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## **UNIT 8      CASE STUDIES ON DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S STRUGGLE**

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### **Structures**

- 8.0      Learning Outcome
- 8.1      Introduction
- 8.2      Civil Society: The Seed Bed of People’s Struggles
- 8.3      A Case Study of Right to Information
- 8.4      The Chilka Movement: A Case Study
- 8.5      An Initiative in Local Development
- 8.6      Identification of Causes of People’s Struggles
- 8.7      Conclusion
- 8.8      Key Concepts
- 8.9      References and Further Reading
- 8.10     Activity

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### **8.0      LEARNING OUTCOME**

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After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the significance of people’s struggles for public administrative studies
- Discuss the role of civil society movements that play a significant role in giving the citizens an enforceable right to question, examine, audit, review and assess the government decisions; and
- Identify the factors underlying the insensitivity of the government agencies towards the marginalised and poor sections of the society, which, many a time, give rise to people’s struggles.

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### **8.1      INTRODUCTION**

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The Constitution of India envisages a just and egalitarian socio-economic, political and cultural environment for the people of the country. The ideals of ‘economic equity’, ‘social justice’, ‘gender sensitivity’, ‘citizens’ participation’, ‘autonomy’, ‘and flexibility’ have been the highlights of all our development programmes. Yet, problems such as poverty, malnutrition, lopsided agricultural development, unemployment, rural-urban migration etc. have not been addressed to a satisfactory extent. The maladies of social and economic deprivation have a tendency to manifest themselves in people’s movements for equality and justice. These could be within the parameters laid down by the Constitution or could even take extra-constitutional forms such as secessionist movements for a separate state or naxalite movement for social justice and autonomy. This Unit will explain the role and relevance of people’s struggles. It will discuss the causes and reasons that go into perpetuating these struggles and their significance for public administrative studies. These struggles draw sustenance from the larger civil society; the role that the civil society movements play to give the citizens an enforceable right to question, examine, audit, review and assess the government decisions will be analysed in this Unit. A few Case Studies that the Unit takes up will explain the

pursuance of ideals of equity, social justice, fairness and participation by the people's struggles in India.

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## **8.2 CIVIL SOCIETY: THE SEED BED OF PEOPLE'S STRUGGLES**

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Story of people's struggle against the State or any regime is as old as the story of civilisation itself. These days, of course, a new name has emerged in the form of civil society to support the cause of the common people. The world of economic liberalisation has conceptualised this new phenomenon as a separate sector which is different from the State and market sectors. Civil society or the third sector organisations work on the premise that effective governance can take place only if State and society initiate, act and function democratically. Their tools of functioning are autonomy, publicity, accessibility, participation and the Rule of Law.

Since the State and civil society share the ideals of universal freedom and universal rights, the moment, the State deviates from its goals, a space is created for the civil society organisations to fill the gap by involving the people. After decades of lying in the dusty quarters of history, the idea of civil society re-emerged in the aftermath of communist collapse. The civil society was projected as a positive ideal to solve all problems arising from resentment against the State, the mediating institutions and the market. People's movements got a fresh impetus as they began to root themselves in the new-founded goals of civil society. It is sometimes synonymously used with social movements.

Civil society organisations articulate the issues such as survival of the marginalised sections, unequal distribution of developmental benefits, struggle for sustainable development and degree of people's participation in the matters of governance. It is very important here to understand the relevance of people's struggles to the study and analysis of public administration. The governance structures and processes have to be encompassing. They must include the institutional as well as non-institutional demands of the system in the policies.

Civil society has been described as the locus of the light side of collective action of social movements (Cohen and Arato, 1994). A social movement is the action, both culturally oriented and socially conflictual of a social class defined by its position of domination or dependency in the mode of appropriation of historicity of the cultural models of investment, knowledge, morally toward which the social movement itself is oriented social movement cannot occur pure and simple. Either it tends to be incorporated into the political system as a force applying institutional pressure and into the State whose intervention it determines. All movements endeavour to create institutions, and institutional crisis in turn gives birth to movements.

