



**M.A. HISTORY**  
**SEMESTER - II (CBCS)**

**PAPER - VIII**  
**HISTORY OF**  
**EMANCIPATORY MOVEMENTS**  
**IN MODERN WORLD**

**SUBJECT CODE: 93418**

**Prof. Suhas Pednekar**

Vice Chancellor  
University of Mumbai, Mumbai

**Prof. Ravindra D. Kulkarni**

Pro Vice-Chancellor  
University of Mumbai

**Prof. Prakash Mahanwar**

Director  
IDOL, University of Mumbai

**Programme Co-ordinator**

: **Anil R. Bankar**

Associate Professor of History and  
Head, Faculty of Humanities,  
IDOL, University of Mumbai

**Course Co-ordinator**

: **Shivdas Changdeo Ghadge**

Assistant Professor,  
Dept. of History, IDOL, University of Mumbai

**Editor**

: **Dr. Vincent D'mello**

Ex-I/c Principal, Associate Professor and  
Head, Dept of History,  
St. Joseph College, Virar, Dist. Palghar.

**Course Writers**

: **Dr. Swapna Hemant Samel**

Sr. Vice Principal and Head, Dept. of History,  
B.K.Birla College (Autonomous), Kalyan (W).

: **Dr. Anjana Sinha**

Assistant Professor,  
Dept of History, R.N. College, Hijpur,  
Vaishali, Bihar-844101

: **Dr. Y. Samuel Wesley**

Associate Professor, Dept. of History,  
C.H.M. College, Ulhasnagar.

: **Dr. Suvarna Jadhav**

Associate Professor, Dept. of History,  
B.K.Birla College (Autonomous), Kalyan (W).

**Dr. Seema Mamta Minz**

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Tribal Studies,  
Central University Jharkhand Cheri- Manatu,  
P.O. Kanke, Dist. Ranchi, Zarkhand-835222.

**Anil R. Bankar**

Associate Professor of History and  
Head, Faculty of Humanities,  
IDOL, University of Mumbai

March 2022, Print - 1

**Published by**

: **Director,**

Institute of Distance and Open Learning,  
University of Mumbai,  
Vidyanagari, Mumbai - 400 098.

**DTP composed and Printed by: Mumbai University Press**

# CONTENTS

---

Unit No.	Title	Page No.
<b>Module I: RACE</b>		
1	Understanding Race and Apartheid .....	1
2	Martin Luther King, Jr. and Afro-American Civil Rights Movements .....	9
3	Nelson Mandela and Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa .....	16
<b>Module II: GENDER</b>		
4	First Wave Feminist Movement.....	24
5	Second Wave Feminist Movement .....	32
6	Third Wave Feminist Movement .....	48
<b>Module III: CASTE</b>		
7	Concept and Understandings .....	62
8	Caste as Tradition, Power and Humiliation .....	71
9	Anti-caste movements of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar .....	76
10	Anti-caste movements of Periyar E.V. Ramasamy .....	85
<b>Module IV: CLASS AND TRIBE</b>		
11	Marxist and Neo-Marxist Understandings of Class. ....	94
12	Nature of Labour Movements in India .....	103
13	Understandings of Tribe and Nature of Indian Tribal Struggles in the 20th Century .....	116

---

M.A. HISTORY  
SEMESTER - II (CBCS) PAPER - VIII  
**HISTORY OF EMANCIPATORY MOVEMENTS  
IN MODERN WORLD**

**SYLLABUS**

**Core Paper VIII: History of Emancipatory Movements in Modern World**

**Objectives:** To make students aware about social movements of the world and introducing her/him with main emancipatory movements of the modern world.

**Module**

**1. Race**

- (a) Understanding Race and Apartheid
- (b) Martin Luther King, Jr. and Afro-American Civil Rights Movements
- (c) Nelson Mandela and Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa

**2. Gender**

- (a) First Wave Feminist Movement
- (b) Second Wave Feminist Movement
- (c) Third Wave Feminist Movement

**3. Caste**

- (a) Concept and Understandings
- (b) Caste as Tradition, Power and Humiliation
- (c) Anti-caste movements of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Periyar E.V.Ramasamy.

**4. Class and Tribe**

- (a) Marxist and Neo-Marxist Understandings of Class
- (b) Nature of Labour Movements in India
- (c) Understandings of Tribe and Nature of Indian Tribal Struggles in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

## References:

Alan B. Anderson, George W. Pickering, [Confronting the Color Line: The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago](#), University of Georgia Press, 2008.

Andrews Kenneth T., [Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: The Mississippi Civil Rights Movement and Its Legacy](#), University of Chicago Press, 2004

Callahan Nancy, [The Freedom Quilting Bee: Folk Art and the Civil Rights Movement](#), University of Alabama Press, 2005

Babbitt Susan E., Sue Campbell, (ed.) [Racism and Philosophy](#), Cornell University Press, 1999

Borse Sachin, [Mandela](#), Rajhans Prakashan (Marathi)

Carol Anderson, [Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African-American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955](#), Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Chakrabarty Dipesh, [Rethinking Working – Class History: Bengal 1890-1940](#), OUP, Delhi, 1989.

Chandavarkar Rajanayan, [The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay 1900-1940](#), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994.

Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, [Tribes of India, The Struggle for Survival](#), Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

Gaikwad Kishor Ghatgecha Shripakr Babasaheb Ambedkar, [Shri Gandharvaveda Prakashan](#), Pune, (Marathi)

Gregory Steven, Roger Sanjek, (ed.) [Race](#), Rutgers University Press, 1994

Guha Amalendu, [Planter Raj to Swaraj: Freedom Struggle and Electoral Politics in Assam: 1926-1947](#), ICSSR, New Delhi, 1977

Jodhka Surrender S., [Caste \(Oxford India Short Introductions\)](#), OUP, New Delhi, 2012

Khalil Gibran Muhammad, [The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America](#), Harvard University Press, 2010

Calloway -Thomas Carolyn, Lucites John Louis (eds), [King Martin Luther, Jr. and the Sermonic Power of Public Discourse](#), University of Alabama Press, 1993.

Krulokke Charlotte, [Gender Communication Theories and Analyses: From Silence to Performance](#), Sage, 2005.

Kwame Anthony Appiah, [Lines of Descent: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Emergence of Identity](#), Harvard University Press, 2014.

Memmi Albert, Translated and with an introduction by Steve Martinot [Racism](#), University of Minnesota Press, 1999

- Mills Charles W., *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*, Cornell University Press, 1998
- Mills Charles W., *The Racial Contract*, Cornell University Press, 1997
- Mitchell W.J.T., *Seeing Through Race*, Harvard University Press, 2012
- Morning Ann, *The Nature of Race: How Scientists Think and Teach about Human Difference*, University of California Press, 2011
- Murray Pauli, *States' Laws on Race and Color*, University of Georgia Press, 1996.
- O'Malley Michael, *Face Value: The Entwined Histories of Money and Race in America*, University of Chicago Press, 2012
- Parfitt Tudor, *Black Jews in Africa and the Americas*, Harvard University Press, 2013
- Pathy Jagannath, *Tribal Peasantry: Dynamics of Development*, Inter-India, New Delhi, 1984
- Paul Alkebulan, *Survival Pending Revolution: The History of the Black Panther Party*, University of Alabama Press, 2007
- Purdue Theda, *Race and the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition of 1895*, University of Georgia Press, 2010
- R. Bentley Anderson, *Black, White, and Catholic: New Orleans Interracialism, 1947-1956*, Vanderbilt University Press, 2005
- Sankar Sumit, *Modern India 1885-1947*, Macmillan Madras, 1985
- Sheth Falguni A., *Toward a Political Philosophy of Race*, State University of New York Press, 2009
- Smith Mark M., *How Race Is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses*, University of North Carolina Press, 2006
- Smith Michael Peter, Feagin Joe R., (ed.) *The Bubbling Cauldron: Race, Ethnicity, and the Urban Crisis*, University of Minnesota Press, 1995.
- Spears Arthur K., (ed.) *Race and Ideology: Language, Symbolism, and Popular Culture*, Wayne State University Press, 1999.
- Tom Bottomore (ed.), *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Blackwell Publication, 1985
- Xaxa Virginus, *State, Society and Tribes: Issues in Post-Colonial India*, Pearson Longman, Delhi, 2008

## UNDERSTANDING RACE AND APARTHEID

### Unit Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Race: A basis of classification of Human Kind
- 1.3 History of the Term and its use in Colonial Power
- 1.4 Critical Race Perspective
- 1.5 Apartheid
- 1.6 Resistance and Protest against Apartheid
- 1.7 Summary
- 1.8 Questions
- 1.9 References

---

### 1.0 Objectives

---

- 1. To study the basic ideas about the concept of race
- 2. To examine the invention and growth and deployment of the term in colonial contexts
- 3. To know the Critical Race Perspective and dismantling of popular and scientific myths
- 4. To assess the Anti-racial/apartheid resistance

---

### 1.1 Introduction

---

The chapter delineates Race as a way of categorizing human populations across the globe based on certain physical and mental characteristics. It demonstrates how this categorization is based on hierarchical evaluation of races translating in inferiority of non-white and non-western people. There is an attempt to discuss race as socially constructed and historically instituted category through colonial scientific discourses. Racial discriminations manifested itself through the political establishment called apartheid which is the concern of following section. The last part deals with a brief account of anti-apartheid movement

---

### 1.1 Race: A basis of classification of Human Kind

---

Race is a basis of classification of human kinds on certain biological characteristics generating, in turn, discrete (racial) groupings (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2020). By discrete racial groupings would mean that a biologically based racial characteristic will be shared by a single racial group and not the other races. So, the biological differences

are understood innate and genetic and naturalized features of particular racial type. Further, the genealogy and ancestry of race get associated with geographical locations spatially segregated across various regions of the globe viz. Africa, Europe, Asia, North and South America (ibid). The inherited racial and biological foundations manifest itself primarily in physical phenotypes, such as skin colour, eye shape, hair texture, and bone structure and, perhaps also behavioural phenotypes, such as intelligence and delinquency (ibid). The ‘naturalized’ biological features can engender a sorting out the world population into white, yellow and black or Caucasoid, Mongoloid and Negroid (Lieberman and Scupin 2011)

Interpretation of the term ‘race’ as it applies to groups of persons is inconsistent, and the definition of this term depends on the motive of person using it (Witzig 1996). The classifying of people on the basis of colour is unscientific because it constitutes the subjective labeling of a complexion hue that can be adaptively or environmentally altered (ibid). The placing of the term “race” in inverted commas is now seen by some sociologists as a useful way of indicating that this manner of categorizing individuals and population groups is not based on any valid biologically based distinction between the genetic make up of ‘differently’ identified races (Scott and Marshall 2009). The sociology of race is largely concerned with examining the causes and consequences of the socially constructed division of social groups according to their so-called race (ibid: 624). Social scientists including the sociologists are more concerned about how the politics of state based on racism translates into segregation of certain racial groups and minority populations in housing and labour market subjecting them to material and symbolic disadvantages (ibid).

