

## Chapter 5: Popular Struggles and Movements

### Intext Questions

**Question 1:** Are you suggesting that strike, dharna, bandh and demonstration are a good thing? I thought it happened only in our country, because we are not a mature democracy yet.

**Answer:**

(i) Democracy evolves through struggle by the people of the country, which could be in the form of strikes, dharnas, bandhs and demonstrations. These are good only if they promote interests, benefits and democratic ideals of the masses, when the government ends up ignoring them. Such activities mean that the democracy is expanding and deepening its roots.

(ii) It is not only our country where these happen. It happens in every democratic country when the general will of the people is ignored.

**Question 2:** Does it mean that whichever side manages to mobilizing a bigger crowd gets away with whatever it wants? Are we saying that 'Might is Right' in a democracy?

**Answer :**

(i) No mobilizing a bigger crowd does not let any side have what it wants. It is not simply mobilizing. People cannot be mobilized as objects. In fact, it is rooted in the common interest of the people. It is the common and genuine interest of the people that has the force of mobilizing the mass. The force of struggle in the people for a common cause cannot originate at the will of any group, it is spontaneous.

(ii) No, we can say it in other words that people's will and interest has might and it is through this that a democracy evolves.

**Question 3:** In 1984, the Karnataka government set up a company called Karnataka Pulpwood Limited. About 30,000 hectares of land was given virtually free to this company for 40 years. Much of this land was used by local farmers as grazing land for their cattle. However the company began to plant eucalyptus trees on this land, which could be used for making paper pulp. In 1987, a movement called Kittiko-Hachchiko (meaning, pluck and plant) started a non-violent protest, where people plucked the eucalyptus plants and planted saplings of trees that were useful to the people.

Suppose you belong to any of the following groups, what arguments you would put forwards to defend your side: a local farmer, an environmental activist, a government official working in this company or just a consumer of paper.

**Answer:**

(i) A Local Farmer :

Land for grazing our cattle will be affected because of Eucalyptus plantations as it does not allow other plants to grow. So, this must not be permitted.

(ii) An Environmental Activist :

Eucalyptus plantation makes the land barren as it grows very fast at the cost of underground water. Not only this, they will affect the growth of smaller plants under them. So, it should not be permitted.

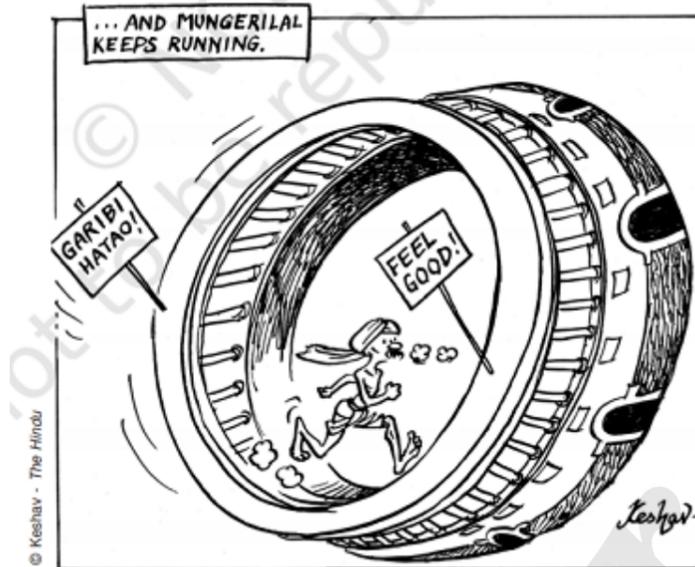
(iii) A Government Official:

I do not know whether this plantation has negative or positive effect. Being a government servant, I have to comply with my duty and continue with planting eucalyptus.

(iv) A Consumer of Paper :

As soon as paper company start producing pulp and paper and supply them at a cheaper rate due to reduction in the cost of transportation.

**Question 4:** Governments initiate schemes and programmes to alleviate the suffering of the poor and meet their basic needs. But poverty remains in the country. What could be the reasons for such a situation?



**Answer:**

The following are the reasons for not able to alleviate poverty from India are:

Corruption is very much found at each and every level of the administrative system. It never let the money of the project/scheme to reach the place or people for which is allocated. Rajiv Gandhi once quoted that whatever we sent from the centre, only 15 to 20 per cent of the money reached to the largest group or place. Other reasons are illiteracy and devoid of awareness in the people regarding their rights and duties specially right to information.

Social Auditing concepts like people taking initiative and check the accounts and quality of the work, then all the officials and contractors will be afraid from taking wrong decisions. Our constitution has given us the right to ask or enquire about any project or activities going on in the area by the fund supplied by the government.

**Question 5:** Can you identify the pressure groups functioning in the news clippings given here? What demand are they making?



**Answer:**

(i) The pressure groups given in the news clippings given here are - AITUC, NGO, CII, RWAs, journalists and Delhi's traders.

(ii) These pressure groups are making the following demands:

AITUS is making demand for Pro- American tilt in foreign policy.