The language of civil society was picked up by people's movements in large part of the world. Some trace them to the Chinese students agitation in Tiananmen Square. Soon civil society became a kind of aspirational shorthand for ideas of equity, participation and public fairness. In South East Asia, it has been used by the advocates of democracy and civil rights. In Latin America, the social movements have used civil society ideas for seeking transformation into a new egalitarian and participatory socio-political order (Elliott, 2003).

In the Middle East, it has been appropriated by intellectuals opposing repressive regimes. In Africa, analysts have noted the capacity of peasants to subvert or defy the predatory State through diverse ways of 'invisible government', embedded in kinship, and rituals. Global society theorists have expressed their frustrations with governments throughout the world by adopting people-centred development as their answer to the State's failure to bring about social and economic transformation (*ibid*). Let us now discuss a few cases to see how the people through various collective initiatives have made a difference to governmental decisions. Unit 19 of this Course will discuss this issue further.

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### 8.3 A CASE STUDY OF RIGHT TO INFORMATION

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Information is the vehicle for governance. The greater the access of citizens to information, the greater would be the responsiveness of the government. Information is the national resource without which people cannot exercise their rights and responsibilities. They would also not be able to participate adequately in the government schemes/programmes if there is no unbiased flow of information. Since the public is the recipient of the benefits accruing from the various government programmes; and since the government institutions are meant for the public, it is the duty of the government to make the people informed regarding their ongoing programmes.

The movement for Right to Information was started on the premise that information is power and government staff at all levels tries to withhold information to enhance its scope for control and patronage as well as to carry on its arbitrary, corrupt and unaccountable exercise of authority. Therefore, the safeguards against corruption are simplified rules and regulations/procedures, total transparency and proactive dissemination of information. Since its inception, the Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Samiti (MKSS) has been involved in the struggle of the poor, mainly with issues related to land and wages, women's rights, prices and sectarian violence. MKSS was formally registered in May 1990. The members of this organisation primarily are landless workers and marginal peasants belonging to lower socio-economic strata of the society.

It was the winter of 1994 when MKSS took up a new challenge i.e., fight against corruption through *jan sunwai* or public hearings. Despite being of local character, the movement shook the very bases of the traditional monopoly, arbitrariness and corruption in the State bureaucracy. The organisation demanded the copies of all documents related to public works completed and being carried out for a people's audit. These documents, that is, muster roll, bills and vouchers related to the public works were the foremost of its demands.

During the *jan sunwai*, the details of the works and the procedures involved in that were read out and explained before the public. This revealed the extent of misappropriation of materials, fudged records and forged muster rolls. Earlier, in the absence of access to hard facts, people were unable to take any corrective or preventive measures. In this *sunwai*, common people were made to participate and speak out fearlessly regarding corruption while government officials were asked to defend themselves. In this process, two demands were made. *One*, citizens should have the right to make copies of bills, vouchers, muster rolls etc. related to the schemes undertaken by the government in their villages. *Second*, funds misappropriated should be immediately recovered and spent for the purpose they were released.

At the beginning, the government officials opposed these demands and obstructed *jan sunwai* proceedings in every possible manner. For instance, the administration in the four districts in the state of Rajasthan where *jan sunwai* was organised refused to register criminal cases against the corrupt officials against whom evidence of corruption had been gathered during the public hearings.

Despite the negative approach of the administration, the public hearings continued and got a huge support from the local people and also from the administrators having progressive attitude within and outside the government. Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, a training Institute for higher civil servants, organised a national seminar for officials and activists with a focus on Right to Information.

