demand for separate states such as Bodoland, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Chhatisgarh, Telangana, and so on.

(v) **Political-Administrative Factors:** Political parties, especially the regional political parties as well as local leaders exploit the regional sentiments, regional deprivation and convert them to solidify their factional support bases. Political parties, especially the regional political parties as well as local leaders, exploit the regional sentiments, regional deprivation and convert them to solidify their factional support bases. They give place to the regional problems in their election manifesto and promise for political and regional development. They give place to the regional problems in their election manifesto and promise for political and regional development. In the present day Indian political scenario some regional parties have strongly emerged and captured power in some states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Assam. Political and administration failure is the source of tension and gives birth to sub-regional movements for separate states. Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Uttarakhand and recently Telangana are result of these failure only. Many such demands are in pipeline such as- Vidarbha, Saurashtra, Darjeeling and Bodoland, etc. These failures also weakens the confidence of private players and do not attract investors in the states.

Along with the aforementioned causes the following, may not be distinct in nature, can also be stated as the reasons for the rise of regionalism. (i) Low rate of economic growth: The economic growth of India has been fluctuating since independence. But with respect to High population growth, the economic growth has been not enough to catch the development with full speed. In the last decade, the economic growths were progressive, but now they are reeling under the influence of world economic crisis and other bottlenecks at domestic level. (ii) Socio-economic and political organisation of states: The states have been unable to do the adequate land reforms and feudal mentality still persists. Bhoodan and Gramdaan movements, after independence, were not enthusiastically carried out and even land under land Banks was not efficiently distributed. The political activities in the backward states were limited to vote bank politics and scams. (iii) Lower level of infrastructural facilities in backward states: The level of infrastructural development, such as- power distribution, irrigation facilities, roads, modern markets for agricultural produce has been at back stage. All these are state list subjects. (iv) Low level of social expenditure by states on education, health and sanitation: These subjects are core for human resource development. The states which have invested heavily on these subjects fall under the developed and advanced states, for example Tamil Nadu, where health care

services in Primary health centre are bench mark for other states. (v) Nature of distribution of power between Centre and State Governments: One cannot ignore that the nature of power distribution is centripetal. Though states have some autonomy in making and implementing laws, but centre have more power in restraining the states to act solely. This sometimes causes the development of the sense of deprivation and fuels regional sentiments.

The Constitution assigns to Parliament the power to enact legislation for the formation of new States. Parliament may create new States in a number of ways, namely by (i) separating territory from any State, (ii) uniting two or more States, (iii) uniting parts of States and (iv) uniting any territory to a part of any State. This power of the parliament may also lead to the rise of regional movements. Because as and when news were being formed out of the regional movements (like Jharkhand), following the power of the parliament, the demand for other regional movements geared up. Successful regional movements coupled with the successful leadership can also be regarded as an important reason for the rise of regionalism. One could cite the example of Telegana movement and K. Chandrashekar Rao's success to be sworn in as the Chief Minister. Citing this success many sub-actors can demand for statihood.

The changing political discourse like of regionalisation of politics or success of coalition politics or rise of the regional parties can also be regarded as the important reason of the rise of regionalism. Since 1990 it is evident from the the outcome of the election results that none of the pan Indian parties has succeeded in gaining a majority in its own without the help of regional parties. However since 2014 electoral success of one national party in the centre my lead to another conclusion but election results after 2019 in in various States can substantiate the previous statement. It is striking that the growing importance of regional parties and the decline of Pan Indian national parties fear files regionalism till date.

6.4.2 Characteristics of regionalism

i) Regionalism is conditioned by economic, social, political and cultural disparities. ii) Regionalism at times is a psychic phenomenon. iii) Regionalism is built around as an expression of group identity as well as loyalty to the region. iv) Regionalism presupposes the concept of development of one's own region without taking into consideration the interest of other regions. v) Regionalism prohibits people from other regions to be benefited by a particular region.

6.4.3 Types of regionalism

Prof Mukherjee mentioned three types of regionalism, i.e. a) supra-state regionalism, b) inter-state regionalism, and 3) intra-state regionalism

Supra-state regionalism is an expression of group identity of several states. In this type of regionalism, the group of states joins hands to take common stand on the issue of mutual interest vis-à-vis another group of states or at times against the union. The group identity thus forged is negative in character and based on specific issue/s. It is not an instance of permanent merger of state identities in the collective identity. Even at times of intergroup rivalries, tensions and conflicts may tend to persist, simultaneously along with their cooperation. Northeastern states in India may be said to have possessed the supra-state regionalism.

Inter-state regionalism is coterminous with provincial territories and involves juxtaposing of the identities of one or more states against another. It is also issue-specific. Disputes between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over the distribution of Kaveri water may be construed as interstate regionalism.

Intra-state regionalism indicates that wherein a part of the state strives for self-identity and self-development and therefore, it is taken in a positive sense. In negative terms, it militates against the collective interest of the state as well as the nation. As for instance there is often a feeling of coastal region and western region in Odisha, coastal region and Telangana region in Andhra Pradesh, and so on.

6.5 Major Regional Movements

6.5.1 Andhra Pradesh movement

Andhra Pradesh movement is regarded as one of the major regional movements. A freedom fighter and a devoted follower of Mahatma Gandhi, Potti Sriramulu, demanded for the separate state that led to the creation of Andhra Pradesh state and linguistic recognition of the states in India. To achieve this end, he died in 1952 after not eating for 52 days in support of a Telugu-speaking state. The Andhra movement or Andhrodyamam was a campaign for recognition of Telugu-speaking part of the Madras Presidency as a separate political unit in British India. The Andhra movement leaders alleged that the Telugu people were being suppressed by the Tamils, who dominated politics and government jobs. However, Sriramulu's death forced Jawahar Lal Nehru to agree to the various demands from other parts of the country with similar demands. Consequently, in 1954, a States Reorganisation Committee was formed with Fazal Ali as its head, which recommended the formation of 16 new states and 3 Union Territories based on the language.

6.5.2 Dravida Nadu movement

Going back to the journey of Regionalism in India, it is well noticeable that the demand for Dravida Nadu it emerged with Dravidian Movement, which started in Tamil Nadu in 1925. This movement, also known as 'Self-Respect Movement' initially focused on empowering Dalits, non-Brahmins, and poor people. Later it stood against imposition of Hindi as sole official language on non-Hindi speaking areas. But it was the demand of carving out their own Dravidastan or Dravida Nadu, which made it a secessionist movement. As early as 1960s the DMK and the Nan Tamil organized a joint campaign throughout Madras state demanding its secession from India and making it an independent sovereign state of Tamiland. DMK proposed that the states of Madras, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Mysore should secede from the Indian union and form an independent "Republic of Dravida Nadu". Dravida Nadu is the name of a hypothetical sovereign state demanded by Justice Party led by E. V. Ramasamy and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) led by C. N. Annadurai for the speakers of the Dravidian languages in South India.

Initially, the demand of Dravida Nadu proponents was limited to Tamil-speaking region, but later, it was expanded to include other Indian states with Dravidian-language speakers in majority (Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Karnataka). Some of the proponents also included parts of Ceylon (Sri Lanka),^[2] Orissa and Maharashtra. Other names for the proposed sovereign state included “South India”, “Deccan Federation” and “Dakshinapath”.

From the 1940s to 1960s the Dravida Nadu movement was at its height. However due to Tamil hegemony fears it failed miserably to find any support outside Tamil Nadu. The States Reorganisation Act 1956, which created linguistic States, weakened the demand further. In 1960, the DMK leaders decided to delete the demand of Dravida Nadu from the party programme at a meeting held in the absence of Annadurai. In 1963, the Government of India led by Jawaharlal Nehru, declared secessionism as an illegal act. As a consequence, in 1963 Annadurai completely abandoned the “claim” for Dravida Nadu which is now geographically limited to modern Tamil Nadu only.

6.5.3 Telangana Movement

In the years after the formation of Andhra Pradesh state, people of Telangana expressed dissatisfaction over how the agreements and guarantees were implemented. Discontentment with the 1956 Gentleman’s agreement intensified in January 1969, when the guarantees that had been agreed on were supposed to lapse. Student agitation for the continuation of the agreement began at Osmania University in Hyderabad and spread to other parts of the region. Government employees and opposition members of the state legislative assembly threatened “direct action” in support of the students. This movement since then finally resulted in the separate state of Telangana. It should be noted that roots of disparity in two regions was in colonial rule. Andhra was under direct rule of crown while Telangana was ruled by Nizam of Hyderabad, who was not so efficient ruler. So over time Andhra got more developed in comparison to Telangana, e.g. 48% share of state income was from Telangana region but only 28% was utilised for its development.

There had been several movements to revoke the merger of Telangana and Andhra, major ones occurring in 1969, 1972 and 2009. The movement for a new state of Telangana gained momentum in the 21st century by an initiative of the Telangana Political Joint Action Committee (TPJAC) including political leadership representing the Telangana area. On 9 December 2009, the government of India announced the process of formation of the Telangana state. Violent protests led by people in the Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions occurred immediately after the announcement, and the decision was put on hold on 23 December 2009.

The movement continued in Hyderabad and other districts of Telangana. There have been hundreds of claimed suicides, strikes, protests and disturbances to public life demanding separate statehood. Telangana was created as India’s 29th state on 2nd June 2014. It was the end result of a decade long movement to bring about a new state based more on cultural factors rather than on linguistic ones.

