

Social Movements In Modern India

Introduction

When we talk about social change two things should be taken into consideration, firstly should government produce change and secondly should people introduce change themselves on their own terms and conditions. Social desires and demand for change is different from personal desire and demands. Hence both stand opposite to each other, for example if the state is glorifying one particular form of religion and people want to go for change or another religion this will lead to struggle between power of the state and power of the people. This struggle between the part of state and power of the people can be termed as social movement.

With the growing consciousness, people are coming forward in large numbers and it has become difficult for the state to ignore the demand of the people and introduce its own wishes. There is a dialectical relationship between state and people. Gandhiji introduced different kinds of protest and encouraged mass movement both in the nature of social and political.

During different points of time in Indian history identity movement have also taken place so that everyone has a space in society, every individual is free and that they do not to hide their actual identity in front of others e.g. homosexuals, transgenders.

A **protest** is an expression of objection, by words or by actions, to particular events, policies or situations. Protests can take many different forms, from individual statements to mass demonstrations. Protesters may organize a protest as a way of publicly making their opinions heard in an attempt to influence public opinion or government policy, or they may undertake direct action in an attempt to directly enact desired changes themselves. When protests are part of a systematic and peaceful campaign to achieve a particular objective, and involve the use of pressure as well as persuasion, they go beyond mere protest and may be better described as cases of civil resistance or nonviolent resistance.

Wherever marginalization, exploitation is caused in extreme form it leads to protest which subsequently transforms itself into a movement through ideological injection e.g. civil rights movement in America under the leadership of Abraham Lincoln where blacks were united to fight against hunger and discrimination by the state and people alike.

During the colonial rule, the tribal areas were least interfered with as it was thought that it is difficult, costly and cumbersome to administer these areas. Hence it was missionaries who landed in those places to work. But some tribal areas were highly resourceful and so they were highly exploited. Since independence hardly any major steps are taken for the development people belonging to these areas. Till today the actual number of tribals existing in India is not known.

Protestant movements in case of India can be divided into three distinctive stages i.e.:

- *Social religious movement which got momentum before freedom struggle.*
- *Economic and political movement during the freedom struggle.*
- *Identity and issue-based movement in contemporary India.*

Protest is not overreaction of a group of people to the action of others. One goes for protest because the action of others are not acceptable by them. Protest is always a registration against the voice of dominance. Protest is reminder to the state that it has limited power. Protest movement will be maximum in a democratic setup.

The term "collective action" describes the situation in which multiple individuals would all benefit from a certain action, which, however, has an associated cost making it implausible that anyone individually can or will undertake and solve it alone. The rational choice is then to undertake this as a collective action the cost of which is shared.

Collective action can be the foundation to social movement but it is not necessary that always collective action will be leading to social movement. For instance new social movements are mostly issue-based like environmental movements, anti-war movements, civil rights movement etc that involve people from different sections of society asking them to form different kinds of mobilisation. Collective action is not just the foundation to social movement, it may be having a larger appeal as well. Amartya Sen says that collective action should be engineered for collective well-being. Participation in many educational programs, awareness campaigns, electoral policies are examples of collective action for collective well-being which is instrumental for the rise of an inclusive society.

Sustainable development approach forwarded by Vandana Shiva indicate that joint forest management scheme, wasteland management, watershed management involve the contesting communities accelerating collective action for common well-being. In macroscopic plane one finds out collective action is initiated by all countries of the world in areas of environmental protection, abuse of nuclear power, humanitarian aids, and political peace. Thus collective action should not only be studied from a single standpoint which consider it as a tool for class conflict, revolution and social change.

Previously social movements were highly organised, ideologically charged which were asking for big changes to emancipate the exploited in the hands of the class or state. But social movements today are more reflexive, reactionary, issue-based and temporal. Thus there is a distinction between social movement and collective action. Social movement can sustain itself if there are many free riders (people who participate for their vested selfish interest), however collective action will not be able to arrive at its goal if there are too many free riders. Therefore participation is very important for the success of contemporary movements.

Social movements can be distinguished from protest and collective action on the ground that social movement is programmed but Protest and collective action are not necessarily programmed. The social movement for its success has to fulfil a number of preconditions like:

- *Issues Identification.*
- *Identification and expansion of support base.*
- *Creation of structural conduciveness.*
- *Crystallisation of ideology.*
- *Evolution of leadership.*
- *Growth of organisational characteristics.*
- *Allocation of responsibility.*

Social movement passes through different stages which includes excitement stage (identification of issues), consolidation stage (propaganda and search for mass support), crystallisation stage (rise of leadership, publication of literature), maturity stage (injection of ideology and allocation of responsibility), resolution stage (accomplishment of goals and decline of social movement).