It was April 5, 1995, when the Chief Minister of Rajasthan announced in the Vidhan Sabha that his government would be the first in the country to confer on every citizen the 'right' to get photocopies of all official documents related to local development works. However, even after one year of this announcement, the Chief Minister's assurance was not carried out by the administration. MKSS accusing the Chief Minister, launched a *dharna* in a small town called Beawar to urge the government to convert the promise into action either by issuing administrative order or passing a Bill in the state legislature.

The government on the first day of *dharna*, issued an order allowing citizens the 'right' to inspect the documents by paying a nominal fee but not to obtain photocopies or certified copies of the documents. MKSS did not accept it calling the order 'toothless and diversionary' because, in the absence of legally valid copies, no action could be taken against the corrupt officials. Even police would not lodge a complaint against those corrupt officials. *Dharna* by the MKSS thus continued. A delegation also met the Chief Minister at the Jawaja village, where he verbally accepted the demand, but refused to give any written instructions till the elections were over.

With each passing day of *dharna*, an unprecedented upsurge of local people, who were mostly local artisans, labourers and middle class groups, was witnessed. In fact, most of the participants were illiterate but aware about the functioning of the government and wise enough to know the cause of *dharna* that was for the Right to Information, one of the important edifices for the better functioning of the democracy. Along with moral and physical support of the local people, donations in cash and kind poured in every day. This was in the form of vegetables, milk, snacks of wheat from farmers, tents and volunteers to cook and serve cold water. What was significant was the fact that thousands of people listened to speeches, shouted slogans, sang songs and participated in rallies. It got support from the people hailing from all walks of life, from shopkeepers to professionals, daily wage labourers to educated people, from right wing politicians to left front leaders, from trade unions to several non-governmental organisations. Even the mainstream media was also very sympathetic.

As a result, an official press note was issued by the Rajasthan government saying that the State government had taken a decision to establish a committee which would give a practical shape to the assurance given by the Chief Minister. Even after one year, despite several meetings with the officials and activists, no concrete decisions were taken. Again, in the month of May 1997, a *dharna* was started at Jaipur. After 52 days of *dharna*, the Deputy Chief Minister announced that six months earlier, the state government had notified the right to receive photocopies of the documents related to local government. But, the fact was that this 'order' related to transparency had been kept secret. However,

it was welcomed as a milestone as far as the Right to Information was concerned, because for the first time, the government recognised the legal entitlement of citizens to obtain copies of the documents.

In 1999, the Rajasthan government announced that it was committed to bring about a powerful bill on the Right to Information. The government initiated consultations with MKSS and other NGOs to prepare a draft bill for this purpose. Ultimately, the draft bill that came through a result of the struggle by MKSS, along with the citizens' groups and imminent individuals has now been passed by the Parliament. The act provides for a broad definition of 'information', proactive disclosure, and appointment of Public Information Officers. You will learn more on Right to Information Act in Course (013) on Public Systems Management.

The institution of governance is suffering from pervasive and systematic corruption that erodes people's faith in the system. It hinders the creation of equity, justice, development, and social order so essential in the making of a just society. The civil society movement like the MKSS plays a significant role to give citizens the right to access information, which is legitimately theirs. It also ensures that these are consistent with the principles of public interest, probity and justice and expand citizens' democratic space by giving them an opportunity to participate in the political process with full capacity.

This type of movement enhances the scope and status of participatory democracy that, among other things, checks the corruption and arbitrary exercise of State power. It helps to mobilise people in an effective manner in order to put their demands before the government and get the effective results. In a sense, these people's movements duly sanction the social audit of the development programmes run by the government.

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## **8.4 THE CHILKA MOVEMENT: A CASE STUDY**

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Sporadic protests against the commercialisation of livelihood resources by the poor and marginal sections of the society is not new in India. During the colonial regime, farmers and tribals were seen mobilising against the State interventions in the customary practices of the people. What is new in this struggle is the accent on articulation of the issues viz., survival of the marginalised, unequal distribution of developmental benefits, struggle for sustainable development and extent of people's participation in decision-making. The recent people's movements have also given the people new identities - the way they would like to live and be governed. In the process, such movements have established a relationship between the government and the governed, widened the scope of Right to Life that has included, among other, the environmental issues. The present case study of 'Chilka Movement' reflects the mode and mechanism of struggle on the vital issues of common concern.