6.5.4 Bodoland movement

The Bodo agitation is led by the Assam Bodo Students Union which is demanding a separate state and has resorted to wide scale violence and a series of crippling bandhs to pursue their demand. One of the basic reason of the Assam agitations is the expansion of education, particularly higher education, but not industrialization and other job creating institutions which is increasing the army of educated youths in the backward regions. These frustrated young men are allured by the movements against the inflow of people from other countries and states. On the other hand these unemployed youths are also attracted by the caste, communal and other sectional agitations fighting for the protection of rights on sectarian lines.

Ethnicity and identity have been the key factors for the Bodoland Movement. The movement has its emergence since the colonial period. The general feeling of the Bodos is that of neglect, exploitation, alienation and discrimination for decades. Bidyasagar Narzary has also pointed out structural factors. All these factors accompanied by the approach of Assamese mainstream towards the Bodos caused the growth of Bodo sentiments. The feeling of Nationalistic attitude among the educated Bodos grew with the formation of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) in 1952. Bodoland movement has taken a huge leap and for the first time has demanded an arrangement for autonomy. The Bodos thus took a new turn in its movement with the formation of the Plain Tribal council of Assam (PTCA) in 27th February, 1967. The PTCA has taken the front seat in the movement during this phase with the whole hearted support of the “All Bodo Student’s Union (ABSU). The movement for the Bodoland continued with two approaches Socio-Political Movement and the Arm Movement.

The “All Bodo Students Union” (ABSU) was also formed on 15th February, 1967 at a time when the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi proposed to reorganize the state of Assam on 13th January 1967. This period has also witnessed the anti-foreigners agitation of the All Assam Student Union and All Assam Gona Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) in 1979. The PTCA and the ABSU has supported this movement. From 1986 to 2003 demand for separate statehood was the objective of the movement. With the creation of First accord was signed between the ABSU, State Government and the Central Government in 1993 for the creation of Bodoland Autonomous Council and the second accord was signed in the year 2003 between the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT), State Government and the Central Government for the creation of Bodo Territorial Council (BTC) under the amended Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, the movement stays in a equilibrium position.

6.5.5 Khalistan Movement

It was during the era of 1980s that Khalistan movement with its aim to create a Sikh homeland, often called Khalistan, cropped up in the Punjab region of India and Pakistan. In fact this demand has also the colours of communalism, as their demand is only for Sikhs.

The Khalistan movement is a Sikh separatist movement seeking to create a homeland for Sikhs by establishing a sovereign state, called Khalistân in the Punjab Region. Such a state existed in Punjab from 1709 to 1849. Before independence the Singh Sabha Movement was founded at Amritsar in 1873. The Akali movement (also known as Gurudwara Reform Movement) have led to Sikh nationalism and through Khalsa schools propagating Sikh nationalism became easy. Events after independence have strengthened the claim for Khalistan.

Independence of India was not a joyful event for Sikhs. The partition left Sikhs in a lot of discontentment with regard to their traditional lands being lost to Pakistan and there was also a mass exodus of immigrants from Pakistan. A movement namely Punjabi Suba movement was initiated in 1955 under Akali Dal, a Sikh dominated political party. It sought re-organization of Punjab along linguistic lines, seeking division of the state into Punjabi and non-Punjabi speaking areas. After a series of violent protests, the movement resulted in the trifurcation of Punjab into Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh. The Anandpur Sahib Resolution reignited the passion of Sikhs and sowed the seeds of the Khalistan movement. The resolution demanded autonomy for the state of Punjab, identified regions that would be part of the separate state, and sought the right to frame its own internal constitution.

Although these events have sown the seeds of Khalistan, the Khalistan movement was intensified under the leadership of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and many others who travelled across Punjab advocating a return to the Khalsa or a more orthodox form of Sikhism. Inspired by the Khalistan ideology the Khalistan movement preceded as an extremist movement (through violent protests and killings of high-profile persons in the Indian government) and turned against the Indian government. Operation Blue star was conducted to capture Bhindranwale in Golden Temple Complex, but the operation resulted in a strong anti-India sentiment. The then PM Indira Gandhi was depicted as an enemy of the Sikhs and two Sikh guards of her assassinated her in 1984. Her killing was followed by wide-spread riots against the Sikhs in Delhi & other parts. The genocide of Sikhs across India fuelled more anti-India sentiment.

Manifold extremist groups like the Khalistan Liberation Force, Khalistan Commando Force, Babbar Khalsa, and umpteen others gained prominence and roamed around freely across Punjab. Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) in its London Declaration (in August 2018) has announced to hold the first-ever non-binding referendum among the global Sikh community. This is called Referendum 2020. Referendum 2020 has a dedicated website, which notes: “Once there is a consensus within the Punjabi people that independence from India is desired, we will then approach the UN and other international forms and bodies with the goal of re-establishing Punjab as a nation-state”. The Khalistan movement which started on Indian Soil is no more restricted to India and the movement has slowly gained attraction from many countries due to people supporting the movement or state support to the movement. International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) in UK, Canada, US-based Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) are the important organisations for the popularisations of the movement. Pakistan has actively supported the Khalistan movement and as turned the Sikhs against India.

6.5.6 Gorkhaland Movement

The catastrophe in Gorkhaland movement has been infusing for many decades and the stems from language. Gorkhaland consists of Nepali-speaking people of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and other hilly districts. The people belonging to these areas hardly have any connection with the Bengali community and are different in ethnicity, culture and language along with its geographical features.

The Indian Nepali speakers often feel that they are treated as foreigners. This is true to a large extent. The middle Indians often get confused between the Indian Nepali and the Nepalis of Nepal. During and after British rule the Gorkhas, an ethnic group originally from Nepal, migrated to India. As essential bases of articulation, the campaign has organized questions of 'primordiality': language, community, ethnicity, common history, dress and civility, nationality and citizenship for a distinct management structure for the Darjeeling Hills Gorkhas. As such the well-intended Indian Nepalis feel physical and physiological pain.

Dooars and Terai are renowned for its beauty and tea which are the primary sources of economic profits. Through tourism, these beautiful places earn lots of money. But there is a growing perception that government spending is on other parts of West Bengal more is not using this money for these areas and people pro-Gorkhaland argue that if Gorkhaland is made as a separate state, it will become economically rich, and thus help the Indian economy as well. Most were enlisted in the colonial army for service. The term Gorkha tends to be applied to all Nepali speaking people in Darjeeling today. This is a cultural rather than a racial mark to accept a multi-ethnic community consisting of the area's indigenous tribes and Indian born Nepalese immigrants. Their common objection towards the Bengali majority is probably what unites them all.

The Bengalis own several business places in the major towns of the hills. However, the Nepali-speaking locals frequently do menial jobs and lament the prosperity of the Bengalis, whom they consider as outsiders in the hills. Besides, they accuse the West Bengal government of its underdevelopment of the Gorkhas. Separatist leaders used Gorkhas' fears over Bengali oppression and domination to unite the Darjeeling hills Nepal-speaking community, stressing their common heritage of Gorkha. Yet the very name is contentious, and there's a lack of agreement among the locals about what "Gorkha" entails.

The word "Gorkhaland" was invented by the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) member, Subhash Ghising in 1980s. However, Darjeeling claims for a separate administrative region in 1907, when Gorkhaland's first proposal was presented before the council of Morley-Minto Reforms. Hillmen's Darjeeling Association sent a report to Minto-Morley Changes requesting different administrative structure. In 1941 a request was set to British Government that Darjeeling be separated from Bengal and that it become a province of the Chief Commissioner. After independence, India's undivided Communist Party sent to the Constituent Assembly, a memorandum, requesting the establishment of Gorkhasthan comprising the Darjeeling district and Sikkim in 1947. The Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League (ABGL) met with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and called for Bengal to split in 1952. In 1955, President of Shramik Sangh District, Daulat Das Bokhim,

submitted a memorandum to the Chairman of the State Reorganization Committee calling for the establishment of a separate state comprising Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar District. The Government of West Bengal passed a unanimous resolution supporting the creation of an autonomous district council consisting of Darjeeling and related areas. In 1981, Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister, issued a letter from Pranta Parishad, requesting a separate State. The incorporated Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) Subhash Ghising. The Gorkha National Liberation Front is a political party in West Bengal, India's Darjeeling District set up in 1980. In 1986, GNLF initiated a most violent uprising in the history of the Gorkhaland movement. It was led by Subhash Ghising.

The movement of 1986 eventually led to the formation of a semi-autonomous body named the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1988 to administer certain areas of Darjeeling district. The Council of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill became independent. GNLF dropped the separate state demand. The fourth elections to the DGHC had been due in 2004. However, the government decided not to hold elections and instead made Subhash Ghising the DGHC's sole caretaker until a new tribal council for the Sixth Schedule was formed. Resentment among DGHC's former councillors grew rapidly. Bimal Gurung, once Ghising's trusted assistant, chose to break away from the GNLF, between them. In 2005, the same parties signed an in-principle settlement memorandum to include Darjeeling in the Indian Constitution's Sixth Schedule, which addresses tribal area administration. In 2007, Bimal Gurung launched Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), calling Gorkhaland 'the Sixth Schedule solution' a betrayal. The same year, agitations for the separate demand for Gorkhaland increased. The new party had once again increased the demand for a separate Gorkhaland state. In 2011, the memorandum of understanding for the establishment of a Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), a semi-autonomous governing body for Darjeeling, was passed by the legislative assembly of West Bengal to appease the GJM. West Bengal state assembly elections were held on April 18, 2011, where GJM candidates won three Darjeeling hill assembly seats, proving that the demand for Gorkhaland in Darjeeling was still high. On 30 July, 2013, the Congress Working Committee unanimously adopted a resolution proposing that the INC-led central government should establish a separate Telangana state from Andhra Pradesh. Due to Andhra Pradesh's division, demand for separation once again rose high in 2013. Under GJM leadership, the campaign became pacifist. GJM followed the revolutionary "Janta Bandh" form of protest. In response, GJM declared a specific form of 'Janta Bandh' protest in which people in the hills were asked to peacefully stay indoors on August 13 and 14 without picketing or using intimidation. That proved to be a major success for the government and an embarrassment. Darjeeling experienced one of its most violent agitations, a 104-day strike, over the June 2017 appeal for separate statehood, which culminated in the deaths of many local and security personnel. In 2020, the the Government of India's decision to revoke Article 370 provisions and to bifurcate Jammu and Kashmir has reawakened hope among the major hill parties, who want Darjeeling to also be a separate Union territory with a legislature. Many scholars said that it was a governance deficiency combined with politicisation that bred the Gorkhaland problem. Some notes the historical pattern, particularly in post-independence period, that the problem has only crupted as political ambitions are connected with it.