**Check Your Progress:**

Q.1. Explain the basic ideas about the concept of “Race”.

---

---

---

---

---

**1.2 History of the Term and its use in Colonial Power**

---

The classical scholar Frank M. Snowden Jr. (Hannaford 1996) describes early encounters of White Europeans with Africans; the Greeks and Romans described the latter as “Ethiopians”, and subsequently, the term applied generally to inhabitants of Africa, south of Egypt and to others of swarthy complexion (ibid). In these beginning phases of inter-racial encounters, the Graco-Roman antiquity did not comprehend race with an ethnocentric perspective with white as superior and as a reference point to judge all other groupings based on race (Thompson 2013).

From sixteenth century on, which also coincided with western modernization, industrialization and colonization by the Europeans, the inherent superiority of the Greeks over inferior races and regions were

emphasized (ibid). Herodotus's *Histories* were regarded by the physical anthropologists of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as precursor of modern ethnography despite the fact that Herodotus did not propagate the *racial superiority* but mostly the *differences* among people (Samuels 2015). Simultaneously, Aristotle's ideas were (mis)appropriated to justify racial superiority post-renaissance (ibid). The concept of race with its close links to the deterministic biology emerged with the rise of modern natural philosophy and the latter's concern with taxonomy (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2020). The first important articulation of race is associated with Francois Bernier's, *A New Division of Earth* (1684) in which the author opined that the first type of race included the people inhabiting most of Europe and North Africa, the second were constituted by people of Africa and Sahara Desert, possessing smooth black skin, while the short and squat Lapps of northern Scandinavia constituted another type (ibid). One of the significant names in instituting racialist thinking in the west is Francis Galton, a proponent of eugenics whose racialist thinking developed with his travel to South Africa as he went on proposing selective breeding as to improve human race (Schumacher 2019). In Galton's book *Hereditary Genius*, he devotes a chapter, 'Comparative Worth of Different Races' to categorize different races (ibid). Low intelligence becomes a marker of racial differences during nineteenth century scientific imaginations. It was a commonsense to most White observers, including Darwin and Galton that Negroes and Australian aboriginals have less intelligence than White people (ibid). In the eighteenth century, "scientific racialism" emanates through the writings of Carlous Linnaeus, a Swedish scientist who developed racial categories and attributed traits and qualities and skin colour viz white, red, yellow and black to each one of these several categories (Lieberman and Scupin 2011). In Linnaeus's description, Homo Europaeu are gentle and governed by laws, Homo Asiaticus as haughty and governed by opinions, Homo Americanus as choleric (short tempered) and regulated by custom, Homo Afer as indolent and governed by caprice (ibid). The stature of Linnaeus as botanist and taxonomist lent the aura of validity to this (ibid).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century evolutionist anthropology supported biological and cultural racism which continued till early twentieth century (ibid). Charls G. Seligman's ethnographic study of Africa delineated races in terms of white and black physical types; he attributes "Hamitic" type located in northern Africa having affinity and resemblance with the White races, and Negroid of sub-Saharan Africa with dark skin interpreted as immobile, and backward (Pierre 2018). Anthropology was nurtured by imperial and colonial powers and in turn, the colonial anthropology till the second World War contributed towards 'othering' and thereby sustaining colonial understanding of the 'natives' and 'colonized world'. The discipline of Anthropology itself originated in colonial milieu to meet primarily the administrative problems which arose in the process of expansion and consolidation of colonialism (Pathy 1981).

## Check Your Progress:

Q.1. Examine the history of the Term and its use in Colonial Power.

---

---

---

---

---

### 1.3 Critical Race Perspective

---

Critical Race perspective aims at questioning the naturalization of physical features into categories, and questions and contests the way these racial divisions, artificially created, are then used to subjugate the non-white, particularly the black communities. In this understanding, the formal racial inequality i.e a mere official equality before the law does not address the deeper structural and institutional inequalities which are deeply discriminatory and invisible and keep racially disadvantaged groups in subordinate position despite formal legal rights. Structural inequalities are historically instituted by the powerful groups which continue even when formal equality is constitutionally promised. The liberal idea of political empowerment through formal equality undermines the historically instituted inequalities, particularly through colonialism and capitalism. The marginalized and racially disadvantaged groups such as Afro-Americans cannot not suddenly experience equality vis-à-vis powerful white groups with mere extension of formal equality through legal changes. As the significant power positions within state and market structures are held by the racially advantaged or superior groups, the institutional practices reinforce racial discrimination and injustices. As Britannica.com on Critical Race Theory ([critical race theory | Definition, Principles, & Facts | Britannica](#)) illustrates:

African Americans and Hispanic Americans,... for an example, are more likely than similarly qualified white persons to be denied loans or jobs; they tend to pay more than whites for a broad range of products and services...; they are more likely than whites to be unjustly suspected of criminal behaviour by the police or private (white) citizens; and they are more likely than whites to be victims of police brutality, including the unjustified use of lethal force. If convicted of a crime people of colour, particularly African Americans, are generally imprisoned more often and for a longer periods than white who are guilty of same offences...