During the early 1990s, a movement called 'Chilka Bachao' was started by the fishermen who resisted the implementation of Integrated Shrimp Farm Project (ISFP) in their area. It was perceived as a threat to the livelihood of fishermen residing around the lake. The movement got active support from students, intellectuals and human rights activists. Before going into the nature of this 'Chilka Bachao Aandolan', let us have a look at the socio-economic profile of the Chilka region. The fishing ground has been divided into five types: 'Jano', 'Khati', 'Bahan', 'Dian' and 'Uthapani'. The fishing practices of the fishermen have been based upon the castes. The 'Keuta' caste form 68 per cent of the

fishermen who use the fish with nets. During British period, Chilka Lake was in the hands of the kings of 'Parikuda' and 'Khalikata'. The fishermen had to pay royalty to the king for access to the lake in the 1920s. The first co-operative society namely the Balugaon Fishermen Co-operative Store having 24 members was established in order to protect the interest of fishermen and to keep the encroachers outside Balugaon in Puri District. In 1953, after the abolition of the princely states, it came under the control of the Government of Orissa. Under their rule, the fisheries were leased out to fishermen by the Anchal Adhikari (circle officer) through open auction. This practice continued till 1959 when the Central Cooperative Marketing Society was established. It was an apex body to lease the fisheries from the government and further sublease them to the primary fishermen cooperative groups. Thus, this system was protective of the fishing rights of the fishermen. The resources that were not taken on lease by the Central Society were auctioned by the tehsildar (a block level official). The Chilka Reorganisation Scheme made a clear distinction between fishermen and non-fishermen.

In 1991, the Government of Orissa issued an order that divided the fisheries in Chilka into two categories – 'capture' and 'culture'. Capture rights were related to fishermen although culturing was meant for non-fishermen and villagers who were not the members of primary corporative societies. Since the government's order did not provide guidelines for the operation of 'capture' and 'culture', the discretionary power was used by the collector. So, the policy further created confusion among the fishermen. The Central Society had limited powers, hanging between Revenue Department and the Primary Societies. Most Primary Societies bypassed the Central Society and marketed directly through commission agents. Thus, the purpose of a dual co-operative structure was rather defective.

Since 1980s, the Chilka Lake has been witnessing subletting of leased out fisheries of the Central and Primary Societies and illegal encroachment by outsiders. The large-scale business of prawn culture has threatened the livelihood of traditional fishermen as well as the eco-system of the Lake. More than thousands of fishermen and non-fishermen have lost their livelihood. Against this backdrop, the Government of Orissa entered into an agreement with the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) for a joint Semi-intensive Prawn Culture Project – Integrated Shrimp Farm Project (ISFP) possessing around 400 hectares of Chilka land, it was clearly not welcomed by the people.

The villagers residing around the ISFP initially knew about the Project but not so much about its ill effects, but a few educated people of these villages were skeptical about the Project. Later, Meet the Students (MTS) type of informal groups of students from Utkal University; Bhubaneswar took an intense drive to make the villagers aware. The young people of MTS made the people conscious of the injustices perpetrated on them by society and the State. Later, a state level students' forum named Krantadarshi Yuva Sangha (KYS) was formed to mobilise youth against the ISFP.

In August 1991, a meeting of intellectuals was convened in Bhubneswar. Following which, Chilka Suraksha Parishad (CSP) was formed and assigned the task of mobilising public opinion. In fact, the forum acted as a think tank of Oriya society to debate and discuss the Chilka issues. Later, the students became convinced about the fact that local organisations could play an effective role against the Project. They realised that their interactions and awareness levels would help people resist the Project more effectively. Keeping this in mind, they decided to involve Chilka Matsyajibi Mahasangha (CMM), an organisation of 122 revenue villages in Chilka that works to protect the interest of

fishermen. In January 1992, the Chilka Bachao Andolan was started as an extension of CMM.