6.6 Suggestive Measures

Following measures can be adopted to curb the menaces of regional movements;

i) Doing away with regional imbalance, ii) regional political parties should not compromise with the idea of national unity and integrity, iii) top priority to the economic development of deprived zones, iv) restructuring of the society, v) acculturation, vi) developed means of transport and communication, vii) proper education, viii) appeal through mass media, ix) create enough employment opportunity, x) provide Special Packages to backward states, xi) special category status to bifurcated states in India, xii) improve National Integration.

6.7 Conclusion

Positive Scholars believe that regionalism plays an important role in building of the nation, if the demands of the regions are accommodated by the political system of the country. Negative Regionalism is often seen as a serious threat to the development, progress and unity of the nation. It gives internal security challenges by the insurgent groups, who propagate the feelings of regionalism against the mainstream political-administrative setup of the country. Regionalism definitely impacts politics as days of coalition government and alliances are taking place. Regional demands become national demands, policies are launched to satisfy regional demands and generally those are extended to all pockets of country, hence national policies are now dominated by regional demands. Several regional political parties have merged in recent years and have gained strength for obvious reasons. The handful of national parties cannot, by the very nature of things, adequately represent and pursue regional causes. Most of the national parties have even failed to live up to the people's expectations. That explains why more State-based parties have been formed in various regions and is quite successful in their aims. To conclude it can be said that there should be a greater spirit of accommodation on the part of the Central government when it comes to the regional forces. This implies a reversal of the process of concentration of power which has admittedly been much in evidence in the country, causing resentment among the opposition-governed State. The question still remains, will the ethnic group return to their homeland if the demand of statehood fulfilled? The sorry state of development in many newly formed states shows different picture. It is, We the people, who should understand that demands could be fulfilled in many ways, separation from one state is not the final answer.

6.8 Self assessment questions

1. Write a brief note on Regionalism in India. What measures can be adopted to curb the menaces of regionalism?
2. What are the basic causes of regionalism? Discuss in this context the basic characteristics of Regionalism in India.

3. Mention the types of regionalism. Examine the nature of Andhra Pradesh Movement in this context.
4. Evaluate the trend and pattern of Telangana Movement.
5. Do you consider Gorkhaland Movement a ethnicity based regional movement? Justify your answer.
6. Write a brief note on Bodoland Movement.
7. Examine the basic trend of Khalistan Movement.

6.9 Suggested readings

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Peasants Movements

Contents

- 7.1 Objectives**
- 7.2 Introduction**
- 7.3 Definition of Social Movements**
- 7.4 Classification of Peasants Movement**
- 7.5 Farmer's Movements during the Colonial Rule**
 - 7.5.1 The *Tebhaga* Movement**
 - 7.5.2 The Telengana Movement**
- 7.6 Peasants Movements in Post-Independence India**
 - 7.6.1 All India Kishan Sabha Movement**
- 7.7 Regional Peasants Movements**
 - 7.7.1 Anti-Levy Movement**
 - 7.7.2 Anti-Eviction Movement**
 - 7.7.3 The Movement for Detection, Recovery and Distribution of Surplus, Benami and Vested Land: 1958-59 & 1967-69.**
 - 7.7.4 The Naxalbari Movement**
- 7.8 The Singur and Nandigram Movement**
- 7.9 The Farmers Amendment Bill 2020 and the Farmer's Protest**
- 7.10 Globalisation and the future of Peasants Movements**
- 7.11 Summing Up**
- 7.12 Self Assessment Questions**
- 7.13 Suggested Readings**

7.1 Objectives

The objective of this unit is to familiarize the students with a brief overview of peasants movements in pre and post-independence India. The unit starts with a brief introduction regarding appearance of farmer's

movement as a social movement in India with special reference to Ghanshyam Shah. For a better understanding of the patterns of peasants movements in India the major theoretical perspectives of the peasants movements i.e. anti feudal, movement by rich farmer's and anti-global peasant moment against state policy have been discussed. For tracing the roots of peasants movements in post-independence India a portion has been dedicated about discussing the peasants movements in pre-independence India with reference to *Tebhaga* and *Teleghana* Movement. The next section is dedicated to the major peasants movements in post-independence India specially appearance of All India Kishan Sabha as a political platform for peasant bargaining with the state apparatus. After discussing the all India movement by peasants there is a discussion about regional peasants movements like Anti-Levy Movement, Anti Eviction movement, the Movement for Detection, Recovery and Distribution of Surplus, Benami and Vested Land: 1958-59 & 1967-69 and the Naxalbari and Singur Nandigram Movement. The last section of the unit has discussed about the ongoing peasant unrest against three farmer related bills passed in Rajya Sabha i.e a) Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, b) The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection)Agreement on Price Assurance Farm Services Bill,2020 and c) Essential Commodities Amendment Bill, 2020.

After studying the unit students will be able :

- a) To understand how peasants movements appeared as a part of social movements in India.
- b) To understand the major theoretical approaches to study peasants movements in India.
- c) To understand the roots of peasants movements in pre-independence India.
- d) To get a brief overview of significant peasants movements in post-independence and contemporary India.

7.2 Introduction

Immediately after independence, the policy planners and political leaders of India concentrated on rapid industrialization as a key instrument of economic development which was visible since the adaptation of second five year plan (1956-57 to 1960-1961). However, agriculture plays a crucial role in Indian economy. According to Government of India Census Report published in 2011, 54.75% percent of the aggregate labour force of the country are involved in agricultural sector. It is evident from the above statics that India is predominantly a society dependent on agriculture and thus is quite well aware with a variety of movements associated with agricultural land and farmer's. Like many other social movements farmer movement is also a social movement that has been witnessed in post-independence India. There is a basic difference between. Farmers movements and other social movements like Women's Movements or environmental movements. Because while Women's Movement and environmental movement to some extent targete civil society but the farmer's movement basically target the state. It is due to the agricultural backwardness in the developing nations, the state occupies the central position. Therefore, farmer's movements always target the state and raise their voice for favorable change in the agricultural policy. However class difference is also an important phenomenon that differentiate not between farmer's or peasant rather within it.

Genealogically, those who are dependent on land for their life as well as livelihood are basically designated as peasant, farmer's, *krishok*, or *kisan*. However, it is not the dependence rather the relationship between farmer's and land which determines the identity, as a result, starting from owner of land to absentee landlord, supervisory agriculturalist, owner –cultivators, share croppers, tenets, even landless labourers are also described as farmer's. However it is agreed that peasants movements is also a social movement. Before going into detailed discussion of farmer movement it is essential to define farmer movement.

7.3 Definition of Social Movement

The term social movement appeared in the European languages in the early nineteenth century. The leaders and authors who used the term were trying to explore the creation of a new society with an objective of emancipation of unprivileged class by changing value system, existing institutions and property relations. Since 1950's researchers like Rudolf Heberle, Neil Smelser and John Wilson have attempted to define social movements. However, a working definition of social movements was provided by Paul Wilkinson. According to him :

A social movement is a deliberate collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into 'Utopean' community. Social movements are thus clearly different form historical movement, tendencies and trends, and the influence of the unconscious or irrational factors in human behavior, may be of crucial importance in illuminating and explaining social movement.

A social movement must evince a minimal degree of organization, though this may range from a loose, informal or partial level of organization to the highly institutionalized and bureaucratized movement and the corporate group. Indeed, it will be shown that much of the literature of social movements has been concerned with natural histories, models or theories of movement development. Such models have attempted to simulate change in movement structure and organization, ranging from states of initial social unrest and excitement and the emergence of a charismatic leadership, to a revolutionary movement's seizure of power.

A social movement's commitment to change and the *raison d'être* of its organization are founded upon conscious violation, normative commitment to the movement's aims or beliefs and active participation on the part of the follower or members. This particular characterization of social movement in terms of violation and normative commitment is endorsed by something approaching a consensus among leading scholars in this field. Heberle, for example, conceives of these belief systems as an expression of the collective will of the people among whom they are accepted. He is emphatic that it is the element of volition that makes the beliefs socially effective. It is conscious violation of individuals acting collectively that brings about the embodiment of ideologies in social movements. (1971:27).