When a social movement dies out, it may give rise to a political party or the residues of social movement will operate as a reminder of past. Social movements can be classified into different types on the basis of their appeal and capabilities to introduce change like:

- ***Transformative Movement*** – *that makes some attempt to produce absolute change.*
- ***Radical movement*** – *that makes some attempt to use violent measures to make some changes.*
- ***Restorative movement*** – *which gives importance to the restoration of some values and ideals for the common well-being of people.*
- ***Reformative movement*** – *which makes an attempt to eliminate non-progressive stereotype ideas and values from the life of people and searches for progress and happiness.*
- ***Redemptive movement*** – *which makes people to change their opinion about the existential condition instead of changing the condition.*

Peasants And Farmers Movement

Peasant refers to small producers who are controlling a small piece of family land, using simple technologies, family labour to gratify their consumption needs. Between man and land there is emotional relationship in peasants society. To its contrast farmers produce for market and so they view their land also from economic perspective and so land is a source of profit for them. If land fails to make profit farmers go for other forms of occupation abandoning agriculture which is not so in case of peasant. Therefore conceptualising agrarian movement as peasant movements or farmers movement is a great sociological challenge.

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. In some areas of the country capitalist agriculture has developed which has led to migration of agricultural workers from the poor regions to these flourishing regions in search of employment, therefore the conflict between land and agriculture class and landless labourers is potentially absent in green revolution belt. In some other areas middle farmers have been organised, they have received support from state and organised cooperatives to improve their economic conditions and so in this case also the conflict between them and agricultural labourers is mostly unfound. In certain pockets of the country traditional form of landlordism is present where labourers, marginal farmers are thoroughly exploited and their control over their own land is becoming fragile and therefore in these areas small, marginalised, farmers and landless labourers are getting unionised and manifest in protest and armed rebellion.

Therefore multiple modes of agrarian production provides no space for sociologists to explain agrarian movement in India either as peasant movements or as, movements. **Gail Omvedt** writes that in case of India the participants of agrarian movement are tribes, lower caste, ethnic minority who is more or less were landless since historic times therefore peasant farmer movement cannot be disassociated from Dalit movement and tribal movements.

Feudal mode of agriculture is still in practice in case of Bihar, MP, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and certain pockets of Orissa. There is also semifeudal mode of agriculture practised in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh. Semi-capitalist mode of agriculture production can be found in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and pockets of Andhra Pradesh. And lastly capitalist agriculture mode of production can be found in Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh.

She considers that in capitalist zone farmers movement get a momentum whereas in feudal areas peasant movements are accelerated but in semifeudal and semi-capitalist both farmers and peasant movements are present. Some sociologists consider that movements initiated during India's freedom struggle should be considered as peasant movement whereas after India's independence the agrarian movement should be considered as farmers movement. Even A R Desai makes a distinction between two timeframes i.e.

protest during colonial period and protest during postcolonial period. While some sociologists believe that it is conceptually difficult to distinguish not only peasant movements from farmers but also agrarian movement from social and religious movements.

In India peasants and farmers movements were initiated as economic organisation highlighting the questions like landlessness, indebtedness, tenancy rights but subsequently people got unionised forging their class identity on the basis of culture and religion. Moplah movement, Eka movement and Peasant Rebellion in case of Bengal vertically divided the people on the basis of culture and religion. This is contradictory to Marx's understanding of class-action when he says that classes is a source people's unification because in case of India peasants belonging to Hindu community supported Hindu landlords in Bengal rather than joining hands with Muslim 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, sub sub feudal Lords thereby giving rise to the evolution of large body of leisure class living on the exploitation of peasants in India. British systematically destroyed indigenous class, cottage industries, transforming artisans into landless peasantry. Moneylenders, absentee landlords gave rise to capitalist interest in agricultural land leading to massive exploitation of indigenous peasants.

Introduction of exploitative taxation system expose peasantry to exploitative market and introduction of cash crops completely paralysed subsistence production - forcibly exposing presented to market without any purchasing power in hand. Therefore peasant in India during colonial period was standing in between devil and the deep sea i.e. being exploited by the landlords on one hand and by the expandable market introduced by the colonial leaders on the other. As a result peasant movement got momentum in different parts of the country in the form of **Sanyasi Vidroh, Indigo Movement, Champaran Movement, Bardoli Movement, Eka Movement, Moplah Rebellion, Birsa Munda Movement.**

The above-mentioned movements had two major consequences; firstly forgetting the linguistic and regional differences, driven by common interest the entire country got unified together and started protesting against the British and secondly 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 later on. AR Desai considers that peasant movement in India is the mother of India's nationalist movement.

Kisan Sabha Movement:

In the year 1927, Kisan Sabha was formulated a frontal organisation for the peasant of the country to safeguard their interests and to protect them from the exploitation of landlords, moneylenders and exploitative colonial regime. All the leaders of early peasant movement got associated with Kisan Sabha movement. This movement introduced Kisan Sabha in every village, stimulating the peasant to control village land and go for cooperative farming, evict absentee landlord from the land and on many occasions also promoted militaristic method to eliminate the intermediaries control over the land.

It was realised that peasant movement in India cannot be successful until different class of peasantry joined hands with each other. As a result many landlords, sub landlords and sub sub landlords took up leadership of Kisan Sabha movement exhibiting consensual attitude towards peasants and agriculture farmers. In case of Bardoli the farmers took the lead in Kisan Sabha movement. Rationalisation of rent payment system was introduced. It was spelt out all over the country that the real exploiters of Indian peasantry are not local zamindars rather it is exploitative British land tenure system.