Many civil society organisations viz., Ganatantrik Adhikar Suraksha Sangathan (GASS) and Orissa Krushak Mahasangh (OKM) supported the Chilka Bachao Andolan. These organisations highlighted the environmental hazards of the Project and forced the government to undertake a study to assess the environmental impact of ISFP on the villagers and adjacent areas. It also became instrumental in attracting the attention of the international community to the environmental issues and also demanded that Chilka Lake should be declared an endangered wetland and be protected. All civil society organisations along with affected people raised many economic, social, legal and environmental concerns that can be summarised as follows:

- The residents of 26 villages had been traditionally using the land allotted to ISFP for harvesting prawn.
- There was a threat of water logging due to the construction of the embankment on the Bhubania canal that forms the outlet of the Lake to sea.
- During breeding season, the embankment would obstruct the movement of the fish and prawn through the brackish water. It would hamper the natural generation of prawn.
- The availability of fish in the future would be badly affected due to the pollution caused by protein feed chemicals and pesticides.
- The ISFP had started without a proper Environment Impact Assessment. Before the allotment of the land to the ISFP, it was not listed under property that could be leased. However, at the time of allotment of the land to the Project, government illegally classified it as community pastureland.

The main focus of this movement was not the Tata Project but the development and resource use of a vulnerable area. The movement attacked the government on its policy towards Chilka and the affected people. The moot point of this movement was to highlight the issues of governance like:

- To whom does Chilka Lake belong, the people or the State?
- If big business houses enter the fishing field, what would be the fate of the fishermen who depend for their livelihoods on Chilka?
- What should be the priority of the State in ensuring the livelihood of the poor?

The issues raised by the Chilka people directly related to the notion of governance. It helped the State in redefining the priorities during formulation and execution of the development objectives. It also highlighted the relationship between State and the poor. This idea of governance ultimately revealed the flaws in the ways of decision making, priorities and their implementation. It was realised that the government must correct its decision making processes in the interest of the poor and marginalised sections of the State.

This case study shows that collective actions come in handy when the State ignores important issues. Lacklustre approach or general insensitivity of the government and international agencies towards the marginalised and poor sections give rise to these types

of people's struggles. The role of civil society, in such situations, when the State fails to fulfil its duties for which it exists, is to extend support to the hapless poor in their struggle to correct the State's machinery. The present decade, with Market vs. State as a backdrop, there are bound to be more conflicts between the State and its citizens. In this context, the Chilka movement is an eye opener for both the people and the government. It suggests that it is possible to take sufficient corrective measures, hold intensive discussions at the public forums, ensure total transparency, and place the people at centre of development through debate and dialogue before initiating or commercialising any development programmes.

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## 8.5 AN INITIATIVE IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

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Of all the non-governmental organisations working for the upliftment of marginalised masses located in underdeveloped regions, the role and approach of the *Harijan Adivasi Rachnatamak Sangh* has been quite remarkable. Moved by the death of a large number of people during the drought of 1967, Shri Surendra Pathak started this organisation with the sole aim of bringing about overall improvement in the conditions of living of Harijans and Adivasis residing in Bankebazaar Block of Gaya District of Bihar. Since then, under the guidance of Shri Pathak, the Sangh has been concentrating on the overall growth and development of these people. Through its innovative and well-analysed approach, the Sangh has brought about a remarkable change in the life of its target groups. Starting from scratch, by his sheer dint of dedication, Pathak has been able to form a dedicated team of skilled and unskilled local youth, who are voluntarily devoting their energies with a missionary zeal for the betterment of their own people in the area.

