

POPULAR STRUGGLES AND MOVEMENTS

Class X Subject : *civics*

Movement for democracy in Nepal

- Nepal witnessed an extraordinary **movement in 2006**. The movement was aimed at restoring democracy.
- **King Birender** who accepted the transition from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy was killed in a mysterious massacre in 2001.
- In Feb 2005, the king dismissed the then prime minister and dissolved the popularly elected parliament. **The movement of April 2006** was aimed at regaining popular control over the govt from king.
- All the major political parties in the parliament formed the seven party alliance and called for a **4 day strike in Kathmandu**. This protest soon turned into an indefinite strike in which Maoist insurgents and other organizations joined hands.
- On **24 April 2006**, the king was forced to complete all the 3 demands. The SPA chose **Girija Prasad Koirala** as the new prime minister.

Bolivia's Water War

- Bolivia is a poor country in Latin America.
- **The world bank** pressurized the govt to give up its control of municipal water supply. The govt sold these rights for the **city of Cochabamba** to a multinational company. The company immediately increased the price of water four times.
- People received monthly bill of **water as thousand rupees** where the monthly income was only five thousand. So this **led to an immediate protest**.
- In **January 2000**, a new alliance of labour, human rights and community leaders organized a successful four day general strike. The govt agreed to negotiate and the strike was called off.
- **Another strike was done in April** and govt imposed a martial law. But the power of people forced the officials **of MNC to leave the city** and made the govt to complete their demands.
- The **contract with the MNC was cancelled** and water supply with the municipality was restored at old rates.

DEMOCRACY AND POPULAR STRUGGLES

- **Democracy evolves through popular struggles.** It is possible that certain significant decisions may be taken through consensus and may not involve any conflict. But that would be an exception. **Defining moments of democracy usually involve conflict between those groups who have exercised power and those who aspire to share power.**
- **Democracy conflict is resolved through mass mobilization.** Sometimes it is possible that the conflict is resolved by using existing institutions like the parliament or judiciary.
- These **confilcts and moblizations are based on new political organizations.** Spontaneous people participation becomes effective with the help of organized politics.

MOBILIZATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- In a **democracy** ,several different kinds of organizations work behind any big struggle. These organizations play their role in 2 ways:
- **One obvious way of influencing the decisions in a democracy is direct participation in competitive politics.** This is done by creating parties, contesting elections and forming govt. but every citizen don't participate directly
- There are also many indirect ways in which people can get governments to listen to their demands or their point of views . They could do so by **forming an organization and undertaking activitites to promote their intersts.** These are called **interest groups or pressure groups.**

PRESSURE GROUPS AND MOVEMENTS

- *Pressure groups are organizations that attempt to influence government policies. But unlike political parties, pressure groups do not aim to directly control or share political power. These organizations are formed when people with common occupation, interest, aspirations or opinions come together in order to achieve a common objective.*
- *But unlike the interest groups, movements have a loose organizations. Their decision making is more informal and flexible. They depend much more on spontaneous mass participation than an interest group*

SECTIONAL INTEREST GROUP

- Usually interest groups seek to promote the interests of a particular section or group of society. Trade unions, business associations and professional bodies are some examples.
- They are sectional because they represent a section of society: workers, employees, industrialists, followers of a religion
- Their principal concern is the betterment and well being of their members, not society in general.

PUBLIC INTEREST GROUP

- The second type of groups are called promotional groups or public interest group . They promote collective rather than selective good.
- They aim to help groups other than their own members.
- For eg: BAMCEF

MOVEMENT GROUPS

- The nepalese movement for democracy arose with the specific objective of reversing the king's orders that led to suspension of democracy.
- In india narmada bachao andolan is a good example of this kind of movement.
- All of these have separate organizations independent leadership and often different views on policy related matters. Yet all these share a broad objective and have a similar approach, that is why they are called movements.

INFLUENCE OF MOVEMENT GROUPS ON POLITICS

- They try to gain public support and sympathy for their goals and their activities by carrying out info campaigns, filing petitions etc.
- They often organize protest activity like strikes or disrupting government programmes worker's organizations, employees associations.
- Buisness groups often employ professional lobbyists or sponsors expensive advertisements.
- In some instances, the pressure groups are either formed or led by the leaders of political parties or act as extended arms of political parties.

TEST YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- Q. DISTINGUISH BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES AND PRESSURE GROUPS.
- Q.NAME ANY TWO SECTIONAL INTEREST GROUP.
- Q.WHAT ARE PUBLIC INTEREST PRESSURE GROUPS? DESCRIBE THEIR FUNCTIONING.
- Q. PRESSURE GROUPS AND MOVEMENTS EXERT INFLUENCE ON POLITICS IN DIFFERENT WAYS. HOW?