Different classes of peasantry joining hands with each other driven by pro-poor socialistic ideology offered a momentum to this 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.

The leaders of Kisan Sabha subsequently became leaders of Congress and promised indigenous farmers/peasants Heaven on Earth after India's independence.

Naxalite Movement:

This movement was started from Siliguri district of West Bengal by Charu Mazumdar who belonged to upper class affluent family. During that period the state was ruled by Communist Party and its associate, however the government had not taken serious steps to implement land reform systems in true spirit. Charu Mazumdar alleged that land distribution amongst landless peasants are unfavourable and non-productive therefore state as a matter of formality is engaged in land distribution. State is limiting farmers from encroaching the fertile land owned by the absentee landlord deploying police and using legal court.

He mobilised 20,000 peasants, gave them training in modern techniques of warfare and asked them to loot police stations to procure weapons and to attack zamindars, forcibly occupying the land. In every village gorilla warfare techniques were taught to the youth and village army was trained to fight

against police and private army of the landlords. This forced the state government to expedite land reform in several states.

Various sociologists consider that naxalite movement should be studied from people's perspective rather than from State perspective. Masses have appreciated naxalite movement because they have introduced welfare schemes, educational campaign, cooperative farming. To make naxalites unpopular state police have demolished many schools, bridges constructed by naxalites therefore naxalite movement today is a struggle between people's power state power.

Contemporary 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. More significantly cooperative movement, green revolution in North, Western and South India have weakened peasant movement. For peasants have got regular employment opportunities in these areas and got access to market, thus dependency between different classes of peasantry has been accelerated and so instead of looking at each other as class enemy they have developed compatible working relationship.

Dipankar Gupta indicates that land tenure system has gone through a series of transformation since India's independence. Division of land has contributed for segmentation of agricultural land, as a result if the father is big farmer of the land and his children are reduced into middle farmers. Relationship between agriculture workers and the middle and small peasants has become an inclusive relationship driven by dependency. Agricultural labourers today are supported by the public policy of the State hence they are mute and accepting exploitation. Thus the intervention and developmental policies have sufficiently contributed for decline of unrest in India.

Cooperative movements have impacted both small and marginal farmers in India, joining these cooperatives they have liberated themselves from historical exploitation, gathered self confidence and improved their quality of life. This view is contradicted by Marxian scholar like **Utsa Patnaik** who indicates that during early stage of capitalist economy relationship between the class is bound to be complimentary but subsequently with the majority of capitalism the inequality between the class becomes absolute. In contemporary India big cotton growing farmers, cash crop producers and horticulturists are hijacking all institutionalised benefits in their own favour. There is consolidation of capitalism in Indian agriculture in the villages of Punjab and Haryana.

Studies have found out the paradox in development in the green revolution belt of the country where poor farmers are committing suicide and rich farmers are consolidating their economic base.

Bharatiya Kisan Union operating in North India is consolidating its base, mobilising all the cash crop produces and bargaining with the government to benefit the capitalist agriculturalists.

Taking these diversified opinion into consideration we can conclude that peasant movement in Indian history were instrumental for India's independence. Those people could not in one tone and in one spirit and voice asked for their basic civil and economic rights. Peasant Movement in India is fractured and articulates different concerns in time and space. Therefore Indian peasant movement is unique, exclusive and is hidden in character. It cannot be equated with peasant movement in other parts of the world.

Backward Classes And Dalit Movement

Dalit movement is a contemporary phenomena started during freedom struggle has become forceful today. It got its ideological support from backward class movement which took place in different parts of the country in the form of self-respect movement in Tamil Nadu, Satya Shodak Samaj movement in Maharashtra, Yadav movement in North India etc. Backward classes is a very loose concept. Sociologically these classes consist of a large number of backward castes which remain above schedule caste and below the upper caste. These casts consist of intermediate caste - the cultivating caste, artisans and service castes.

The Backward castes have been deprived of many social, economic, political and religious privileges. These people provided manual labor and the untouchables occupied the lowest position among the caste hierarchy. They were subjected to extreme form of exploitation. The colonial power accentuated the disparities in the distribution of economic power. The atrocities united the lower castes against the upper castes. Some of the important backward caste movement which came up was Satyashodak Samaj which consolidated the masses along the castelines. E.V Ramaswamy started Self-Respect movement against the Brahmins in South India. The SNDP movement in Kerala was more of a reformist movement. In 1950s there was a widespread desire among the non-Brahmin castes to be categorized as Backward. Subsequently Backward Class commission was set up to look into the conditions and requirements of these classes. Mandal Commission submitted its report in 1980 recommending reservations for backward castes in educational institutions and government offices.

Self-Respect Movement

The **Self-Respect Movement** was founded in 1925 by E. V. Ramasamy (also known as Periyar) in Tamil Nadu. The movement had the aim of achieving a society where backward castes have equal human rights, and encouraging backward castes to have self-respect in the context of a caste based society that considered them to be at the lower end of the hierarchy. A number of political parties in Tamil Nadu, such as Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) owe their origins to the Self-respect movement. Periyar declared that the Self-Respect Movement alone could be the genuine freedom movement, and political freedom would not be fruitful without individual self-respect.