7.4 Classification of Peasants Movements

The peasant community of India has fuced decade long exploitation first under the ruthless British colonial ruler and then under the independence government who was unwilling to provide any proper financial or

structural assistance so that they can get rid of their financial debt and distress. The British Colonial Government introduced many new agricultural policies such as Zamindari system, unpaid labour, arbitrary eviction and growing rent to pave the way for their expansion. After seventy five years of independence nearly 70 percent of the population are still dependant on agriculture for their livelihood. The structure of peasantry has undergone a huge change from a feudal and semi-feudal phase to a capitalist one.

Scholars have used different classification systems of peasants movements based on time frame as well as issues involved in farmer's struggle. Although there is no unified structure of peasantry across the country, Kathleen Gough has identified five major types of peasant revolts based on their ideological orientation and organizational methods. These are :

- a) Restorative rebellion basically to drive away the British or any other oppressive ruler.
- b) Religious movement for liberating either a region or an ethnic community under a new form of government.
- c) Social banditry.
- d) Terrorist vengeance with an objective of getting collective justice.
- e) Mass insurrections for redressing a particular grievance.

K.P Kennan has divided the farmer's movements in three different types based on class identity. They are:

- i) Peasant protest based on religious or cultural identity and basically against capitalist mode of production;
- ii) Secular movement rejecting caste identity and appealing to rational consciousness and brotherhood of humanity ;
- iii) The nationalist movement culminating in radical political consciousness.

However most of the categorizations are associated with pre-independence farmer's movements of India. There are some other factors associated with categorization of peasants movements in India.

Sudha Pai has categorized peasants movements into three broad categories based on five criterion. These are:

- a) The pattern of landownership that determines the production relation and class structure,
- b) Policies of the states adopted for farmer or agriculture at different points of time,
- c) technology based or market based changes which automatically develop political consciousness and action,
- d) Pattern of mobilization based on caste or class identity, and
- e) leadership, strategies, issues and demands.

Depending on the above mentioned criterion Sudha Pai has divided agrarian movements of India into three broad types :

- a) Anti-Feudal movements against exploitation by landlords or against the state authority demanding

redistribution of land ownership, rise of wage for labourers, lower rents to small peasants and eradication of other existing exploitative practices. During the post-independence period, discontent arising out of the failure of the state regarding promised land reforms discontented resulted in the rise of a number of land grab movements that resulted in a series of farmer's movements across the country. Most of these farmer's movements of that types were led by Socialist or Communist leaders. During the 1960's the issue of land redistribution lost its importance due to subsequent change from institutional to technological policy.

- b) Movements by rich farmer's due to commercialization of agriculture and class differentiation were followed by Green Revolution during 1960's. As this particular kind of farmer's movement was led by rich farmer organisation, they had worked more as a pressure group than that of farmer's organisation. They also pressurised the government to formulate policy favourable to them. There was also a change in perception as the state became the owner of the total land, from that time they started to consider state as the enemy and not the landlord. Although they mobilised the small farmer's but they actually tried to pursue the interest of the big farmer's.
- c) During 1990's, due to liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation slowed down the agricultural growth and introduction of structural adjustment programmes led to structural change in agriculture and the policy framework. Instead of large farmer's movement there were regional movements in different states as they tried to introduce market oriented policy. However, in recent times due to price hike and acquisition of agricultural land for corporate purpose has inspired the small farmer's to raise their voice against state for such corporate mentality for private and international corporations.

7.5 Farmer's Movements during the Colonial Rule

There was a common belief that Indian farmer's were passive in nature but if anyone looks back into history then there are ample examples that they have protested and revolted against the oppression of Zamindars and exploitative revenue policies of the British Government. A series of peasants movements had taken place in different parts of the country during the colonial time. Notable among them were : the Sannyasi rebellion (1763-1778) which took place in a number of districts in Bengal and Champaran of Bihar, the Wahabi rebellion (1830-1831) which took place in Baduria of Bengal presently located in North 24 Parganas district, the Faraizi Rebellion which occurred in a place called Faridpur in East Bengal, the Santhal rebellion (1855-1856) in Bengal and Bihar, the Indigo rebellion (1858-1861) in Bengal, the Moplah Rebellion (1836-1849) in Malabar and the Deccan riots (1875).

In majority of peasants movements religion played a crucial role in mobilizing the farmer's and in the development of anti zamindari and anti –British movement. However, most of the movements were spontaneous in nature as the huge exploited masses do not have formal channel to express their grudge. Due to adequate resources and leadership some of the movements were short lived. Initially, the movements were guided by the economic exploitation but they raised political challenge too. Many of the rebel leaders demanded both liberty and land. On the Government side, most of the peasant uprisings were suppressed

by the brutality. It is interesting to note, the emerging middle class was by and large hostile to the peasants movements with some notable exception. The history of peasant resistance during 1858-1914 is, necessarily, a disjointed collection of histories of agrarian relationship and struggle, each of which had his own timetable of revolt.

When Gandhi returned to India after South Africa *satyagraha* in 1915, he played a crucial role in organizing peasants movements. He also organised some local peasants movements seeking the redressal of grievances of the peasantry. The notable peasants movements led by Gandhi were the Champaran Satyagraha(1917) which abolished the Tinkathia system, the Non revenue movement of Kheda (1918) in the context of poor harvest in 1917, the farmer uprising in Bardoli (1928) against revenue hike, forcing the government to reduce the increase from 22% to 6.25 % and the non rent and non-revenue campaign in Oudh during 1930-32. After 1918 with Gandhi Congress revolutionalized the demand of peasant in military way.

As a political party the Communist Party played an important role by organizing the All India Workers' and Peasants' Party (WPP) in 1928. During the same period of time many regional political parties appeared like Bangiya Krishak Sabha (1933) in states like Bengal, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. With course of time the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) appeared in the scene. During 1940's AIKS organised two major peasants movements -the Tebhaga movement in Bengal (1946-47) and Telengana uprising in Andhra Pradesh (1946-51).

7.5.1 The *Tebhaga* Movement

The tebhaga movement in Bengal in the mid forties was a struggle of share croppers to retain two thirds share of the produce for themselves and thereby to reduce from one half to one third the produce as rent paid to jotdar –a class of rich farmer's who held superior rights in land. From late 1946 tebhaga movement began to spread in a number of districts in Bengal under the leadership of Bengal Provincial Kishan Sabha. It is interesting to note that, the demand of the share croppers was admitted in 1940 itself by the Floud Commission appointed by the then Bengal Government of Fazlul Haq. The rise of sharecropper cultivation between 1940 and 1950 has to be attributed first to the severe famine in 1943 and secondly to the massive influx of refugees in Bengal after the partition in 1947.

The movement initiated first in a village –Atwari (North West Dinajpur) where several *bargadar* volunteers cut the paddy crop and carried it to their own *khamar*(thrashing –flor) instead of taking it to their *jotedarss khamars* as they used to do in past. When the police intervened peasant –police clashes followed. Fearing mass arrests, the *Krishan Sabha* and communist leaders, who spearheaded the movement, went underground The share cropper initially resisted more intensely in the Thakurgaon subdivision of Dinajpur district but within two weeks the movement spread to several villages covering nearly three fourths of that District.

The BPKS also Panjia conference in June 1940 had called for a movement for tebhaga. During September 1946 the Sabha launched a mass struggle to realize the demand. The movement involved nearly 60 lakh share croppers who had to face stiff resistance from the jotdars and violent reprisals by the police

leading to a death toll of 70 innocent persons. The most horrifying incident took place in Khan pore where 22 people were killed in direct confrontation with police.. The movement did not last long due to the failure of leadership and unwillingness to counter state repression.

7.5.2 The Telengana Movement

The Telengana uprising was also a notable movement in the history of peasants movements in India. The princely state of Hyderabad was ruled by Nizams in feudal style. There are mukhs(revenue collector) and jagirdars who exploited the poor farmer's in several ways specially in the Telengana region. The communist leaders were aware about the exploitation and tried to organise the exploited farmer's through two different organizations –the Andhra Mahasabha and the Andhra Conference. After the ban was lifted from the Communist Party in 1942 they started to raise their voice for abolition of forced labour (locally known as vetti) eradication of eviction and hike in the wage rate of the farmer.

In July 1946, a militant peasant named Doddi Komaryya has been brutally murdered by a *deshmukh* in Nalgonda district which ignited the movement and certainly gained support as it was designated against Nizam's declaration of Hyderabad as an independence state. The farmer's took up arms against the oppressive *razakars* (anti nationals) with the backing of Nizam. In between 1947 August and 1948 September the movement reached its peak and nearly 12000 armed worriers were ready to fight. The epic center of the movement were located in three districts Nalgonda, Khammam and Warrangal. The achievement of the movement were the eradaication of vetti system, rise of agricultural wages lands above certain stipulated celling were saized and redistributed.

However the Nizam was surrendered to newly independence government of India as a result Indian army entered in Hyderabad. During that period the Congress and the CPI had urged for armed struggle to the farmer's and overthrough the government of the newly independence India. As a threat to newly emerged sovereign authority the Indian military ruthlessly operated against the farmer's movement and by 1952 the movement was totally vanished. The movement failed according to experts due to few reasons they are ; a) Initially the movement was led by poor farmer's but soon the land –holding peasant took the leadership and decided to capture the land as much as possible. B) After 1948 when the movement was directed against the Indian government and military entered the scenario then the support base of the movement declined. C) As the Indian army entered the scenario the communist leadership were divided regarding the future course of action of the movement.

7.6 Peasants Movements in Post Independence India

During the post-independence period a series of legislations. Abolition of Intermediaries Act and subsequent land ceiling legislations were implemented by different state governments. However there were several loopholes which delayed the implementation process. In the newly formed legislature there were exemptions allowed on the grounds of self cultivation having orchids and fisheries etc. As a result since 1950's

the All India Kishan Sabha raised their voice against such anti peasant development.