The basic approach of this organisation is 'self-help', and the belief in the dictum of 'local problem: local solution'. On these principles, the Sangh emphasises on 'shramdan' (donation of labour). It believes that the only asset of the rural poor masses is 'labour', which is available in abundance. The target of a development programme should be to ensure direct benefits to the people who contribute this labour. The involvement of masses infuses a new spirit in them when they realise that even without depending on the government, they themselves can bring about massive changes in the overall situation. This restores their self-esteem, which decades of dependence, suppression, repression, and a feeling of helplessness had taken it away from them. The Sangh stresses on 'do-it-yourself' policy and accordingly identifies the local problems. It works out possible solutions as per local resources and organises people to bring about the required change.

Bankebaazar is perhaps the most backward Block of Gaya district of Bihar. Most of the residents of this Block are poor and backward in all senses and purposes of the term. This area has been ignored by both the state government as well as district administration. So, almost no infrastructural facilities are available here. There are some villages in the Block where no form of administration has even reached. Even in this supersonic age, no type of vehicle has reached some villages and people have to walk five kilometres to buy a mere packet of salt. In the absence of *kutchra road*, in this damp forest area, it is unthinkable to reach a doctor in emergency situations, and the people are left to their own fate. They are deprived of even the minimum basic human needs, of food, shelter, clothes, drinking water, and medicines. As a result, water borne diseases, malnutrition, and many ailments are rampant. This apart, the people live in perpetual social tension caused by sporadic caste or class wars inspired and engineered by Naxals and other Senas/groups.



This grievous neglect has been caused by a combination of several factors, like absence of articulate and vocal leadership representing interests of the area in the local and state-level democratic set-up; lack of political will on the part of others who are supposed to have a national vision and concern for the poor, hapless and exploited Harijans; hopeless condition of law and order which scares away government functionaries from discharging their due role; and, on top of all this, a nexus between politicians, bureaucracy, contractors, businessmen, and mafia, who have developed vested interests in keeping the area backward to maintain their throttling hold over it. To compound the situation, there are no visible signs of development, howsoever inadequate, in the area.

Therefore, the Sangh took up the task of constructing *kutcha* roads to provide inter-village and village-market linkages running into 45 km. It constructed 38 houses in village Binovanagar, the abode of Harijans; the capacity of these dwelling units ranged between one to four rooms, providing 15 dug wells (*kutcha wells*) as source of drinking water. Construction and maintenance of tanks, dams, and irrigation channel (the latter running into 10,200 meters) to serve small irrigation needs in the area were provided for.

Since there were several villages without a primary school in the area, the Sangh has been running 20 primary schools in the area by raising a sum of Rs. 10 from each student in order to pay their teachers. Besides, girls' residential schools have been started in 1995 in Bankebazar. It has classes from I to III, which are scheduled to be raised to Class V. This school, through prayers, *upasana*, *yoga*, meditation, studies, sports, training in different aspects of cottage industry, etc. aims at making students action-oriented, efficient and self-sufficient.

The Sangh has also started *Chak Bandi* of land as a land-reform measure in one village as an experiment. It is showing great promise as a large number of women have also come forward in this effort. Under different categories of activities, the Sangh has planted over 1000 fruit-bearing varieties like orange, guava, lemon, papaya, etc., which cater to economic as well as food needs of the area. Over 5000 timber trees (like teak, *shisham*, etc.) have been planted in 25 villages; and 2000 trees of varieties like *neem*, *ber*, *peepal* and *amla* have come up. Besides, there are over 10,000 plants of medicinal value, including *tulsi*.

To impart knowledge and skills among the poor Harijans/tribals in the area of cottage industries, the Sangh has been imparting training in trades like blanket weaving, soap making, *papad* making, *pattal* making, *darri* making mats or *aasan making* (made of polythene waste), etc., to promote self-employment and provide sources of income in the non-farm sector. Sangh has provided five *papad* and *pattal* making machines to the people and has helped in setting up of a bakery unit in Tarvan village with a capacity to produce 70 kg of 26 varieties of biscuits daily, and bread-loaves too. The Sangh has been organising farmers' training camps in which experts are invited to advice farmers on agricultural practices biannually.