NGOs –These organisations are demanding the standard drugs to be supplied to Bhopal gas victims, Because these victims are getting sub-standard drugs.

CII- It is demanding for the establishment of SEZs (special Economic Zones) for the growth in the job sector.

RWAs- They are making demand that their side of the story should be heard too.

Journalists – They are protesting against assault on photographer. So, they are demanding action against those who assaulted photographer.

Delhi Traders – They are demanding the assurance of timely refund of VAT dues to Delhi's traders.

**Question 6:** Do you think the cartoon exaggerates the obstructionist role of bureaucracy in the implementation of the Act?



**Answer:**

No, Bureaucrats are government officials they always try to protect the government actions from not being into public.

In the cartoon, the head of the government the PM is shown inaugurating the Right to information law. A person is shown trying to make this law applicable to the general public, but the bureaucratic hurdles don't let it reach to the people.

**Question 7:** What are the social movements listed in these news clippings? What efforts are they making? Which sections are they trying to mobilise?



**Answer:**

(i) The social movements listed in the news clippings given above are – social audit of government account, RTI activist's movement for fair play in PDS, M.P. tribals seek their right on forest land, KSSP for ADB loans and social audit of government account.

(ii) The organizations mentioned above are making the following efforts to mobilize a particular section:

Social Organisations are making effort to check the account and other activities to uncover irregularities in Rajasthan. They are mobilizing the general public to come out and take this responsibility.

RTI activists are making efforts to raise the issue of muscle and money power in ruling the PDS. RTI activists are trying to mobilise the poor section of the society who are not getting their due from the PDS system.

M.P. Tribals – are making efforts to seek full right on forest land and are also opposing displacement from the area. They are mobilizing the tribal people to come out and take initiative for their birth right on forest land.

KSSP- is putting pressure on the bank officials to follow transparency in the distribution of ADB loans.

**Question 8:** Follow the news on any news channel for one week. Make a note of news related to pressure groups or movements representing the following sector or sections : Farmers, traders, labour, industry, environment and women. Which of these are mentioned most on television news? Which sections or intersects get mentioned the least? You may follow a newspaper if you don't have TV at home.

**Answer:**

(i) Traders, women and industry are mostly mentioned on television.

(ii) Environment, farmer and labour get mentioned the least on television.

**Question 9:** In the given passage what relationship do you see between democracy and social movements? How should this movement respond to the government?

The Green Belt Movement has planted 30 million trees across Kenya. Its leader Wangari Maathai is very disappointed with the response of government officials and politicians:

*"In the 1970s and 1980s, as I was encouraging farmers to plant trees on their land, I also discovered that corrupt government agents were responsible for much of the deforestation by illegally selling off land and trees to well-connected developers. In the early 1990's, the livelihoods, the rights and even the lives of many Kenyans in the Rift Valley were lost when elements of President Daniel Arap Moi's government encouraged ethnic communities to attack one another over land. Supporters of the ruling party got the land, while those in the pro-democracy movement were displaced. This was one of the government's ways of retaining power; if communities were kept busy fighting over land, they would have less opportunity to demand democracy."*

**Answer:**

(i) Social movements are carried by the agitated people against the wrong practices and ill policies of the government. In the above passage, while Mr. Mathai was encouraging farmers to plant trees on lands, the government sold the piece of land to its supporters. To prevent undemocratic situations like this people started agitation against government.

(ii) The movement should oppose the working of the government officials. It should forward its demand before the government till justice is met with.

**Question 10:** This cartoon is called 'News-no-news'. Who is most often visible in the media? Whom are we most likely to hear about in newspapers?



### Answer:

(i) The following are most often visible in the media:

Political leaders, ministers, businessmen, industrialists, traders, sportsmen, film actors/actresses, etc.

(ii) In newspapers, we hear most likely about the following:

Women activists, social workers, environmentalists, etc.

### Exercises

**Question 1:** In what ways do pressure groups and movements exert influence on politics?

### Answer:

Pressure groups exert influence on politics in different ways like they start to campaign on public issue. With the help of media they draw attention of public. They generally call for strike and dharnas to raise their demands or voice. But unlike the interest groups, movements have a loose organization. Their decision making is more informal and flexible.

**Question 2:** Describe the forms of relationship between pressure groups and political parties.

### Answer:

There are two types of relationship between pressure groups and political parties. In a direct relationship, pressure groups act as an extended wing of political parties. In other cases, the relationship between parties and interest or movement groups is indirect. They often take positions that are opposed to each other. Yet they are in dialogue and negotiation. Movement groups have raised new issues that have been taken up by political parties.

**Question 3:** Explain, how the activities of pressure groups are useful in the functioning of a democratic government.

### Answer:

Pressure groups provide chance to marginalised groups to voice their opinions. They force the government to make policies which will benefit other sections of the society also.

Sometime rich and powerful put pressure on the government to form a policy or take a decision in their interest. In such situations pressure groups can counter such move by putting pressure on the government to take a decision in the interest of ordinary citizens. To put pressure on the government in public interest is good and it strengthens democracy.