Critical Race Theory (CRT), therefore constitutes a movement that seeks to understand how white supremacy as a legal, cultural and political condition is reproduced and maintained in the contemporary U.S. context (De la Garza 2016). Even though CRT scholars recognize race as central, they acknowledge that multiple forms of power and oppression capable of operating simultaneously and in different registers (ibid). Based on this understanding, CRT scholar emphasize intersectional critique including class, gender, sexuality, colonization, ability and other forms of identity and marginalization (ibid).

In current Covid-19 context, structural racism manifested in higher risk of infection and mortality among racialized minorities (Zalla et al 2021). For example, 14 percent of population of Illinois identifies as black or African American, but this group accounts for an estimated 19 percent of confirmed cases and 27 percent deaths from Covid-19 (ibid). In North Carolina, 9 percent of population is from Hispanic origin, but this group represented an estimated a 35 percent of confirmed cases and 10 percent of deaths during Covid 19 (ibid). This is a more recent and perfect example of structural inequality.

Another aspect of institutionalized racism can be seen in the criminal justice system with high rates of incarceration of African-Americans and other racial minorities in the U.S. as well high rates of victimization of these racial minorities (Mauer 2011). Black Lives Matter is a response to police brutality against black communities. Founded in 2013, the BLM movement expanded in 2014 after the police killing of two unarmed men- Eric Garner and Michael Brown ([Black Lives Matter | Definition, Founders, Goals, History, & Influence | Britannica](#)). Garner died in Staten Island, New York, after a white police officer held him in a prolonged illegal choke hold, and Brown, a teen ager was shot and killed by white police in Ferguson, Missouri- these murders led to large protest culminating in BLM gaining national and international attention (ibid). On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, 46 years black old man was murdered in a neighborhood of Minneapolis when A police officer, Derek Chauvin, kept his knee on Mr. Floyd’s neck for nearly nine minutes even when Mr. Floyd repeatedly said- “I can’t breathe”, and eventually became unresponsive ([George Floyd death: Why US protests are so powerful this time - BBC News](#)). This sparked another wave of BLM movement during president Donald Trump’s regime. Structural inequalities and institutional discriminations surface in greater incidence of black poverty, unequal access to health and education, higher unemployment and low income and precarity. The black neighborhood schools may have less qualified, less-experienced teachers along with over-crowded classrooms. In a study, it was found that a black student was evaluated by one white teacher and one non-white teacher, white- teacher consistently rated black student lower the non-white teacher (Gleeson, 2019).

Critical Race Perspective combines structural issues with intersectionality in understanding and analyzing racial injustices.

**Check Your Progress:**

Q.1. Review on Critical Race Perspective.

---



---



---



---

---

## 1.4 Apartheid

---

The Oxford dictionary describes apartheid as a former political system in South Africa in which only white people had full political rights and other people especially black people were forced to live away from white people, go to separate school, etc. ([apartheid noun - Definition, pictures, pronunciation and usage notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com](#)). It existed as a racial segregation-based policy, and political and economic discriminations against non-white in South Africa benefitting the white minority ([apartheid | Definition, Facts, Beginning, & End | Britannica](#)). Many scholars have attributed economic factors for institutionalization of apartheid- the extreme form of racial discrimination was motivated by white business owners who believed a massive, low-paid African workforce would allow them to make unprecedented profit (Clark and Worger 2011). Others have argued that white workers and farmers also benefitted economically from racially discriminatory laws that protected them from competition with African workers and producers (ibid). Apartheid was enforced through certain legal enactments. The Population Registration Act of 1950 required people to be identified and registered from birth as one of the four distinct racial group- White, Coloured, Bantu (Black African) and Others (Suzman 2021). Bantu is recognized as any aboriginal or tribe of Africa, and a coloured person is the one who is neither Bantu, nor white (ibid). The prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act, 1949 and Immorality Act, 1950 prohibited interracial marriage or sex ([apartheid | Definition, Facts, Beginning, & End | Britannica](#)). Through the Suppression of Communist Act, 1950 South Africa intensified policing and punishing of any act which was interpreted as any political action including protest and resistance against the state and law (Chaskalson 2011). The harsh penalty also included flogging (ibid). Between 1948 and 1990, the apartheid state developed extensive legal mechanism to implement racially based spatial segregation in urban areas including the Group Areas Act, 1950 and the Black Education Act 1953 (Strauss 2019). All these legislative measures facilitated the creation of ethnically defined homelands and enabled the physical displacement of thousands of black persons, who were prohibited from living in areas other than rural reserves (ibid). The spatial reconfiguration of black population also resulted in concentrated pockets of severe inequality, poverty and deprivations (ibid). The institutional framework for separate development has been established by the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, the promotion of Bantu Self-government Act of 1959, The Bantu Homelands Constitution Act of 1971, and Bantu Administration Affairs Act of 1973 (Baldwin 2007). Implementation of these acts led to the removal of Black communities from White Settlements and resettling them in African reserves (Ibid). The resettlement camps have been described as the impoverished and destitute ‘dumping grounds (ibid).

## Check Your Progress:

Q.1. Write a note on 'Apartheid'.