Periyar observed that political freedom as conceived by nationalists not excluding even Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru did not cover individual self-respect. To him neither revival of the original spirit of Hindu religion and ancient traditions which formed part of Gandhi's conception of freedom, nor complete liberation from the British rule which was considered by Nehru to be the meaning of freedom or both of them together could ensure individual self-respect or remove the ills from Indian societies. In his opinion the task of fulfilling the need for self-respect would have to be faced whatever be the extent

of political freedom gained. Pointing out that even the British monarch in a sovereign independent nation had no freedom to marry a person of his choice and had to abdicate his kingdom, Periyar raised a question whether Gandhi's vision of freedom or Nehru's concept of independence contained even an iota of individual self-respect.

The main tenets of the Self-Respect Movement in society were to be: no kind of inequality among people; no difference between rich and poor in the economic life; men and women to be treated as equals in every respect without differences; attachments to caste, religion, varna, and untouchability to be eradicated from society with a prevalent friendship and unity around the world; and every human being seeing to act according to reason, understanding, desire, and perspective, and shall not be subject to slavery of any kind or manner.

Equality with stress on economic and social equality formed the central theme of the Self-Respect Movement was due to Periyar's determination to fight the inequalities ingrained in the caste system and religious practices. Working on the theme of liberating the society from the baneful social practices perpetrated in the name of dharma and karma, Periyar developed the idea of establishing this movement as the instrument for achieving his objective.

Tamil Brahmins were frequently held responsible by the followers of Periyar for direct or indirect oppression of lower-caste people this resulted into attacks on Brahmins and which among other reasons started a wave of mass-migration of the Brahmin population.

One of the major sociological changes introduced through the self respect movement was the self-respect marriage system, where by marriages were conducted without being officiated by a Brahmin priest. Periyar had regarded the then conventional marriages were mere financial arrangements and often caused great debt through dowry. Self-Respect marriages encouraged inter-caste marriages and arranged marriages to be replaced by love marriages. It was argued by the proponents of self-respect marriage that the then conventional marriages were officiated by Brahmins, who has to be paid for and also the marriage ceremony was in Sanskrit which most people did not understand, and hence were ritual and practices based on blind adherence.

Satya Shodak Samaj

Satyashodhak Samaj was established by Jyotiba Phule on September 24, 1873. This was started as a group whose main aim was to liberate the socially oppressed Shudra and Untouchables castes from exploitation and oppression. Through his writings and activities Phule always condemned Hinduism and the privileged status of priests in it. He openly condemned the inequality in the religious books, orthodox nature of religion, exploitation of masses by the means of it, blind and misleading rituals, and hypocrisy in

the prevalent religion. While condemning the prevalent religion, Phule established Satyashodhak Samaj with the ideals of human well being in broader aspects, human happiness, unity, equality, and easy religious principles and rituals.

Phule was influenced by the writings of Christianity, he said that in this age of science one should not be guided by the dogmas, rituals and superstitions. Phule says that prior to Aryans various indigenous tribes were present in India. He considers the tribes were the first Hindus and Aryans as the second Hindus who came to India. The original ruler of West India was 'Bali' and that the whole kingdom was flourishing with prosperity, but with the advent of Aryans caste consciousness was injected in the society and this led to various wars and hierarchical society.

He considers that all the evils in society is the result of Aryans. They were responsible for converting an egalitarian society like India into a non-egalitarian one. He asked people to forget interpersonal differences and come together as "Bahujan"(community of people) and adopt one identity i.e. "Maratha" to fight against injustice and inequality. He said that Arya Samaj movement speaking about reforms should not be acceptable for the reason that it promoted Aryans superiority and culture. He indicated that nationalist movement will never give you space for the benefits of the people at the lowest rung of the hierarchy as it is dominated by Brahmins and Baniyas. To get away from the domination of Brahmin he asked people not to get themselves involved in rituals. Ambedkar later joined Satya Shodhak Samaj and consequently developed a party known as 'Dalit Panther Party' which later came to be known as 'Republican Party of India'.

Dalit Movements

Dalit, also called **Outcaste**, is a self-designation for a group of people traditionally regarded as Untouchables. Dalits are a mixed population of numerous caste groups all over India. While the caste system has been abolished under the Indian constitution, some people claim that there is still discrimination and prejudice against Dalits in India. Since Indian independence, significant steps have been taken to provide opportunities in jobs and education. Many social organizations have encouraged proactive provisions to better the conditions of Dalits through improved education, health and employment.

In the context of traditional Hindu society, Dalit status has often been historically associated with occupations regarded as ritually impure, such as involving leatherwork, butchering, or removal of rubbish, animal carcasses, and waste. Dalits work as manual labourers cleaning streets, latrines, and sewers. Engaging in these activities was considered to be polluting to the individual, and this pollution was considered contagious. As a result, Dalits were commonly segregated, and banned from full participation in Hindu social life. For example, they could not enter a temple nor a school, and were required to stay outside the village. Elaborate precautions were sometimes observed to prevent incidental contact between

Dalits and other castes. Discrimination against Dalits still exists in rural areas in the private sphere, in everyday matters such as access to eating places, schools, temples and water sources. It has largely disappeared in urban areas and in the public sphere.^[74] Some Dalits have successfully integrated into urban Indian society, where caste origins are less obvious and less important in public life. In rural India, however, caste origins are more readily apparent and Dalits often remain excluded from local religious life, though some qualitative evidence suggests that its severity is fast diminishing.