7.6.1 All India Kishan Sabha Movement

Faulty provisions had resulted in mass eviction of the tenants and share croppers. Keeping this background in mind AIKS launched a nationwide movement for the amendment of tenancy laws in areas like West Bengal and Hyderabad. The AIKS also united peasants in Punjab and Rajasthan against the imposition of betterment levy. During that period there was an acute food crisis around the country therefore AIKS organised nationwide a food movement. Although in some states the movement took violent form. As a result in some states like West Bengal nearly 100 people were killed in police firing.

In 1960's new issues were taken up by the AIKS which varied across the states. For example in Uttar Pradesh AIKS supported the strike of the Sugarcane workers, in Andhra Pradesh they emphasized the distribution of waste land among the agricultural labourer, The organised a movement in Kerala with the Kerala Karshaka Sangam which witnessed a mass signature campaign and a 28 day long foot march. The movement spread in other states like Bihar, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu and Maharashtra.

During 1962 Indo-China war the activities of Kishan Sabha incresed heavily.As a result in 1967 AIKS got bifurcated, followed by the split in CPI. During 1970's, the AIKS also initiated movement for the wage rise and other related causes of the agricultural labourer.

7.7 Regional Peasants Movements

During the 1950's there were a series of peasants movements across the country as the Kishan Sabha since 1952 gradually concerned itself with the issue of levy and canal tax which was much related to the vested interest of the land holding peasant. As a result, many regional movements appeared for taking care of the interest of the poor farmer's.

7.7.1 Anti-Levy Movement

In 1953, the Government of West Bengal passed an act according to which people having or cultivating more than 10 acres of land will have to sell their surplus food grains to the Government. Krishak Sabha selectively opposed the policy. It was suggested that the required amount of grains could be collected by procuring the surplus production from the landlords and *jotedars* and therefore the demanded the exception of peasantry from compulsory levy. The Krishak Sabha never ever questioned the necessity of levy system however it tried to earn the trust of the middle and rich peasants. They also failed to bring any desired change in the crop procurement policy of the Government. However, as there was no viable alternative their membership increased.

7.7.2 Anti-Eviction Movement

One of the most successful movements was launched by WBPKS was the movement against sharecroppers by land owners of different types. The Central Government had declared a policy of structural

change in Indian agriculture by tenancy reforms and redistribution of excess land to the landless peasant. Therefore, the Government of West Bengal adopted some legislative measures like passing the West Bengal Bargadars Act 1950, and the Estate Acquisition Act 1954 to implement the plan of the Central Government. The act hardly benefitted sharecroppers because according to the act, to evict anyone the permission of Bhagchas board was essential as it was the final arbitrator for settlement of disputes. The board was supposed to look after the interests of the sharecroppers but in reality sided with the landed peasantry. Moreover, issue of membership nomination and time consuming tactics put the sharecroppers in big trouble. If any member of the board the sharecropper, sided with he on she immediately removed from the board. The Estate Acquisition Act 1954, also was also for the protection of the interests of the sharecropper but the reality was something different. According to the section 41 (1), provided the opportunity was to the landowners to retain 1000 acers of land for tank fisheries, cooperative or religious purpose which were widely misused by the land owners to evict the sharecropper lawfully. Keeping this background in mind the WBPKS started to organise state wide movement during the 1950's to stop the gross eviction of the sharecropper by the landowners.. They also demanded elected representatives in the Bhagchas board instead of nominated representatives. They gheraoed administrative authorities in their respective offices for realizing their demand. During mid 50's the movement reached its peak and in the face of tremendous pressure the Government passed Anti –Eviction ordinance on 9th June 1954 and declared that since 5th may 1953 all evictions were illegal. It was partially successful as the landowners again started to evict sharecroppers by tactfully using the legal loopholes.

7.7.3 The Movement for Detection, Recovery and Distribution of Surplus, Benami and Vested Land: 1958-59 & 1967-69.

Indian peasantry was dominated by landless farmer's whereas some bullock capitalists had acquired huge amount of benami lands to avoid the legal obligation of land ceiling. Therefore, since the end of 1957 the Krishak Sabha took up an action plan for the identification of surplus lands, recovery of benami lands and redistribution of vested lands among the landless. However, a part of administration was not willing to implement the land reform measures and there was increasing grudge among the land and sharecroppers against the administration. Therefore, for drawing urban attention the Krishak Sabha organised a public rally on 11th March 1958. The movement confined it self to the districts of Midnapore, 24 Parganas, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and Coochbihar.

In the midst of turmoil when the United Front Government assumed power they had considerable impact on agrarian politics under the leadership of Harekrishna Koner, the then Secretary of the CPIM controlled Krishak Sabha. As promised earlier, the Farmer friendly government within a short period of time distributed 3 lakh cores acres of vested lands among the landless and sharecroppers.

7.7.4 The Naxalbari Movement

The let 1967's was the period marked by radicalisation of peasants movements aiming at capturing the power of the state. The movement initiated in a place called Naxalbari in North Bengal and was known as

the Naxalbari movement. The open support of the armed volunteer groups led to armed conflicts and casualties in both sides. The radical dimension of the Naxalbari movement was supported by the Chinese Communist party and due to its radical nature it attracted a huge number of young radicals. Some of them also were not communist minded. Similar radical movements were organised by farmer's in different places like Debra and Gopiballavpur of Midnapore district in South Bengal. Due to the downfall of the Second United Front Government the brutal police action confined the movement to Calcutta and some urban areas. Inspired by the Naxalbari movement Girijans also initiated armed struggles in Srikakulam and Andhra Pradesh.

7.8 The Singur and Nandigram Movement

During the fag end of three decades of Left Rule in West Bengal the leaders were emphasized on industrialization for keeping pace with the changing scenario and fast growth. Between 2006 and 2008 thousand acres of multi cropped land was forcibly acquired by the Government in Singur, a place located in the Hoogly district of West Bengal and Nandigram, a place situated in Midnapore district for setting up automobile and other industries. That particular tendency which David Hervey identified as 'expanded reproduction to accumulation by dispossession'. The then Chief Minister of West Bengal Mr. BuddhedeBhattacharya was convinced by Ratan Tata to set up an automobile industry in Singur with an investment of 48000 crores. The Nandigram project was materialized by Selim Group, a Real estate giant for setting up Special Economic Zone Both were strongholders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) The forcible acquisition of land from the farmer's were opposed by the then opposition leader Ms. Mamata Bannerjee. In Nandigram, two farmer's with the help of Trinommol activists nearly two hundred and fifty CPI (M) after getting order from the local MP Laxman Seth. The clash resulted in the death of six people, as a result, farmer blocked the area. The Nandigram area was blocked for more than two months. On 14th March the Chief Minister sent 2500 police personnel accompanied by 400 CPI(M) cadres who recaptured the area with 14 farmer's causality, and nearly 100 people were missing. The incident was so sensitive that the left lost their political credibility and Mamta Bannerjee went on to form alliance with the Congress and came to power.

7.9 The Farmers Amendment Bill 2020 and the Farmer Protest

During the of 2020, the Government of India passed about three later half farmer's bills : a) the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill,2020, b) The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance Farm Services Bill, 2020 and c) Essential Commodities Amendment Bill, 2020. According to the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, farmer's to sell their product outside the agricultural product market committee (APMC) regulated markets. The APMC are government controlled marketing yards commonly known as *Kissan Mandis*. Therefore, the farmer's hardly have any choice on who they want to sell. According to Government source as per the economic experts, the APMC is an age old institutions the scarcity of the

agricultural products and to secure the interest of the farmer's. However with in due course of time it has changed its role from protector to oppressor by establishing monopoly by fixing low prices for the farmer's product and forcing the helpless farmer's to sell it at cheap price. The second Bill i.e. The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance Farm Services Bill, 2020 was passed as per recommendation of the Standing Committee. As per the Standing Committee observed of that APMC laws need to be reformed due to a limited number of traders in APMC Mandis, the law 26th November, 2020. The third Bill, i.e Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020, allows intra-state and inter-state trade of farmer's' produce beyond the physical premises of APMC markets. State governments are prohibited from levying any market fee, cess or levy outside APMC areas.

The farmer's initially oppose the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020. According to the farmer's of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana, these bills will ultimately ruin the minimum support price system in the their states and finish the provision of Government procurement. According to Government Experts like Gurucharan Das, some farmer's cultivate rice in the areas of water shortage only for the MSP for paddy which is a threat to long term sustainability, depletion of ground water and soil quality.

Farmers also protested against other laws specially, the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020. As earlier stock limits apply to traders, the amendment exempted processors, exporters and other value chain participants. The amendment also contract farming between farmer's and corporate encouraged ladies. According to Government contract cultivation is voluntary in nature, largely for crops and not for trading in APMC. According to the Central Government they want to frame laws that promote barrier free trade in the neo-liberal, post globalization age.

Even after getting assurance from the Prime Minster the Kissan Union started protesting against the bills and even after 11 round of talks no point of negotiations could be reached on either side and farmer's demanding dropping of all the three laws.