The Sangh has made special efforts to promote communal harmony, particularly among Hindus and Muslims, who jointly celebrate their festivals in the area. 'Padyatra' programmes are organised to this effect. The Sangh is involved in quarterly prohibition campaigns or *Nasha Mukti Abhiyans* to convince people of the evil effects of liquor with the support of doctors and yoga experts. Meditation experts are also invited to render voluntary service to the people. This has produced surprising positive effects.

Keeping in view the needs of the local people, libraries and community halls have been constructed and are being maintained. *Goonjan* and *Vatayan* libraries have been set up at four places, viz. Bankebaazar, Parsawan, Diguriya and Telaiya. It has helped in spreading education as well as discipline among the youth. Community Halls for holding meetings, celebrating social functions, lodging *baraat* party. etc. have been constructed in several villages. Besides, a host of activities have been carried out by Sangh, such as organising free medical checkups, running stitching centres for women, etc. This case study shows that ‘self-help’ is the road to self-sufficiency and development.

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## 8.6 IDENTIFICATION OF CAUSES OF PEOPLE’S STRUGGLES

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Social and economic deprivation is the root cause of people’s struggles. As we have read in this Unit, the case studies clearly reflect that unfair State interventions, non-participatory governance system, and lopsided development strategies are compelling the people to get organised and fight for their rights and demands. People’s power as manifested in various civil society organisations is being recognised as a visible way of realising the objectives of equity and justice.

Some major causes of people’s struggles could be successive generations of exploitation, abject malnutrition and impoverished conditions. Socio-economic deprivation and inaccessible development programmes and government schemes have also aggravated the problem. The naxalite movement, movements for autonomy and secessionist movements in Kashmir and North-East; as well as the environment movements such as Narmada Bhachao Andolan, movement for protection of Olive Redley Turtles, movements against privatisation of power and water, protests against MNCs like Coke, Pepsi and McDonald etc., have their origins in some or the other wrong committed by the government or the private sector. These social movements leaving aside the secessionist ones do not aim to seize State power or undermine modern State to serve their ends. Rajni Kothari observes that civil society’s ordering of politics and governance is the take off point for humane governance. Such a re-entry is what contemporary social movements strive for. Human rights movements, ecology movements, women’s movements, peace movements are all about restoring the first principles of the ‘good’ and ‘good life’ in the conduct of human affairs (Gupta, 2003).

The new social movements are different from traditional or old social movements such as labour and peasant organisations, which were primarily concerned with economic and socio-political justice. New social movements seek to mobilise sections and groups oppressed or exploited in ‘new’ or different ways, especially by the processes of ‘modern capitalism’. A recent article by Fuentes and Gunder Frank seeks to analyse the recent growth of action groups in the Third World. Using a very inclusive definition that includes practically any movement that is not a traditional class or national/separatist organisation, they define such groups as ‘grass roots’ (locally-based), transitional to socialism, and anti-political in the sense of not seeking to achieve power at the institutional level, but broadly democratic movements. In addition, they believe that they are ‘cyclical’, not really new, but actually older than historically recent working-class movements. In short, they are age-old instruments and expressions of people’s struggle against exploitation and oppression and for survival and identity. They are attempts at, and instruments of, democratic self-empowerment (Haynes, 1997).

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## 8.7 CONCLUSION

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The case studies discussed in this Unit clearly show that people's power is crucial for ensuring an ethical, transparent and efficient governmental system. It can put pressure on the State to mould its policies in the desired direction of goal fulfilment, be it environmental, developmental or livelihood related objectives. The people's groups and NGOs can change the face of rural India even without any governmental aid. Therefore, one need not feel surprised to discover that although the State-led developmental process was particularly initiated to dilute, if not totally dissolve, social and economic disparities, which have caused persistent social strife and tension, it has paradoxically turned out to be the major factor behind pervasive social strife and heightening tension today, even after 55 years of our independence.