Dalit movement receives momentum and confidence from Gandhi. He was recognised as mass leader and when he dined with Dalits it gave a mass message to eradicate this discrimination. He gave the concept of Harijan. Most of the people who could not go for Sanskritisation went for conversion as a protest against Brahminic domination. Gandhiji said that "one is high or low on the basis of deeds and not on the basis of birth".

Gail omvedt considers that Dalit movement is not an ideological movement but rather it is a class movement. Dalit identity and poverty as an experience are interconnected to each other. Since the beginning of Indian civilisation till contemporary times Dalits are oppressed class. They are victims of monopolistic culture of the Hindu pundits. Thus their condition is no different from blacks in case of West.

Over the period of time Dalit movement in India started losing mass appeal as it was hijacked by specific group of people for the glorification of their own political interest i.e. from Dalit Panthers party to Republican Party of India and subsequently Bahujan Samaj party is the indication of politicisation of Dalit cause rather than focusing upon ameliorating the conditions of Dalits. Some sociologists are also concerned about the rise of Dalits within Dalit. Their concern is that Dalit movement in India has given way to the growth of elitism and that different Dalit leaders does not only engage in contesting different ideologies but they also keep changing their ideology according to their own convenience. Therefore Dalit party today is not a product of Dalit movement rather it is a politics of opportunism and politics of convenience similarl to other political parties.

Time is come when Dalit should not accept the cultural subordination as a matter of fact but the pride and conviction they should glorify the idea that "yes we are Dalit" and open their eyes so that they are no more taken for a ride by political parties who are least concerned about their upliftment and more concerned about their own vested selfish interest.

In conclusion it can be advocated that in India Dalit movement is a movement of protest, a protest against Brahmanism, inequality, cultural subordination. It wants to demolish the distinction between man and man. It was to create a society driven by self-respect, inclusiveness and equity. It tries to homogenise all depressed classes together injecting into their mind new found ideology. Thus Dalit movement is an ideologically charged ,homogenised class movement intended to bring change of structure rather than change in structure.

Feminist Movement

The **feminist movement** (also known as the **Women's Movement**), refers to a series of campaigns for reforms on issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, women's suffrage, sexual harassment and sexual violence.

A **Lingam** advocate the feminist movement in India is slowly leading towards NGOisation. She finds out that thousands of NGOs working around the country are taking up women issues differently in different space. She believes that women movement in India should be integrated in order to become more focused in approach and appeal.

Veena Mazumdar finds out that women movement in India is mostly accused to being middle-class, educated women's movement who are questioning to women's rights both in public and private sphere. But in case of grassroot level the NGOs addressing to women's problem are more concerned about women's livelihood, their protection and their rights. Therefore there is a paradox between issues and question with regard to strategies associated with women movement in urban and rural India.

Women movement in India is a watchdog to the excesses of state and it is greatly engaged in highlighting problems of women with regard to their rights and duties. Looking into the diversity, complexity and diffusion of women issues different sociologists have developed various approaches to study feminist movement. **Gail Omvedt** divided India's feminist movement into two types such as women equality movement and women liberation movement.

Historically feminist movement can be divided into two phases:

First phase: 1850-1915

The colonial venture into modernity brought concepts of democracy, equality and individual rights. The rise of the concept of nationalism and introspection of discriminatory practices brought about social reform movements related to caste and gender relations. This first phase of feminism in India was initiated by men to uproot the social evils of sati (widow immolation), to allow widow remarriage, to forbid child marriage, and to reduce illiteracy, as well as to regulate the age of consent and to ensure property rights through legal intervention. Women in this phase were categorized along with lower castes as subjects of social reforms and welfare instead of being recognized as autonomous agents of change. The emphasis was on recreating new space in pre-existing feminine roles of caring. The women involved were those related to male activists, elite, western educated, upper caste Hindus.

Second Phase: 1915-1947

Gandhiji legitimized and expanded Indian women's public activities by initiating them into the non-violent civil disobedience movement against the British Raj. He exalted their feminine roles of caring,

self-abnegation, sacrifice and tolerance; and carved a niche for those in public space. Women-only organizations like All India Women's Conference (AIWC) and the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) emerged. Women were grappling with the issues relating to the scope of women's political participation, women's franchise, communal awards, and leadership roles in political parties.

Women's participation in the freedom struggle developed their critical consciousness about their role and rights in independent India. This resulted in the introduction of the franchise and civic rights of women in the Indian constitution. There was provision for women's upliftment through affirmative action, maternal health and child care provision (crèches), equal pay for equal work etc. The state adopted a patronizing role towards women. Women in India did not have to struggle for basic rights as did women in the West. The utopia ended soon when the social and cultural ideologies and structures failed to honour the newly acquired concepts of fundamental rights and democracy.