Even sectional interest groups play a valuable role. As there are different sectional groups, no one can achieve dominance over society. If one group brings pressure on government to make policies in its favour, another will bring counter pressure not to make policies in the way the first group desires. Thus, different sectional interest groups help the government to maintain a balance of power and accommodation of conflicting interests.

**Question 4: What is a pressure group ? Give a few examples.**

**Answer:**

Pressure groups are organizations that force government through protests, bandhs, and strikes to make policies. These organizations are formed when people with common occupation, interests, aspirations, or opinions come together in order to achieve a common objective.

Examples are – Nepal’s movement for democracy, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Movement for Right to Information, Anti-liquor Movement, Women’s Movement, Environmental Movement.

**Question 5: What is the difference between a pressure group and a political party ?**

**Answer:**

A pressure groups fight for public interests in indirect way. They influence the government in making decisions which promote its interests. They fight and try to achieve a common objective. They do not take part in competitive politics but try to influence the government by different means. Whereas political parties take direct participation in competitive politics. They contest elections in order to win majority and form government. Their aim is to achieve political power. They have their own ideology and have their own way of achieving their aim.

**Question 6: Organisations that undertake activities to promote the interests of specific social sections such as workers, employees, teachers and lawyers are called ..... groups.**

**Answer:** Sectional interest

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**Question 7: Which among the following is the special feature that distinguishes a pressure group from a political party ?**

- (a) Parties take political stances, while pressure groups do not bother about political issues.
- (b) Pressure groups are confined to a few people, while parties involve larger number of people.
- (c) Pressure groups do not seek to get into power, while political parties do.
- (d) Pressure groups do not seek to mobilise people, while parties do.

**Answer:**

(c) Pressure groups do not seek to get into power, while political parties do.

**Question 8: Match List I (organisations and struggles) with List II and select the correct ..... answer using the codes given below the lists :**

|    | <b>List I</b>   | <b>List II</b>               |
|----|---|------------------------------|
| 1. | Organisations that seek to promote the interests of a particular section or group                     | A. Movement                  |
| 2. | Organisations that seek to promote common interest  | B. Political parties         |
| 3. | Struggles launched for the resolution of a social problem with or without an organisational structure | C. Sectional interest groups |
| 4. | Organisations that mobilise people with a view to win political power                                 | D. Public interest groups    |

|     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| (a) | C | D | B | A |
| (b) | C | D | A | B |
| (c) | D | C | B | A |
| (d) | B | C | D | A |

**Answer:** (b) C, D, A, B.

**Question 9:** Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists :

|    | <b>List I</b>         | <b>List II</b>                     |
|----|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. | Pressure group        | A. Narmada Bachao Andolan          |
| 2. | Long-term movement    | B. Asom Gana Parishad              |
| 3. | Single issue movement | C. Women's movement                |
| 4. | Political party       | D. Fertilizer dealers' association |

|     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| (a) | D | C | A | B |
| (b) | B | A | D | C |
| (c) | C | D | B | A |
| (d) | B | D | C | A |

**Answer:** (a) D, C, A, B.

**Question 10:** Consider the following statements about pressure groups and parties :

- A. Pressure groups are an organized expression of the interests and views of specific social sections.
- B. Pressure groups take positions on political issues.
- C. All pressure groups are political parties.

Which of the statements given above are correct ?

- (a) A, B and C
- (b) A and B
- (c) B and C
- (d) A and C

**Answer:** (b) A and B

**Question 11:** Mewat is one of the most backward areas in Haryana. It used to be a part of district Gurgaon and Faridabad. The people of Mewat felt that the area will get better attention if it were to become a separate district. But political parties were

indifferent to this sentiment. The demand for a separate district was raised by Mewat Educational and Social Organisation and Mewat Saksharta Samiti in 1996. Later Mewat Vikas Sabha was founded in 2000 and carried out a series of public awareness campaigns. This forced both the major parties, Congress and the Indian National Lok Dal, to announce their support for the new district before the assembly elections held in February 2005. The new district came into existence in July 2005. In this example, what is the relationship that you observe among movement, political parties, and the government? Can you think of an example that shows a relationship different from this one?

**Answer:**

In the above instance of Mewat, we can infer that movements take up issues which have been ignored by political parties. Political parties may then be influenced by these demands when they frame their own manifestoes. It was a movement that was supported by different organizations viz., Mewat Educational and Social Organisation, Mewat Saksharta Samiti, and Mewat Vikas Sabha. Because of Mewat Vikas Sabha force, two major parties, Congress and the Indian National Lok Dal supported them.

In the Mewat case, the government of the Indian National Lok Dal was in power and it also supported the demand for the new district in view of coming elections in the state. None of the party wanted to go against the demands of the people. As Congress won the election in 2005 and had supported the movement, the new district came into existence in July 2005.

The Asom Gana Parishad, formed out of the AASU (All Assam Students Union), contested and won the elections, forming the Government of Assam. In this example, we see a political party being formed out of a pressure group, which then goes on to form the government.