7.10 Globalisation and the future of Peasants Movements

In post-independence India peasant mobilisation has been shaped by two major trends : the centrality of the state in directing agrarian policies, and overgrowing capitalist tendency in agriculture. As agricultural policies has through significant changes, farmer's movements appeared as a response to agricultural policies. Penetration of capitalists in agriculture led to subsequent changes in state policy of agriculture and it became a technological strategy aimed at rapid agricultural growth from a question of equity and justice based on institutional strategy. Therefore, according to experts like Sudha Pai there are three major patterns of farmer's movement in India : a) anti-feudal movement demanding land in the immediate post-independence period, b) rich farmer's movements during 1970's and 1980's and c) much less movement during 1990's despite emergence of liberalisation, privatization and globalization and deepening crisis in agriculture. Globalisation made the state withdraw their responsibility towards land reforms and distribution, rural development and market regulations. The poor farmer's and landless day wage workers were facing the worse hit due to

downturn in agricultural sector. Earlier the movement by small farmer's against global capital and state policy got scattered but gradually it became intensified which has been witnessed in the recent ongoing protest against the three agricultural bills.

7.11 Summing Up

- Peasant movement was initially, movement by poor farmer's but gradually it appeared as a social movement.
- The major peasants movements are guided by secular sentiment, religious and cultural identity and some of them were guided by nationalist sentiment.
- The peasants movements in pre independence India were mostly against the oppression of the colonial rulers.
- In India post-independence mostly guided were anti farmer's policies adopted by the government.
- Several regional movements also appeared in different states against peasant exploitation, land reform, and price of agricultural product and minimum support price.
- The Nandigram and Naxalbari movements were essential regional peasants movements but they had a huge impact on national politics.
- The ongoing peasant protests against anti farmer's policy is also going to set a landmark with regard to the all India movement due to its intra state nature.

7.12 Self Assessment Questions

Now that you have read this Unit, please go through the following questions, and find out how many of them can be answered by you. If you see that you have been able to answer less than 50% of them, please go back again to the top, to the relevant portion of this Unit, and read again carefully. In case, you have any queries or if you require any clarification on this Unit, please ask your teacher during the PCP (Personal Contact Programme).

- a) Write a note on the definition of social movement.
- b) Why peasants movements is considered as a social movement?
- c) What are the major classifications of peasants movements in India?
- d) Discuss the nature of peasants movements during the colonial rule.
- e) Write a note on the Tebhaga movement.
- f) Analyse the contribution of the Teleghana movement to the peasant movements in India.
- g) Examine the contribution of regional peasants movements and their impact on National politics.
- h) Discuss the significance of Naxalbari Movement in relation to peasants movements of India.
- i) Write a detailed note of the Nandigram movement?

- j) How the anti land acquisition movement by the peasants in Singur had impact on national politics?
- k) Write a note on the ongoing protests against the peasant related bills passed in the Parliament, and its consequence in case of national and regional politics.

7.13 Suggested Reading

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Trade Union Movements

Contents

- 8.1 Objectives**
- 8.2 Introduction**
- 8.3 Importance of Trade Unions**
 - 8.3.1 Growth and Decline of Trade Unions: Some Theoretical Debates**
 - 8.3.2 Definition and Types of Trade Union Movements**
- 8.4 History of Trade Union Movements in India**
- 8.5 Different Phases of Trade Union Movements in Post-Independent India**
- 8.6 Strategy and Choice of Trade Unions in India**
- 8.7 Liberalisation, Structural Adjustment Programmes and Response of Trade Unions**
- 8.8 Summing Up**
- 8.9 Self-Assessment Questions**
- 8.10 Suggested Readings**

8.1 Objectives

The primary objective of this unit is to familiarise the students with a brief overview of trade union movements in colonial and post-colonial India. The unit starts with a brief introduction about trade union movements in India and the reasons behind its appearance with the consolidation of different types of business and labour interests and their tussles. Afterwards, a small section has been dedicated the importance of the trade union movement in India. For a more visible understanding of trade Unionism in India, some primary theoretical debates regarding the growth and decline of trade union movements have been discussed with particular reference to workers participation in the decision-making process. In the next section, the discussion focuses on definitions and types of central trade unions such as Craft Union, Trade Associations, General Union, and Staffs Unions. In the next part of that section, the discussion is concentrated on how trade unions appeared in colonial India with reference to special factory regulations. Consecutively, the next part discusses the significant patterns of the trade union movements in post-colonial India. The various strategies used by trade unions are discussed in the next section. The last section discusses the significant challenges a trade union faces in the neoliberal era, particularly the structural adjustment Programmes.

After Studying the unit, students will be able :

- a) To understand how trade Union Movements appeared in India
- b) To understand the reasons responsible for the appearance of the trade union movements in India
- c) To understand the theoretical definition and significant types of trade union movement available in India.
- d) To get a theoretical overview of the rise and fall of the trade union movement in India.
- e) To understand the patterns of the trade union movement in India and major trends of the trade union movement in India.
- f) To understand the strategies used by trade unions for materialising their demands and critical challenges faced by them in the liberalised world, especially after the adaptation of structural adjustment programme.

8.2 Introduction

Trade is one of the crucial elements of society. It performs many societal functions in its production economy, social formation, and political and governing process. A wide variety of economic activities are encapsulated in trade and business. Each activity has its own station within the sphere of business and its interest, which are called trade and business interests. Different types of business interests are sometimes characterised by conflict and discord rather than by harmony concord. The interest of traders cannot be similar to the interests of the industrialists. In terms of the scale of operation, trade and business can be classified into different types –big, medium and small scale businesses. Their interests and mode of functions also vary. It was the industrial revolution that widened the gap between rich and poor, which resulted in animosity among them. As a result, workers started to unite among themselves to protect their interests. The idea of the unification of workers has been championed by the communist and socialist thinkers who talked about the class wars between the rich and the poor.

The trade union movement in India is not a new phenomenon. Starting from Marxian to Gandhian, many thinkers adopted the violent or non-violent method to achieve their political mileage. In most developing countries, there Trade Unionism in the fields of Agriculture, Industry, Bus and Lorry, Handy Workers and Labour Edu-Professionals etc. Their Trade Unionism had a great impact on social, political and economic life India, Trade Unionism can be seen only in the field of Industrial area. Since the evolution of human society, various conflicts between workers groups and employers group have been lasted in the form of strikes, Gherao, lockout, pen down etc., against exploitation. To strengthen then in a democratic way to asset their demands over their contribution to an organisation, people organize themselves into a group and constitute a Union for their common welfare. Thus, Trade Union is an instrument of defence formed by employees against exploitation by the owners and to protect themselves from economic and social interests. This is a complex institution with numerous social, economic, political, and psychological facts. Trade Union provides services as an agent of workers and working classes at large. In this epistle, unit Trade Union Movements in India, a brief discussion on stipulations concerning Trade Unionism can be found.

8.3 Importance of Trade Unions

Trade Union is an essential tool for collective bargaining. According to Mahatma Gandhi, the Trade union movement is a reformist and economic organisation and capital and labour are equally part and parcel of an organisational set-up. The requirement of trade unionism has been felt necessary in the following manners :

- i) To provide service security to the worker's group working in various industries.
- ii) To protect the common and mutual interests of the workers.
- iii) To bring more participation in decision making.
- iv) To promote better industrial relations among workers, employers and the system group.
- v) To bring an ambience of industrial relations through collective bargaining with union leaders and representatives.

8.3.1 Growth and Decline of Trade Union: Some Theoretical Debates

The economic theories have explored the causes of growth and decline of trade union for several decades. The salient factors identified by economists that help or hinder union membership growth are economic prosperity versus depression, business cycles, business failure rates, price inflation and union wage mark-ups in a specific industry and across the economy. Notably, these studies suggest that the economic prosperity versus depression theory offers at best a modest explanation for union membership growth, although early work in the United States indicates that union membership increased in times of economic prosperity. This was probably because workers perceive lower risk of job losses and higher labour resistance cost for employers. Consequently, in an environment of rising demand for products and services and labour shortages, employers are more likely to concede to union demands, enabling them to recruit new members. There is stronger support for the relationship between union membership growth and price inflation. Workers are more likely to join unions during times of price inflation. Price rises are often accompanied by increasing production and decreasing unemployment. However, inflation is accompanied by falling production and employment, which is more likely to precipitate union membership losses. Price rises of essential items affect all workers causing widespread grievance, whereas business cycles affect certain industry sectors and groups of workers to various extents. Hence, mobilising workers around price rises probably offers greater opportunities for union revival than business cycles.

Union instrumentality effect has also been associated with membership rise, particularly Trade union's ability to secure higher wages. Not all factors that help or hinder union growth are precisely quantifiable. For instance, the socio-political climate that may result in favourable or unfavourable labour laws being enacted by the state, strategic union decisions to invest resources in rank-and-file organising and the role of the union leaders in framing issues to galvanise union membership and secure wider public support to their cause are important factors that may explain union growth or decline. However, capturing their effects through econometric modelling is fraught with problems and may yield unreliable results. Institutional theorists have long argued that the institutions which promote labour's participation in the decision-making process at various levels are important contributors to Trade union membership growth. In Western Europe, for instance, Trade unions' role in the

administration of welfare schemes and their influence in co-determination have ostensibly helped them attract and retain members. The varieties of capitalism literature also suggest that unions do better in terms of securing worker's rights. Consequently membership levels in countries such as Germany and Netherlands, which are typified as 'coordinated market economies' with well-established institutions which promote social dialogue compared with 'liberal market economies such as the United Kingdom or the United States with weak institutions. However, some of the German labour studies question the ability of institutions to effectively promote union influence and collective bargaining through national- and workplace-level institutions. While acknowledging the significance of institutions, a strand of literature examines individual determinants that may explain worker's propensity to join or leave unions. These studies, often underpinned by rational choice and interactionist/social network theories, suggest a range of individual and collective reasons why workers may or may not join unions and how the best Union could stem the flow of membership loss. The literature on comparative politics takes a different view of institutions. For instance, Peters argues that institutions by themselves do not act. The actors within those institutions and their interests shape the trajectory of outcomes. Ideologies also matter. Although ideologies are amorphous in nature, the policies that emanate from them can have a positive or detrimental impact on union growth and influence. This is evident, for instance, in Brazil, where trade unions made significant gains in collective representation and tripartite negotiations during the presidency of Lula da Silva of the Workers Party from 2003 to 2011. Likewise, the union leadership of COSATU and its alliance with the political leadership of the African National Congress resulted in the passage of the Labour Relations Act of 1995, which secured the position of labour within the national development framework.