Kalpana Shah divides Indian feminist movement into three types:

- *Moderate* - it talks of gender equality, sensitisation of state towards the needs of women.
- *Socialist* - it is largely influenced by Marxist ideology and speaks about class mobilisation and class action.
- *Liberal* - it is concerned about integrative approach to women issues involving state, women organisation, women research centres and feminist groups.

Women's movement is an eye opener not only to amend the Indian society at large indicating that state needs to be gender sensitive. Man needs to create space for women so that they genuinely serve to make Indian society inclusive an egalitarian. Therefore gender movement may not be considered as silent revolution but still it is not a violent one. Striking a balance between the two terms of methodology, one can say women movement in India is more Indian addressing to issues associated with everyday life of women coming from different strata of social life.

Environment Movements

There is a strong linkage between nature and culture in India where nature is worshipped. Max Mueller said that the Aryan religion is the most ancient religion known to mankind and Aryans worshipped five great cosmic forces i.e. **sky, earth, water, fire and air**. Nature nurtures individual and is the foundation to our religion. Love for nature is not contemporary phenomena. Since historic times they are never considered as lifeless. Love for nature is therefore voluntaristic in case of India. Nature is treated as mother, people go for holy bath for purification and therefore they carry sacred embodiments. **Atharva Veda** gives description about different kinds of plants which have medicinal value hence nature is the source of man's life.

Women and nature related as nature is fertile so are women, women and nature both produced and reproduced, fertility is cyclic in both cases, nature is Centre of love, joy, compassion and happiness so are women; nature stands for sacrifice so are women. Therefore nature is close to women. When nature becomes annoyed we experience earthquakes, cyclones, volcanoes etc similarly when woman get angry they take the role of Kali, Durga.

Various ethnic groups have historic relation with nature. The tribes go for development of the nature because they have respect and love for nature. Many tribes in India not only consider forest as a place of residence but also as a place where the spirits of their ancestors live. During the birth of a child he/she is taken to the ancestors tree to take the blessing of their ancestors. Nature ensures life, health, protection, foundation to religion and food supply.

During British are colonial rulers found huge deposits of minerals present in the forest. They tried to persuade the tribal people and trap mineral wealth. Forest became the land of the state and the forest produce became first right of the state. The use of land for commercial purposes displaced the tribals leading to distressful relationships.

Chipko movement initiated by Sunderlal Bahuguna who practised the Gandhian methods of satyagraha and non-violent resistance, through the act of hugging trees to protect them from falling. The modern Chipko movement started in the early 1970s in the Garhwal Himalayas of Uttarakhand, with growing awareness towards rapid deforestation. The landmark event in this struggle took place in 1974, when a group of peasant women acted to prevent the cutting of trees and reclaim their traditional forest rights that were threatened by the contractor system of the state Forest Department. Village communities took responsibility to protect forest from police and commercial forest users. They initiated 24-hour surveillance which persisted for 7 to 8 years. This is one of the most successful self organised movement by villagers wherein men, women and children were all involved which forced the state to enter into negotiations and declare traditional trees will not be uprooted. Their actions inspired hundreds of such actions at the grassroots level throughout the region. By the 1980s the movement had spread throughout

India and led to formulation of people-sensitive forest policies, which put a stop to the open felling of trees .

The Chipko movement, though primarily a livelihood movement rather than a forest conservation movement, went on to become a rallying point for many future environmentalists, environmental protests and movements the world over and created a precedent for non-violent protest. It occurred at a time when there was hardly any environmental movement in the developing world, and its success meant that the world immediately took notice of this non-violent **Tree hugging movement**, which was to inspire in time many such eco-groups by helping to slow down the rapid deforestation, expose vested interests, increase ecological awareness, and demonstrate the viability of people power. Above all, it stirred up the existing civil society in India, which began to address the issues of tribal and marginalized people. So much so that, a quarter of a century later, India Today mentioned the people behind the "forest satyagraha" of the Chipko movement as amongst "100 people who shaped India"

Ramachandra Guha writes that dams are symbols of civilisation, development, economy, modernity. It talks about sociology of dams and raise many questions "Dams For Whom"? He writes that due to dams, from 1950 to 2000 around 15 million people are being displaced. Peasants, tribal communities, illiterate people have no exposure to modern education, they don't have the skills and hence they are directly dependent on natural resources. The state has not provided adequate rehabilitation to the affected people.

Jawahar Lal Nehru said that "for the larger cause of development of nation people should make some sacrifice". He considered industries as temples of modernity and to Achieve economic development they need to be set up. But in reality the actual cost of development is paid by the indigenous people who in the name of development lost everything.

Due to inadequate rehabilitation program, rehabilitation colonies set up by the government looks like a war zone . Humans have been left at the mercy of nature. No productive resources are available to be exploited for their survival and people dependent on government ration had to wait four weeks. Nehru considered the industrial development as builder of modern India but it has created more disparity leading to poverty and inequality wherein there is growth but no development.

