

## Dalit Movements:

- **Who is a Dalit?** - Dalits are those groups of people who have faced social discrimination including the untouchability. They largely belong to the economically disadvantaged groups of our society. They are placed in the Scheduled Caste categories in our constitution.
- **Who coined the term?** - The category of Dalits was first used by **Jyotiba Phule** in the nineteenth century. It was first popularly used by the Dalit Panther in the 1970s.
- **Objectives of the movement:** Dalit movement raises issues of caste-based discrimination and economic inequality. It involves a struggle for social justice and other issues like implementation of the reservation policy, promotion in the job, denial of democratic rights like casting of votes.
- **Classification of movements:** **Ghanshyam Shah** classifies the Dalit movements into **reformative** and **alternative movements**. The former tries to reform the caste system to solve the problem of untouchability. The alternative movement attempts to create an alternative socio-cultural structure by conversion to some other religion or by acquiring education, economic status, and political power.
- **Phases of the movement:**
  - **Phase I:** Implementation of the universal adult franchise, reservation in educational and political institutions, and in jobs for the Scheduled Castes led to politicization of Dalits which made them conscious of their rights.
  - **Phase II:** This phase was marked by the combination of class and caste struggles. An educated group of Dalits like young Dalit writers and poets, set up an organization known as Dalit Panther in 1972 which aimed at rejecting the caste system, as it was based on the Brahminical Hinduism.
  - **Phase III:** This phase during 1990s saw the proliferation of Dalit organizations in different states like BSP in Uttar Pradesh, RPI in Maharashtra etc. These organisations aimed to mobilize the majority other sections of the society, the Bahujan Samaj, consisting of the Dalits, backward class and religious minorities which excluded the high castes like Brahmans, Rajputs, and Banias.
  - **Phase IV:** According to **Sudha Pai**, an analysis of the Dalit movement in the country, in **contemporary times**, reveals a paradox. On the one hand, Dalit parties are in electoral decline as sections of the Dalits have moved away to non-Dalit parties, impacting the unity and strength of the Dalit movement. On the other hand, Dalit assertion remains strong, as seen from the strident reaction to atrocities in recent years and emergence of organizations/movements led by new Dalit leaders, such as the Bhim Army in Uttar Pradesh (UP) by Chandrasekhar Azad etc.
- **Challenges for the movement:** As **Gail Omvedt (1976)** perceptibly observes, the autonomous Dalit movement had to engage with three forces in colonial society:
  - It developed in opposition to the socially and culturally pervasive and historically deep-rooted hegemony of Brahminical Hinduism.
  - It had to contend with the hegemony of the nationalist movement, which under the leadership of the Congress, strove to take over the agendas of several subaltern movements while restraining their democratic and egalitarian potential.

- It had to face a difficult relationship with the communist movement.
- **Conclusion:** Dalit Movement, a social revolution aimed for social change, replacing the age old hierarchical Indian society, based on the democratic ideals of liberty, equality, and social justice, has begun much earlier, became intense in the 1970s and began to deem at present. One reason behind this, as pointed out by **Uma Chakraborty**, is that the academicians are not paying much attention. Another vital issue is that the movement lack participation from all the communities of Dalits. For instance, in Maharashtra, the Mahar dominated the movement. The other Dalit communities like the Mangs, Chamars were not actively involved in the Movement.

## Women's movement

- **Definition:** Women's movement can be defined as 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. It comprises all the forms and processes of women's upsurge and assertion, including their fights alongside of men as well as their more obviously 'anti-patriarchal struggles with men.
- **Objective:** The women's movement, like other social movements, brings about or intends to bring about a change in the existing social structure. The social change that results from a movement may be seen first in terms of the changes in the positions of the concerned section of a movement and secondly in terms of their impact on the wider society.
- **Phases of movement:**
  - **19<sup>th</sup> century:** This phase had immense contribution towards women's movement in India. Though the movement in this era was limited in terms of lack of mobilization of women, they targeted sati system, permitting widow remarriage, abolishing child marriage, promotion of education of girls etc. Leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar etc., played a key role.
  - **Freedom struggle:** Aparna Basu says that women were accepted in India's freedom struggle as political comrades and given equal opportunities for participation. This paved the way for involvement of women in the wider sphere of social, political, and economic life in future.
  - **Post-Independence:** Peasant movements, tribal movements, student's movements etc. witnessed the participation of women. **Illena Sen** says that women in these movements do not strive for autonomous or independent articulation of only their women specific demands. At the same time, their articulation of demands and issues exerts a pressure on their movements to take cognizance of the women in their mass base.
  - **Post 1970's:** During this period, participation of women further increased as they went to the forefront of all major socio-economic, political, and related environmental issues. For ex., Chipko Movement, Anti Dowry Movement, Anti Rape Movement etc.