---

---

---

---

### 1.5 Resistance and Protest against Apartheid

---

The resistance against Apartheid which is also known as Anti- Apartheid movement can be traced to the Boycott Movement in June 1959. In 1959 a group of South African exiles and their British supporters appealed for an international boycott of South African products ([Boycott Movement - Learn about the history of the Boycott Movement \(aamarchives.org\)](#) ). The idea of a boycott came from South Africa, where the Congress movement was boycotting products made by companies that supported the apartheid government (ibid). A chain of events then culminated in demonstration against apartheid in Sharpeville on March 21, 1960 ([apartheid | Definition, Facts, Beginning, & End | Britannica](#)). The police response to the protesters' action was to open fire, killing about 69 black Africans and wounding more (ibid). The other landmark in the anti-apartheid movement was Swatow Uprising of 1976 by the black students against the 1953 Bantu Education Act, entailing separate and unequal educational system for to keep the black students inferior and segregate them in menial low paid jobs (Shepherd 1955). On June 16, 1976, an estimated 20 thousand students in Swatow, a township of Johannesburg, left their school and marched in peaceful protest against the unjust educational system ( [Soweto Uprising: How a Student-Led Movement Changed History | Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility](#)). In response the police firing resulted in several hundred people dead and more than 3000 injured (ibid). It did not, however. Lowered the spirit of protesters. Within four months of the Swatow revolt, 160 African communities all over the country were engaged in resistance (ibid). In 1985, both United Kingdom and United States imposed selective economic sanction on South Africa ([apartheid | Definition, Facts, Beginning, & End | Britannica](#)). Another decisive and crucial moment in anti-apartheid movement is the arrival of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918-2013), a South African revolutionary and politician who started his career in 1940 and soon became a prominent member of the African National Congress by leading its youth wing. Mandela was appointed president of ANC's Transvaal branch rising to prominence for his involvement in 1952 Defiance Campaign against unjust laws and 1966 Congress of the People, an alliance against apartheid ( [Nelson Mandela - Wikipedia's Nelson Mandela as translated by GramTrans \(wikitrans.net\)](#)). He was repeatedly arrested for seditious activities and was arrested in 1962 on the accusation of conspiring against the state (ibid). Mandela served 27 years in prison initially on Robben Island and later on Pollsmoor prison and Victor Verster Prison. After his release in 1990 through the initiatives of president F.W.D. Klerk he became the internationally recognized image (Boehmer 2008). Mandela

subsequently led the ANC in its negotiations with the minority government for an end to apartheid and the establishment of a multiracial government (Nelson Mandela Released From Prison - HISTORY) . In 1998 Mandela and Klerk were jointly awarded Nobel Peace Prize and in 1994, the ANC won an electoral majority in the country's first free election and Mandela was elected South Africa's president (ibid). Mandela initiated South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to identify past human rights violations.

### **Check Your Progress:**

Q.1. Asses the anti-apartheid movement.

---

---

---

---

### **Summary**

The idea of race emerging in colonial context was a way of dividing and classifying human populations across the globe. This resulted in not only in racial differences but a power equation where the western white race was put at the pedestal of racial hierarchy. The colonial scientific legitimacy of race was subsequently questioned through anti-racial struggles and Critical Race Theory. The most concrete example of colonial racism is the regime of apartheid in South Africa where white groups were allowed to dominate and discriminate the non-whites through legal enactments. Nelson Mandela who rose to prominence during 1950s sustained the anti-apartheid movement culminating in the end of white political dominance in South Africa.

### **Questions**

1. Which specific legal provisions were opposed through Anti-apartheid movement?
2. Is it possible to argue that race is a social construct contrary to the scientific justification and naturalization of race?
3. Racial power is associated with structural and institutional inequalities, and formal equality is inadequate in eliminating them. Comment.
4. Race and apartheid are closely associated. Discuss

### **1.6 References**

- Boehmer, Elleke. 2008. *Nelson Mandela: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Baldwin, Alan. 2007. 'Mass Removal and Separate Developments'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03057077508707934> (published online)

- Chaskalson, Arthur. 2011. 'Dignity as a Constitutional Value: South African Perspective'. *American University International Law Review*. 26 (5), pp. 1377 to 1407.
- Clark, Nancy L. and William H. Worger. 2011. *South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. New York: Routledge.
- De la Garza, Antonio T. and Kent A. Ono. 2016. 'Critical Race Theory'. In Klaus Bruhn Jensen and Robert T. Crag (eds) *The international Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy*. Wiley Blackwell.
- Hannaford, Evan. 1996. *Race: A History of the Idea in the West*. Washington DC: John Hopkins University Press.
- Liberman, Leonard and Raymond Scupin. 2011, 'A History of Scientific Racialism'. In Raymond Scupin (ed) *Race and Ethnicity: The United States and the World*. Pearson.
- Mauer, Marc. 2011. 'Addressing Racial Disparities in Incarceration'. *The prison Journal*. 9 (3), pp. 875- 1015.
- Pathy, Jaganath, 1981. 'Imperialism, Anthropology and Third World'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 16 (14), pp.623-127
- Pierre, Jemima. 2018. 'Structure, Politics, Progress': Anthropology, Colonialism and Race in Africa'. *Journal of Anthropological Sciences*, 96, pp. 213-219.
- Race. 2020. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. [Race \(Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy\)](#), retrieved 14.8.2021
- [Samuels, Tristan. 2015. 'Herodotus and the Black Body: A critical Race theory Analysis. \*Journal of Black Studies\*, 46 \(7\), pp. 723-741](#)
- [Scott, John and Gordon Marshall. 2009. \*Oxford Dictionary of Sociology\*. Oxford; Oxford University Press.](#)
- [Shepherd, R.H.W. 1955. 'The South African Bantu Education Act'. \*African Affairs\*, 54 \(215\), pp. 138-42.](#)
- Schumacher, Suzanne. 2019. *Racialist Thinking in the Life and World of Francis Galton*.
- [Schumacher, Suzanne HIST480 Dissertation.pdf \(canterbury.ac.nz\)](#)
- Strauss, Margot. 2019. 'A Historical Exposition of Spatial Injustice and Segregated Urban Settlement in South Africa'. [A historical exposition of spatial injustice and segregated urban settlement in South Africa \(scielo.org.za\)](#)
- [Suzman, Helen. 2021. 'Key Legislations in Formation of Apartheid'. \*apartheid legislation \(cortland.edu\)\*](#)
- Thompson, Lloyd A. 2013. *Romans and Blacks*. New York: Routledge.
- Witzig, Ritchie. 1996. 'The Medicalization of Race: Scientific Legitimation of a Flawed Social Construct'. [download \(psu.edu\)](#)
- Zalla, Lauren C. 2021. 'A Geography of Risk: Structural Racism and Covid- 19 Mortality in United States'. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. [kwab059.pdf \(archive.org\)](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

# MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AND AFRO-AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

## Unit Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Martin Luther king, Jr: A Brief Biography
- 2.2 The Montgomery Bus Boycott and Civil Rights Movements in the U.S.
- 2.3 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom 1963: “I have a Dream Speech”
- 2.4 Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Growth of Civil Society and Commemorating
- 2.5 Questions
- 2.6 References

---

## 2.0 Objectives

---

- To know the brief biographical account of Martin Luther King, Jr. and his contributions towards Civil Rights Movements alternatively known as Afro-American movements for civil and political Rights.
- To understand the economic rights and rights of dignity were equally central to these historic moments in the history of the U.S. ‘Bus Boycott’ and “March on Washington” - the two landmark events, integral to this civil rights movement have been discussed and analyzed.
- To analyse the King’s assassination and politicization, and symbolization around his work and ideas.

---

## 2.1 Martin Luther king, Jr: A Brief Biography

---

Martin Luther King Jr was a pastor, humanitarian and leader in American civil rights<sup>i</sup> movements of the 1960s (Szalay 2021). In contemporary political thought ‘civil rights’ is indissolubly linked to the struggle for equality of American blacks during 1950s and 1960s ([Civil Rights \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)). Civil Rights Movements in the United States is synonymous with Martin Luther King Jr. With the gifts of dynamic oratory, energy, imaginations and a sense of mission, King led marches, demonstrations, and boycotts in fighting against racism (Burns 2006). King had nurtured a dream of equality and dignity and committed to them throughout his life as Burns (2006:x) writes:

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood...my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by content of their character

Martin Luther king Jr was born on 15 January, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia and studied at Morehouse College at Atlanta (ibid). He belonged to a solidly middle-class family that wielded considerable influence due to its heritage of leading churchmen; King's father and maternal grandfather were well known pastors (Kennedy 1989). In 1948 he was appointed as associate pastor Ebenezer Baptist Church at Atlanta. 1951 was the year he graduated from Crozer with a bachelor in divinity and entered Boston University to study theology (ibid). He subsequently received a doctor of Philosophy in 'Systemetic Theology' from the same university in 1955 (ibid). His anti-racist and civil rights activism begins in 1955 with Montgomery protest, a large-scale demonstration against racial segregation in buses<sup>ii</sup>. In 1959, King visited India to engage with non-violence philosophy of Gandhi, in 1964, he appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine as its man of the year and led many landmark protests against civil, economic and political rights till he was shot dead on 4<sup>th</sup> April, 1968 in Memphis where has had come to lead a march of Sanitation workers<sup>iii</sup> (Burns 2006).

### **Check Your Progress:**

Q.1. Write a brief biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.

---

---

---

---

## **2.2 The Montgomery Bus Boycott and Civil Rights Movements in the U.S.**

---

The racial subordination in terms of segregation of black communities in all interaction arenas ranging from transport to Church was more intense in southern part of the U.S. where these communities were in large numbers. The southern black communities were politically disenfranchised, could not exercise voting rights due to white supremacy with the later turning the lever of state power into an instrument of racial oppression (Kennedy 1989). For example, only whites were hired as agents of state-e.g. prosecutors, tax assessors, jury commissioners or police officers. The blacks had to contend with unequal, inferior and separate public schooling; the asserted reasons for exclusion from responsible positions to the white supremacists were blacks' 'character traits' such as 'lack of responsibility', 'intelligence' and 'honesty' (ibid). In 1950s, under the system of racial segregation and subordination in southern U.S. many levels of discriminations and material disadvantages were observed. Based on Kennedy (1989) some of these oppressive

structural inequalities along racial lines were-- concentration of blacks within unskilled sector (75 percent while white's representation was only 25 percent); majority black women worked as domestic help (50 percent in contrast to only 1 percent white women); the poor and a very negligible representation of blacks among high paid prestigious jobs such as physicians, dentists, lawyers, pharmacists was minimal which were mostly occupied by the whites.

This symbolical reproduction of white supremacy appeared in manners and etiquettes. Jim Crow Laws disqualified the blacks from entering public parks, theatres and restaurants (Jim Crow Laws: Definition, Facts & Timeline - HISTORY ). Segregated waiting rooms in bus and trains, water fountains, rest rooms, building entrance, elevators, cemeteries and even amusement park cashier windows were added to denial of the African-American to stay in white neighborhoods (ibid). The discriminatory etiquettes made it binding upon the blacks to address whites as "Mr" and "Mrs" without any reciprocity from the whites; it counseled blacks to enter a white dwelling from the rear and warned the black men against showing sexual interest in white women without any similar restrictions for the white men (Kennedy 1989).