Sardar Sarovar Project

This dam is one of India's most controversial dam projects (over Narmada River) and its environmental impact and net costs and benefits are widely debated. There are two groups present:

- Beneficiaries - (big industries).
- Displaced tribal people.

People love for nature is subdued by the state lust for nature. Tribal livelihood versus interest of capitalist led to large-scale protest which worked as an eye-opener to the governments hegemonistic actions. The rich farmers of Gujarat wants the height of Dam to be increased whereas the tribal people of Madhya Pradesh protest against it. The capacity of the rich, to lobby and influence political decision-making had adversely affected not only the interest of the tribals but degradation of environment. There is visible contest between state development agenda and people's livelihood.

Chilka Bachao Andolan : This movement was a result of introduction of commercial fish cultivation which affected the livelihood of local fishermen as it deteriorated the ecological conditions thereby affecting the direct dependency of people on fishing. People went for both violent and non-violent methods followed by massive protest resulting into a ban on trawlers. This also resulted the return of migratory birds and preserved the beauty of nature and also its ecology.

The reluctance of the government to learn from past mistakes (Bhopal gas tragedy) has led to promotion of capitalist interest not only at the cost of local community but also environment. Opencast mines located at various places like Orissa, Jharkhand, Bengal is not only affecting the health of local communities but also severely degrading environment and destroying forest thereby leading to natural catastrophe like Flash floods, landslides etc. New awareness programs are getting momentum in these areas and peoples movement are coming to the forefront.

Gandhian crusaders like Baba Amte, Sunder Lal Bahuguna etc follow a method of protest that says that there should be more of connectivity between people and nature. More one has interest for material comfort more we go for exploitation of nature. Nature has limited growth and demand is increasing which is creating a lot of pressure on the ecology. To abolish this problem we have to contain our needs and develop a tendency to live with nature in harmony. They ask people to go for **sustainable development approach** rather than high-speed approach.

The spread of environmental awareness and media has also played pivotal role in emergence of environmental movement. People were previously unaware of the importance of the environment. But as the environmental awareness increased due various reasons people started protecting their environment. Some e.g. are the local movements to protect the purity of different rivers such as Ganga and Yamuna. The greening of many Indian cities also comes under this category. The Bhagidari movement of Delhi is a good example of this kind of environmental movement. Media has also played an important role in sustaining theses movements.

A balance must be established between economic growth and environmental protection. We need to go for systematic planning and scientific application through the use of modern technology to minimise environmental impact as much as possible and make it a development led growth rather than growth without development.

Ethnicity And Identity Movements

An *ethnic group* (or *ethnicity*) is a group of people whose members identify with each other, through a common heritage, often consisting of a common language, a common culture (often including a shared religion) and an ideology that stresses common ancestry or endogamy. Another definition is that it's a biologically self-perpetuating group sharing common interest in a homeland connected with a specific geographical area, a common language and traditions, including food preferences, and a common religious faith".

When we discuss about the problem of tribe we find ourselves completely lost because of lack of communication with them. Tribals can be best understood by knowing their residual tribal elements. When tribal people start coming into mainstream and start having close connection with the larger civilisation, it leads to the problem of adjustment which many a times also results into their exploitation. As a result they go for protest and movement.

The whole question of tribal identity has been lost because they have been subjected to variable cultural and religious influences depending upon the region they are living into. For example in north-eastern States Christianity dominates, in Kerala there is domination of Islam and in central India Hinduism dominates.

Tribals entry into Hindu fold is not a matter of voluntary choice as portrayed by GS Ghurye. Sanskritisation is not a voluntaristic process for the tribals but a compulsion for them to self sustain in mainstream society. When state reorganisation committee was constituted it gave importance to cultural identity. Hence states were created on linguistic basis.

Struggle between tribes and non-tribes are historic but more specific during colonial times. Tribal protest was not anti-imperialism as they were unaware of this term. They just meant to control their own land. The tribal movements in central India was against exploitation. Tribal never makes a difference between indigenous exploitation and colonial exploitation.

The Hindu identity of the tribals have been questioned time and again which made them realise that they are Hindus not by choice but by force and compulsion. Every community while searching for identity went for territorial demarcation. Language cannot bring unity among people because different tribes speak different languages therefore what brings unity is the territory. If Asamese for Ahom, Maharashtra for Marathis then what is for tribal people.

Territory is essential for political assertion and this movement became intensified when the tribals were dislocated and wanted their land back. Fragmented tribal movements went for unification, proclaiming their identity, territory, state etc to revive their past culture e.g. Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh identity are examples of such movement.

Jharkhand movement revolves around factors like culture, economic and socio - polity. It is an anti-colonial and anti-imperial movement; anti-government movement which is reacting to development displacement and finally anti-exploitation movement united against traders and moneylenders. Identity is the foundation to tribal movement in general and Jharkhand movement in particular. Identity is foundation to social movement has been an essence of ethno-politics in India.

In case of tribal society geographical isolation, land alienation, industrialisation, inflow of non-tribal population into tribal areas put the tribal population into a disadvantaged position which led to glorification of tribal identity which further resulted into a movement in search of separate state. Identity focused movement has gone through stages of revolution starting from the colonial period. Tribals were exploited in the hands of the colonial rulers who drove them out of forest and stripped them off their livelihood.