The social movement and mobilisation theories offer alternative explanations of union growth and decline. According to these theorists, workers must have a strong sense of injustice, which is deeply felt and widely shared. However, a sense of injustice by itself is inadequate to attract them to unions or encourage participation in collective actions. Workers must attribute the blame for their grievances to an agency like employers or the state and not too ambiguous forces such as globalisation. Workers must perceive their Union to be effective in resolving their grievances. The role of union leaders in 'framing' issues is pivotal in union membership recruitment and collective actions—an area that is yet to be fully explored. At the macro level, union revival and collective actions are contingent upon a range of conditions such as the degree to which unions have access to political decision-making structures, can exploit unstable political alignments, including divisions among the ruling elite and have influential allies within the political system and in the wider civil society. For instance, the Russian labour movement appears to be a case of institutional demobilisation whereby trade unions in the Soviet era were conditioned to be subservient to the state and management of the state-owned enterprises, and any form of labour dissent was an anathema. Consequently, in the post-Soviet era, Russian trade union leaders who were historically trained in bureaucratic politics found mass mobilisation unfamiliar. The coercive form of social partnership in Russia has disabled the mobilisation capacity of trade unions who are unable to influence decision-making processes despite having access to the ruling elite.

8.3.2 Definition and Types of Trade Union Movements

According to Abdul Aziz, a Trade Union is an organised association of any kind of industrial workers, group of traders, professional or mechanical working groups formed to protect and further their rights and workers or

the group of people organised under the Union. For Aziz, there are broadly five types of Trade Unions. These Are a) Trade Associations: associations founded and sponsored by industrial trade groups, businessmen who operate in a specific industry. Their main objective is to collaborate between companies, or standardisation and associations producing services, such as conferences, networking or charitable events or associations of non-profit organisations governed by bylaws. B) Craft Union: When workers are involved in a single occupation and form a union called Craft Unions associations of employees for the primary purpose of strengthening their bargaining position and raising their claims for better working conditions. C) Industrial Labour Union: This is basically a grass root level of Trade Unionism. D) Staff Union: The combined assimilation of both the Craft Union and Industrial labour union is called the staff Union. E) General Union: It is a union that comprises workers from different industries and assembles various skill groups and some different people from different occupations. The Trade Union is an association of employees with the sole objective to strengthen their bargaining position and raise their voice for better working conditions and proper wages right.

Craft and general unions are not prominent in India, as the country 'by-passed the merchant–craftsman stage of capitalism and went straight from agriculture to factory stage of production. Unions were organised on the principle of industrial unionism in India; it is a dominant organisational form. There are two variants of industrial unionism: the region-cum-industry unions (e.g., unions of textile, plantation workers in a city or district) and national industrial unions (e.g., unions in banking, transport, ports and docks, steel, insurance industries). A secondary type of Union in India is 'enterprise' or 'plant' unions, though organised on the principle of industrial unionism. Enterprise unions arose due to the failure of political unionism. The growth of enterprise unions has been noted by many. The distinct feature of these unions is that they shun broader alliances and affiliations with political parties and concentrate on plant level issues. They enjoy greater unity and genuine dues-paying membership. Nevertheless, they lack ideological bases and are sectional in nature which weakens their power. To overcome this, some unions tried to form 'firm-level federations' (embracing unions in all units in India). There was even an attempt to form a National Convention of Unaffiliated Union Federation. Though the political unionism model faces a serious challenge from enterprise unions, it still plays a dominant role in policymaking. Trade unions in India have a long and established association with political parties, and political unionism has been a dominant feature of the trade union movement in India for several reasons. Party sponsorship of unions, splits and factions in unions because of party politics, strong links between party and union policies, leaders exchange programmes between parties and unions, the political objectives of unions, political considerations determining strategies and actions (say strikes) of unions, the relationship between union activity and political elections, the political commitment of leadership and members, the reward mechanism for union leaders (top positions in political parties or government ministries or awards or positions in consultative bodies) are some of the features of unionism in India that qualify it to be described as political unionism. The common refrain of commentators has been to decry political unionism in India. However, it is argued that while unions could stop being mere adjuncts of political parties, they cannot escape politics. The strong ties between political parties and unions have ensured that unions do not often take a stance or indulge in protest actions that would embarrass the political parties; this trait becomes more potent when the party to which the Union is connected is in power. The INTUC or BMS often remains antagonistic or opposes the struggle of other unions in order not to embarrass its political ally in

power. However, Unions in India do not operate as a part of the state apparatus or as ‘transmission belts’ of state policies. The competitive pressures in the pluralistic union movement are tremendous; rival unions would capitalise on the failures of state-patronised unions and create advantages for themselves in the situation. Unions enjoy a significant measure of independence from the state, and the political parties respect the differing stance of unions. The high incidence of industrial conflict in the system, national level agitations on policy issues like labour rights by all unions, and conflicts between the ruling party and its labour wing strongly indicate independence attitudes among the unions in India, which are to a great extent independence of the state. While as labour wings of the political parties, they are subject to some control, they have differed significantly from the party line on labour issues in recent times. Conflict with employers is still the dominant union strategy in India, in spite of scholars and firms advocating cooperation and industrial peace in the face of an economic environment of intense global competition. Cooperation is also held to be a realistic policy in these times of union retreat. However, an adversarial stance has always been the defining principle of industrial relations in India. Employers and unions have never learned to compromise or accommodate one another. India has been amongst the top five strike-prone countries in the world for the last three decades. They eschewed an adversarial stance only during crises or times of war. Since the mid-1970s, employer offensive in the form of lockouts has increased.

Trade Unions in India (K.R. Shyam Sundar)

Number of Estimated Registered Unions	1990	52,016
	2000	66,056
Number of Union Members (Thousands)	1990-1992	6,288
	1998-2000	6,369
Union Density (%)	1990-1992	23.29
	1998-2000	22.65

8.4 History of Trade Union Movements in India

In India, the Trade Union movement has been considered as the product of industrial development since the First World War 1914-18. Before that, Indian workers were poor and did not have a strong Union to fight legally against any exploiter. During that time, they used to follow the guidelines of the Government of India’s Factory Act 1881, which was not perfect for protecting the interests of employees. The system of collective bargaining was absent. In several industries, the workers went on strikes every now and then to secure wage increases. In that meantime, Labour leader Narayan Meghaji Lokk and led a labour movement, formed “Bombay Mill Hands Association” and partly succeeded in introducing a weekly holiday system for Bombay Mill Owners Association. In 1918, Trade Union Movement in India became more organised and a varieties of unions, were formed e.g. Indian Colie or Employees Association, Indian Seamen’s Union, Railway Men’s Union, Port Trust Employees Union etc. In the meantime, Gandhiji formed The Textile Labour Association in 1920 for fulfilling the demands of spinners and weavers society. Moreover, the different labour unions and their representatives from all over India met in Bombay in 1920 and established the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) led by Lala Lajpat Rai.

Gradually the Trade Union Movement in India appeared as an apostle of national figure in leading periodic strikes, Gherao, picketing, and boycotts in contrary to different work fields for prevention and settlement of industrial history. As a result, Mr N.M. Joshi, the then General Secretary of All India Trade Union Congress, moved a resolution in the Central Legislative Assembly in 1921 recommending the Government to introduce legislation for the registration and protection of the Trade Union's existence in India. Bombay Mill Owners strongly protested the resolution, and it took a long bed rest on the table of the Central Legislative Assembly. In the year 1924, many communist leaders were arrested and prosecuted against aggressive and lengthy strikes. From that period, a number of Indian working classes, including the Peasants Party, united and demanded the Indian Government through the AITUC to pass an act to protect the interests of all Indian workers group, resulting in The Trade Union Act 1926 in India. Moreover, Many Unions different situations in different times formed some of where listed as below. All India Trade Union Congress 1920, Red Trade Union Congress 1931, National Federation of Labour 1933, Red Trade Union Congress merged with AITUC in 1935, Indian Federation of Labour 1941 etc. The Eighteenth Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress led by Suresh Chandra Banerjee, President of the Congress, was held at Bombay on 28 and 29 September 1940; The session constituted a landmark in the history of the Indian Trade Union Movement in that it witnessed the restoration of complete unity in Indian Trade Union from the merging of the National Trade Union Federation in the All-India Trade Union Congress. A Tripartite Labour Conference was convened in 1942 to provide a common platform for discussion between employees and employers. Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) was formed in 1947 to settle industrial disputes in democratic and peaceful methods. Moreover, the Indian Federation of Labour was formed in 1949, the Hind Mazdoor Sabha in 1948 and the United Trade Union Congress was formed in 1949 at the national level and recognised by the Government of India to serve national and international conferences. Trade Union Movement does not delimit its operation within Bombay vicinity or Delhi. Over time, the movement spread all across the country, and convenient groups welcomed the Trade Union Movement from different parts of India. In the state of Assam, the garden men's forum and Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha, claimed for their minimum wages from their employers according to the rules of The Plantation Labour Act, 1951, which regulates the wages of tea-garden workers, their duty hours and the amenities, states that the management is supposed to provide housing, drinking water, education, health care, child care facilities, accident cover and protective equipment. The Government of Assam has fixed Rs.169 as the minimum daily wage for tea plantation workers and by asked the commissioner and secretary of labour and employment to execute the same in other fields of the industry also. But all the tea garden owners have not equally implemented the rules accordingly as the statement claims. For their negligence, a huge agitation has sustained at present. On the other side, the apex body National Council of Central Trade Union was formed in 1971 by unitis of AITUC, INTUC and HMS (Hind Mazdoor Sabha). At present, there are 14 Central Trade Unions and various registered Federations like All India Bank Employees Association, All India Mine Workers Federation etc., functioning in various fields of industries. Thus Trade Union Movement in India has developed and changed the scenario over time, coping with the situations and conflicts.