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Park, a black woman refused to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama and this precipitated the Montgomery Boycott Movement leading to the emergence of Martin Luther King, Jr. as leader of the Afro-American civil right movement (Gracia 2020). Rosa Park who was secretary for the Montgomery chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), was taking a bus home after a long daywork (Kratz, 2015). The white section of the bus had filled, so the driver asked Parks to give up her seat in designated black section of the bus to accommodate a white passenger (ibid). Her refusal resulted in her arrest for being in violation of chapter 6, section 11 of the Montgomery City Code<sup>iv</sup> which upheld a policy of racial segregation on public buses (ibid).

Sparked by the address of Rosa Parks, the Montgomery Bus Boycott was a 13 month mass protest that ended with U.S. Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses is unconstitutional (Montgomery Bus Boycott The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute (stanford.edu)). The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) coordinated the boycott, and its president Martin Luther King, Jr, became a prominent civil right leader (ibid). Simultaneously, the bus boycott demonstrated the potential for non-violent mass protest to successfully challenge racial segregation and served as example for other southern campaigns that followed (ibid). Arguing in Gandhi like fashion, King emphasized in countless interviews, speeches and articles, the non-violent, un-embittered, redemptive character of the protest (Kennedy 1989: 1023). Outlining the significance of non-violent approach adopted by martin Luther King Burns (2006:39) writes- ...King appealed to the city's black citizens for non-violent response to any aggressive assaults made by the whites. King and other leaders distributed pamphlets that suggested- "If

cursed, do not curse back. If pushed, do not push back. If struck, do not strike back, but evidence... goodwill at all times.

The boycott lasted 382 days, from December 5, 1955 to December 21, 1956 with ninety percent of black bus commuters stayed off the buses with the MIA creating alternative transportation network with hired drivers, bought vehicles (Kennedy 1989:1022). Black Montgomery psychologically declared its independence from the white power structure, and became in important respects, self-governing (ibid).

King was prosecuted and tried under 1921 law that prohibited conspiracies interfering with lawful business. The prosecution, however, had opposite effect as being arrested and jailed pursuant upon protest had become a badge of honour (Kennedy 1989). The prosecution also advanced the cause of the boycott by elevating it to national and international news (ibid). Apart from violating anti-boycotting law of 1921 in 1956, King was also accused of income tax fraud ( State of Alabama v. M. L. King, Jr., Nos. 7399 and 9593 | The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute (stanford.edu)). In the first case, King was imposed heavy fine by the court against which he made an appeal but the imposition of fine was later converted into 386 days of Jail time (ibid). He was later released on bond of 1000 American dollars (Wayne 1956). The second indictment in February 1960 charged King on account of fraudulent tax return in 1956 and 1958 which was effectively countered by King's lawyers and the jury could not find any evidence against him.

### **Check Your Progress:**

Q.1. Discuss the Montogomery Bus Boycott and Civil Rights Movements in the U.S.

---

---

---

---

## **2.3 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom 1963: “I have a Dream Speech”**

Another landmark historical event immortalizing King and his contributions towards instituting civil, political and economic rights is the famous 1963 ‘March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom’. On 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1963, approximately a quarter million (more than 250,000) people converged on the nation’s capital to demand civil rights for African-Americans (JHU history professor discusses the significance of the March on Washington | Hub) . The ‘March on Washinton for Jobs and Freedom’ was one of the largest political rallies in history where Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his “I have a dream speech” (ibid). High levels of black unemployment, minimal wages and poor job mobility to Afro-Americans and the persistence of racial segregation in south America prompted discussions about a large scale march for political and economic justice as early as 1962 (March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom | The Martin

Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute (stanford.edu). Philp Randolph, the trade union and civil right leader was instrumental in organizing the protest through writing to appropriate authority- to the secretary, Stewart Udall of the Department of Interior<sup>v</sup> (under president John F. Canady) seeking permission (ibid). On behalf of Negro American labour Council (NALC), the Southern Christian leadership Conference, the Congress Racial Equality (CRE) and Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Randolph wrote to Stewart Udall permitting him to organise the gathering at Lincoln Memorial (ibid). In March, 1963, Randolph approached Martin Luther King, Jr, and the stage was said for the historic March. The demands of the organizers of the protest included- civil right legislations guaranteed to all Americans, withholding of federal funds from all discriminatory programs, banning discrimination in federal-supported housings, to institute injunctive suits where constitutional rights are violated, dignified jobs at descent wages and fair Federal Employment Practices barring all discriminations ( The 10 demands from the March on Washington you probably never heard about (feministing.com)).

This historic march influenced the passage of Civil Right Act of 1964 and Martin Luther King was awarded Nobel Prize for peace in the same year. Speakers from each of the sponsoring organizations addressed the crowd from the podium of Lincoln Memorial. Randolph closed his speech with the promise that civil right revolution will advance to every nook and cranny of the land and that “we shall return again and again to Washington in ever growing numbers until total freedom is ours” (March on Washington - HISTORY). Some of the other prominent speakers included NAACP (National Association of Advancement of Coloured People) President Roy Wilkins, John Lewis of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), civil right veterans Daisy Lee Bates and actor Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee (ibid). The march also featured musical performances from the likes of Marion Anderson, Joan Baez and Mahalia Jackson (ibid). The passage of Civil Right Act of 1964 and Voting Acts of 1965 were turning points in the struggle of civil rights (Legacy and Impact of the March | National Museum of American History (si.edu)). Together the two laws outlawed segregated public facilities and prohibited discriminatory practices in employment and voting and provided a model for non-violent social change (ibid).