*During the second stage many tribal leaders evolved from different parts of the country who glorified tribal rights and in a heroic manner fought war against the colonial rulers and their agents rejecting the exploitative land tenure policy, encroachment on forest land and forest resources. Birsa Munda movement, Gond rebellion, Santhal rebellion are often considered as peasant movement by sociologists but **Dr. V. Xaxa** considers these movements as identity focused movements. He says that when Hindu peasants simply rebelled against exploitative land tenure system, the tribal people rebelled against the loss of identity than just loss of livelihood. He criticised the nationalist sociologists like Ghurye, MN Srinivas, NK Bose who believed that tribes voluntarily accepted Hindu culture and that they are backward Hindus. Tribals went for non-tribal identity for social recognition, for survival because non-tribals were predominant in every area. Therefore it is a form of enforced identity.*

*During the first stage, the revivalist movement got momentum in tribal India. The tribal leadership emphasised on integration of all tribes, irrespective of name, location and class position. The tribe exposed to modernity took up the leadership role highlighted the exploitation of tribes in the hands of the non-tribal and initiated reforms in tribal life and culture and advised tribals to go for secular beliefs and practices. **Adivasi Mahasabha** was constituted and attempts were made to unify all dispersed tribes located in central Indian state to stand together and go for homeland for tribesmen, known as greater Jharkhand as sovereign state. The nationalist aspiration of tribes of central India is considered as an attempt for tribal demand to control the benefits of progress and modernity. Srinivas considers it as an obstacle in the process of nation-building and Ghurye tells this as secessionist and anti-national movement.*

After India's independence ethnic mobilisation of tribes of India is focusing attention on the state centric exploitation. State has the mandatory responsibility to protect the rights of people but in case of tribal, and the big dams, encroachment of forest land, expansion of industries in tribal pockets are initiated by the state. State benefits at the cost of people therefore gap between the two is so

greatly expanded that it has given way to alienation and marginalisation of the tribe. Thus the tribes were mobilised to have a people centric state, a government of their own who would be sympathetic to their needs and concern therefore a demand for separate tribal state, identity is being used as platform for ethnic consultation in search of political assertion in tribal India.

Even in tribal states non-tribals have a significant economic and numerical presence as a result the tribal states evolved public policies that do not fulfil the aspiration of tribal community. Therefore the tribes are not divided on class lines which is glorifying naxalite movement and Maoist insurgency in tribal states. The marginalisation, displacement and alienation of tribals in their own soil is providing foundation to common ideology and common class identity accelerating class conflicts in tribal India. Therefore central Indian tribes are shifting from identity-based movement to issue-based movement.

In case of North East India, the states of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura are experiencing identity movements which has become more pronounced in contemporary India. In Manipur two groups exist i.e. Nagas and Kukkis. These tribes are engaged in war with each other and are fighting in perpetuity for their identity. Identity has become a source of distinction and has become so powerful in case of tribals in north-eastern India that they can even go to eliminate each other on this basis. Tripura is full with non-tribal population which is the result of escalation of conflicts among the people.

The Bodo people in Assam who consider themselves to be the original inhabitants are outnumbered slowly by the Bengali population who have control over industries which leads to regular conflict between them. Tribal identity is glorified due to this infiltration of non-tribal people into tribal areas.

Nagas were greatly dispersed tribe prior to partition and carried different names in different states of North East India. After independence the demarcation re-marked their dislocation, restricted their mobility and this has challenged their identity which resulted into protest and movement and in most cases resulting into violence and loss of life.

In 1970 separate State of Nagaland came into existence thus giving right to the people to have their own government which further glorified political aspirations by various tribes of other states. The same thing happened in case of Mizoram wherein the Mizos who considered themselves as 'Highlanders' and indigenous people/original inhabitant protested for a separate State status which was granted to them.

But rather than solving the problem by the creation of separate state for Nagas and Mizos it further complicated the problem. Indigenous tribes belonging to other areas also started protesting for separate statehood. "Nagas are having Nagaland, Mizos are having Mizoram - what is for us?" This

question further aggravated the protest for a separate statehood in several parts of north-eastern India which is still continuing.

Another reason for the coordination of identity-based protest in north-eastern States is for the reason that even though autonomy was given to the people but practically it was squeezed from the people themselves i.e. creation of district councils to fulfill their aspirations which failed to break any ice with them as it was occupied by powerful people with vested interests

Once tribal state is created, the search for tribal identities by various other tribes led to war against each other over the issue who will hold major share in power structure. This gave rise to ethno-politics in India which is highly complex particularly in case of North East.

Identity gets glorified because of two reasons i.e. inaction of government and over reaction of government to the protest. Identity appear, disappeared and consolidates due to different reasons and at different points of time. Other movements can die out but identity movement will survive in one way or the other e.g. in contemporary times-Maharashtra Navnirman Sena.

Thus it can be concluded that identity and tribal conflicts in India is a conflict between:

- state versus people;
- within a state - insider versus outsider;
- within tribe - one faction versus other faction