8.5 Different Phases of Trade Union Movements in Post-Independent India

According to Bhattacharjee (2001), the evolution of industrial relations, divided the era into four phases. The first phase (1950 to 1960s) was highlighted with public sector unionism dominated by political unions and ‘state pluralism.’ The second phase (the mid-1960s to 1979), which is associated with industrial stagnation, falling production, and employment associated with lower labour productivity, affected the union activity and collective bargaining. This phase saw forms of protest such as go-slow and a considerable increase in violence. The Government responded with a national emergency by suspending the right to strike. The third phase (1980-1991), which is known for the partial industrial and import deregulation, financial liberalisation, exchange rate policy and export incentives accompanied by failure of multiple governments, led to structural adjustment. The 1982 amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act required the employers employing more than 100 employees (reduced from more than 300) to take permission from the Government to lay off and retrench workers. The fourth phase, which is the era of liberalisation (1992-2008), was achieved by devaluing the rupee, lowering the tariff, reducing import quota, and leading to the growth of low-wage jobs and casual and contract workers. Trade unions were considered as representing a declining ‘sectional interest group’ while the Government tried to uphold consumer interest over union rights. The fifth phase of industrial relations (2008-2017), which features the growth of globalised transnational organisations and boom in the service economy, was marred by the recession. This has forced the trade unions to cooperate with the employers who were adopting innovative human resource policies and practices with the individualisation of employment relations. While the trade unions experienced the bottom low as marginalised by the growth of the informal sector and lack of strategy, the I.T. and ITES (I.T. Enabled Services) industries saw the dawn of a new form of unionism.

8.6 Strategy and Choice of Trade Unions in India

Trade unions in India have not changed their strategy and approach to managing work relations and employer relations. Despite the massive portion of the labour force (around 92%) still employed in the unorganised sectors, the unions have not put enough endeavour to organise the casual and contract labour. All available evidence points to the failure of trade unions to protect the interest of the organised sector leading to emaciated labour. After liberalisation, the rate of economic growth increased significantly despite the labour market witnessing a steady slowdown in the rate of employment generation in India, which declined from 2% in 1961-80 to around 1% in 1990-2000. There is also a huge difference among the states in India in terms of labour market flexibility. Unionism in India is in decline. The strikes were recorded high during 1961-74 at all India levels. However, the post-liberalisation era has also experienced a number of nationwide strikes, demonstrations and struggles protesting against neo-liberal policies of the Government. Nevertheless, most of them were in public sector units and were successful. The docile status of a trade union is attributed to the introduction of new labour practices such as recruitment-freeze, outsourcing, increasing use of contract workers, freedom to hire and fire, liberty to close industrial undertakings, soft labour inspection system, permissiveness to introduce labour-saving technologies, repeal of legal provisions regarding bonus, voluntary retirement schemes—VRS, and privatisation of non-viable

public enterprises. Industries started to increasingly utilise contract workers both in perennial and non-perennial work. They utilise contract labour not only for flexibility but also for reducing production costs. Trade Union Act, 1926 provides for union registration only, whereas the law is silent about the process of union recognition and collective bargaining. Due to no clear rule regarding union recognition in India, the collective bargaining institutions are relatively weak. Today's trade union also shows a new trend of association and international interaction. Union for Information Technology and Enabled Services (UNITES) is one of the earliest trade unions in India in the I.T. sector to fight against the overnight layoff by employers. Using the lenses of Boxall and Haynes (1997), the above unions can also be categorised into groups based on their strategic response. Trade Unions such as AICCTU, AITUC, AIUTUC or TUCC mostly follow the paper tiger unionism as their way of operation is rooted in adversarial, protest, strike and revolutionary changes. Though CITU has a similar approach, it can be termed to be exhibiting traditional unionism as benefits may be given to them for their organising activities. INTUC, one of the oldest unions in India, has not performed much in revitalising itself though they try to balance between cooperation and confrontation. INTUC follows consultancy unionism. BMS and HMS can be regarded to adopt partnership unionism as these unions have moved beyond the dispute mechanism and focus on market-relevant factors such as industrial democracy, productivity, consumer interest, workers' education and the cooperative movement. HMS is the Union that follows a socialist attitude and is not affiliated with any political party. Although other unions have taken up workers education as an initiative, it is there in the central agenda for HMS, which believes in a tripartite relationship and regularly conducts vocational and sensitisation workshops for trade union activists and members. The other major trade union which has grown as a social movement is the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA). SEWA has a membership of 1.3 million. The movement is to empower self-employed women and organise themselves for full employment. This movement has completely changed the direction of unionism and can be a lesson for the other unions struggling for membership. SEWA approaches development with two goals—Full employment and Self-Reliance.

8.7 Liberalisation, Structural Adjustment Programmes and Response of Trade Unions

As per the McKinsey report, India's economy grew at an average of about 6.6% per year between 2011 and 2017. Multiple stresses and strains, such as a rising fiscal deficit, high consumer inflation, the collapse of the mining sector, and a logjam in infrastructure projects, led to a macroeconomic slowdown from 2011 to 2013, as well as because of 2008 recession when GDP growth fell to an average of 5.6% per year. From 2013 to 2017, growth recovered to 6.9% per year, making India one of the fastest-emerging economies globally. According to the annual surveys, India's total number of jobs from 2011 to 2015 grew by about seven million, from 455 million to 462 million. However, the apparent sluggishness in job creation disguises significant structural change: agricultural employment fell by 26 million, and non-farm employment rose by 33 million, or by more than eight million jobs a year. The pace of non-farm job creation dipped during the economic slowdown years of 2011 to 2013 to as low as eleven million and rose sharply to 22 million during the following two years. Labour moved out of agriculture into construction, trade and hospitality, and transport, the mainstays of the non-farm labour market in many

developing countries; these three sectors generated 36 million jobs from 2011 to 2015. By contrast, mining and manufacturing lost jobs during the slowdown, although manufacturing jobs seem to have grown between 2013 and 2015. As a major drive for bringing structural changes to the labour reform, the Government of India has already proposed the 'Industrial Relations Code' bill in 2015. The key changes suggested in this bill include allowing companies employing up to 300 workers (increased from 100) to lay off workers without any government permission. All the central trade unions unanimously opposed to the proposal as 85% of the companies will be thrown out of the ambit of the act (currently covered under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947), enabling employers to hire and fire employees at will. The draft bill proposed to recognise the trade union and provide the status of 'sole negotiating agent' if the Union secures 51% or more votes. Because of the pressure from the trade union, the bill was also revised to include all the unions securing more than 15% votes to have their representative on the negotiating board in the absence of a two-third majority with any trade union at the time of voting. Overall, the trade unions have taken the stand of confrontation and are not found to be mature enough to protect the employment of their members and regulate the working conditions.

8.8 Summing Up

- Trade Union Movement was initially started by poor factory workers, but it appeared as a social movement over time.
- The trade union movement was not entirely a new phenomenon; however, the industrial revolution played a role as a catalyst in the entire process.
- Although the nature of the trade union movement is not unilateral the primary visible types of trade union movements in India have been identified and discussed for proper understanding.
- The worker's movement in pre-independence India was mainly against the oppression of the new factory regulations introduced by the British rulers.
- In post-independence India, the patterns of trade union movement varied.
- The tools and strategies of the trade union movement also played an important role and varied a lot.
- Due to the advent of globalisation and the adaptation of structural adjustment programmes trade union movements faced a drastic challenge in the neo-liberal world.

8.9 Self-Assessment Questions

Now that you have read this unit, please go through the following questions, and find out how many of them can be answered by you. If you see that you have been able to answer less than 50% of them, please go back again to the top, to the relevant portion of this unit, and read again carefully. If you have any queries or require any clarification on this unit, please ask your teacher during the PCP (Personal Contact Programme).

- a) How do you define trade Union Movements?
- b) Discuss in details the major types of trade Union movements in India.

- c) What are the primary reasons for the emergence of the trade union movement in India?
- d) Write a brief note on the outline of trade union movements in colonial India.
- e) Analyse the significant patterns of the trade union movement in post-independence India.
- f) Write a note on strategies of trade union movement used by leaders of trade unions to materialise their demands.
- g) Discuss the significant challenges faced by trade Union Movements in the globalised world
- h) Discuss the primary theoretical debates regarding the rise and fall of trade Union Movements in India.

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