Agrarian violence with its class and caste overtones is one of its ugliest manifestations. What is, therefore, needed today is to initiate a genuine process of empowering the people on the noble principles of self-sufficiency and *shramdan*, to awaken them and make them conscious of their tremendous self-developmental potential. Let us, therefore, think in terms of shedding the archaic, wasteful and expensive structure, which has over the decades promoted and strengthened the syndrome of total dependence on the government in favour of the much cheaper and reliable process of rekindling self-propelling energies of the people through community endeavours to better their social and economic existence. In the globalisation context, governance has become encompassing and multi-actor centric with government, market and civil society working in the area of provision of goods and services. It has to be seen that root causes of people's struggles are not aggravated. The social movements have to look for solutions to the problems in the right earnest. They must articulate specific local issues and guard against the manoeuvres of national and international groups with vested interests. This Unit through its case studies highlighted some of these aspects.

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## 8.8 KEY CONCEPTS

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### Capacity Building

Efforts aimed to develop human skills or societal infrastructures, within a community or organisation, needed to reduce the level of risk. It also includes the development of institutional, financial, political and other resources, such as technology at different levels and sectors of the society. The term 'capacity building' was repeatedly used in the Doha Declaration in the context of assistance to be provided to developing countries in establishing and administering their trade policies, and identifying their interests in trade negotiations.

[www.unisdr.org/eng/library/lib-terminology-eng%20home.htm](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/library/lib-terminology-eng%20home.htm), and  
[www.personal.umich.edu/~alandear/glossary/c.htm](http://www.personal.umich.edu/~alandear/glossary/c.htm)

### Environment Impact Assessment

It is a planning tool that is an integral part of information gathering and decision making. It provides the policy makers with an objective basis for granting or denying approval for a proposed development project. It may be defined as a formal process used to predict

the environmental consequences of any development project. It ensures that the potential problems in a development scheme are foreseen and addressed at an early stage of project planning and design. The purpose of Environment Impact Assessment is to support the goals of environmental protection and sustainable development.

[www.deh.gov.au/industry/finance/glossary.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/industry/finance/glossary.html)

[www.gdcr.org/uem/eia/define.html](http://www.gdcr.org/uem/eia/define.html).

### **Fishing Ground Near Chilka**

The fishing ground in Chilka Lake has been divided into five types – ‘Jano’, ‘Khati’, ‘Bahan’, ‘Dian’ and ‘Uthapani’. *Jano*: Mostly located around the various islands of the Lake and are barricaded with split bamboos. Fishing is done in shallow water and is operated from October to February. *Khati*: This is shrimp fishing ground where fishing is done with the help of bamboo traps set in the shore areas between March and September. *Bahan*: This is a deeper fishing portion of the Lake and is carried out almost throughout the year. *Dian*: It is an unplanned area and operated during September to January. *Uthapani*: It is an area of shallow water, where fishing is carried out during monsoon. The fishermen groups are: *Kanobara*: the second largest group, use traps i.e. *Dhaudi* and *Tota* for catching crabs and prawn. The *Tiar* use bamboo traps called *Baja*. The *Karotias* use both traps and nets for fishing, besides; there are *Nolias*, the Telugu immigrants who fish mainly in the sea and partly at the mouth of the lake. A large number of refugees from Bangladesh also come to fish here for their livelihood.

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## **8.9 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING**

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## **8.10 ACTIVITY**

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1. Visit some nearby NGO or a Self-help Group working in the area of development and welfare of people. Pen down your observations on the nature of relationship it shares with the people and other government organisations or private enterprises it interacts with.