- The **contemporary women's movement** in India is characterized by decentralized structure and multiple arenas of interaction. Women's movement is also widening its domain and getting involved with issues related to environment, population, child rights, globalization, marketisation etc.
- **Conclusion:** Women's mobilizations of the past proved their intended organized actions (as in the case of anti-arrack, anti-price rise, Chipko etc.) always bring about wider social repercussions. Participating in such mobilizations definitely gives the women of the community a social identity. And this social identity of course makes way for their empowerment. Their further empowerment is realized through the affirmative actions taken by the state as well as the civil society organizations in response to their efforts and capacity to initiate collective action. Despite the dramatic accomplishments of the women's movement, gender equality has not yet been achieved. **Even contemporary feminism has over time tended to follow the perspective of the upper or middle class from which it is largely drawn and this trend gets reflected even in #Metoo movement.**

#### **Environmental movement:**

- **Definition:** Environmental movement is a type of social movement that involves an array of individuals, groups and coalitions that perceive a common interest in environmental protection and act to bring about changes in environmental policies and practices.
- **Origin of Environmental Movements in India:** The genesis of concern for environmental protection in India, can be traced back to the early twentieth century when people protested against the commercialization of forest resources during the British colonial period. However, it was only in the 1970s a coherent and relatively organized awareness of the ecological impact of state-monolithic development process started to develop, to grow into a fully-fledged understanding of the limited nature of natural resources and to prevent the depletion of natural resources.
- **Participation in the movement:** The participants of these movements in North are the middle class and upper-class people, who have concern for the nature. But in the south the protesters are generally the marginal population – hill peasants, tribal communities, fishermen and other underprivileged people. The examples could be taken as Chipko, N.B.A., Mitti Bachao Andolan, Koel-Karo Andolan etc. That is why the environmentalism of the North is refereed as “**full stomach**” **environmentalism** and the environmentalism of the south is called as “**empty – belly**” **environmentalism**.
- **Reasons for the Emergence of Environmental Movements in India:** Major reasons of the emergence of environmental movements in India have been discussed by Aviram Sharma, which include reasons such as
  - **control over natural resources.**
  - **False developmental policies of the government.**
  - **Socioeconomic reasons.**
  - **Environmental degradation/ destruction.**
  - **Spread of environmental awareness and media.**

- **Ideological Trends in Indian Environmentalism:** Gadgil, Madhav and Guha Ramchandra have identified five broad strands within the environmental movements in India. These strands include:
  - **Crusading Gandhians:** They emphasize on the moral necessity to restrain overuse and ensure justice to the poor and marginalised.
  - **Ecological Marxists:** They see the problem in political and economic terms, arguing that it is the unequal access to resources, rather than the question of values, which better explains the patterns and processes of environmental degradation in India.
  - **Appropriate Technology:** They focus on practicing a set of socio-technical alternatives to the centralizing and environmentally degrading technologies presently in operation.
  - **Wilderness Enthusiasts:** They emphasize the scientific rhetoric of biological diversity and the moral arguments in favour of 'species equality' in pursuit of a more extensive system of parks and sanctuaries and a total ban on human activity in protected areas.
  - **Scientific Conservation:** Scientific conservationists are concerned with efficiency and management.
- **Conclusion:** Thus, the nature-based conflicts, the false developmental policies of the government, the marginalization of the tribal and other underprivileged groups and the environmental degradation are the root causes of emergence of environmental movements in India.

#### Farmers movement:

- **Agrarian movements** in India can be broadly classified into two main categories. Peasant Movements in India:
  - **Peasant movements:** The first category includes the movements related to poor, small and marginal agriculturists whose economic condition and survival is mainly attached to agriculture.
  - **Farmers movement:** The second category includes those of more affluent agriculturists who can produce sufficient surplus from the agriculture.
- In India, there is present **multiple modes of production**. In some pockets of the country there are **peasants, medium farmers, small and marginalised farmers** who do not make a huge margin of profit from land and **landless peasants**.
- **Peasant movement during British Period**
  - British introduced the **exploitative Land Tenure System** with Ryotwari system in western and southern India and Zamindari system in eastern and northern India. These two distinctive Systems of Land Tenure System gave way to the rise of feudal Lords, sub feudal Lords, there by giving rise to the evolution of large body of leisure class living on the exploitation of peasants in India.
  - Exploitative taxation and introduction of cash crops completely paralysed subsistence production. Peasants were exploited by both Landlords and exploitative market of British. Hence movement in diff parts of country Sanyasi Vidroh, Indigo

Movement, Champaran Movement, Bardoli Movement, Eka Movement, Moplah Rebellion, Birsa Munda Movement.

- Peasant movement offered platform for the **rise of localised leadership** in various parts of the country which became the precursor to the national movement in India.
- **Kisan Sabha Movement: AR Desai** considers that this movement is originally initiated by middle peasants and subsequently received ideological support from middle-class youth and finally when this movement acquired a nationalistic appeal several peasants joined the movement as a result of which class movement got converted into mass movement.
- **Post-Independence Agrarian movement:**
  - After India's independence peasant movement has gone to the state of oblivion. The factors responsible for that can be attributed to rural development programme introduced by the state.
  - By cooperative movements small and marginal farmers in India liberated themselves from historical exploitation, gather self-confidence and improved their quality of life. This view was contradicted by Marxist scholar **Utsa Patnaik**. She said all the big farmers are hijacking all the institutionalised benefits in their own favour. There is consolidation of capitalism in Punjab and Haryana.
- **Contemporary Agrarian movements:** This period saw the **rise of New Farmers movement** with following characteristics:
  - These farmers' movements do not believe in romanticising their lifestyle or social life.
  - These movements believed in the principle of going beyond locality. It is nothing but going beyond nation/nationality to internationalism.
  - They believed in united or undifferentiated struggle.
  - Gail Omvedt argues that the new farmer's movement believed in the new form of exploitation.
  - The demands of the farmers' movement include issues like remunerative prices, writing off loans, anti-government policy of procurement, levy policy, liberalisation etc. Other than these economic issues, the farmers' movement also focused on social issues.

Thus, agrarian movement did bring about a paradigm shift in the discourse, analysis and perception about farmers in India. It made the policy makers to address the deep-rooted crisis of agriculture as well as agrarian classes in India. It has also helped the farmers to be a part of international movement against such issues as globalisation, imperialism and capitalism.