On August, 28, 1963, King presented one of the rhetorically inspiring speech ever delivered, titled the “I have Dream Speech”. At one point he made an emotional appeal to all suffering black communities as he said- “I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character” (Manfredonia 2012). Even though King called for the “whirlwind of revolt”, he urged those on the frontlines of civil right movement not to let “bitterness and hatred” define their action (I Have a Dream Speech by Martin Luther King, Jr. Plot Summary | LitCharts ). He talked about ‘Fierce Urgency of Now’ emphasizing making changes with immediacy rather than through “tranquilizing drug of gradualism” (I Have a Dream" Speech Key Points of the Speech - eNotes.com). The urgent needs of black community needed urgent intervention.

### Check Your Progress:

Q.1. Describe the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom 1963.

---

---

---

---

## 2.4 Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Growth of Civil Society and Commemorating.

King was assassinated near his room at Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968 ([Martin Luther King, Jr. Assassination - HISTORY](#)). He had been supporting the black sanitation workers there who were on strike for nearly two months demanding better wages, working conditions and most notably human dignity (Whitlinger and Fretwell 2019). King's arrival in Memphis on March 18 initially bolstered the spirit of striking workers, but this enthusiasm was completely faded when a mass demonstration led by king turned violent on March 28 (ibid). When King returned to Memphis on April 3<sup>rd</sup> again with a determination to lead a non-violent march, his plan was violently cut- short (ibid). On 4<sup>th</sup> April, King's "Sojourn on earth went blank". The person who killed King was identified as James Earl Ray, a career criminal who had briefly served in the U.S. Army ([Why James Earl Ray Killed Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 | Time](#)). Ray was arrested at London's Heathrow Airport on June 8, 1968, a week after the crime (ibid). Within hours of assassination, riots broke out in 110 cities across the country and within a week 43 were dead and 20,000 arrested amid the deployment of 72800 Army and national Guard Troops – the largest military deployment since civil war (Whitlinger and Fretwell 2019). King's murder radicalized many moderate African- American activists fuelling the growth of Black Power Movement and Black Panther Party in late 1960s and early 1970s ([Martin Luther King, Jr. Assassination - HISTORY](#)). According to National Museum of African-American History and culture (NMAACH), the Black power Movement aimed to "emphasize Black self-reliance and self-determination more than integration; it sought to give black people control over their own lives by empowering them culturally, politically and economically ([The Black Power Movement: Understanding Its Origins, Leaders, and Legacy | Teen Vogue](#)). At the same time. it instilled a sense of pride in black people who began to further embrace black art, history and beauty (ibid). The Black Panther Party founded in 1966, strayed from the idea of integration was an extension of Black Power Movement founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in Okland, California (ibid). The Black Panthers advocated self- defence, anti-capitalism and anti-racism, self-reliance and community support (Harris 2001).

Great souls like that of Martin Luther King are part of collective memory with memorializing and commemorations constituting political acts.

Memorial landscapes and spaces play a central role in shaping how the public values identifies with and debates with the past (Alderman 2003). Some 483 streets in the U.S. were named after Martin Luther King which shows the significance of values around civil liberty and political empowerment but there are also opposition to this sentiment revealing how the process of instituting civil liberties and political empowerment are far from an easy process. Many African-American activists argue that Martin Luther King was important to all races and they support the renaming of major thoroughfares that cut through prominent business districts and unite white and black communities (ibid). Many Whites do not agree to that and opposition often leads to confinement of his name to minor streets or portions of large streets in African-American areas of the city (ibid). The predominant viewpoint, which constructs King as haloed consensual figure, is deployed to endorse the idea that United States is in post-racial era which goes with the official worldview whereas the emphasis on the radical and confrontational politics of King highlights that the U.S. is far from being a racially equal world (Bruyneel 2014).

### Check Your Progress:

Q.1. What were the modes of racial segregations practiced during Martin Luther King's time?

---

---

---

---

---

### Endnotes

---

<sup>i</sup> Civil rights are the basic legal rights including personal, political and economic rights forming the basis of citizenship (see [Civil Rights \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)).

<sup>ii</sup> Montgomery Bus Boycott was a civil right protest during which African-American refused to ride the buses in Montgomery, Alabama, to protest segregated seating ([Montgomery Bus Boycott - Facts, Significance & Rosa Parks - HISTORY](#)).

<sup>iii</sup> See [assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. | History & Facts | Britannica](#)

<sup>iv</sup> For Montgomery City Code, see [Montgomery City Code - IIT Chicago-Kent Law Library Blog](#)[IIT Chicago-Kent Law Library Blog](#)

<sup>v</sup> Department of interior is a federal executive department responsible for management and conservation of all federal lands and natural resources and the administration of programs relating to Native Americans ([U.S. Department of the Interior | USAGov](#)).

---

## 2.5 Questions

---

1. Please reflect on the significance of non-violent protest based on Martin Luther King's approach.
2. What were the modes of racial segregations practiced during Martin Luther King's Time?
3. Why does legal reform fail to translate into social and economic equality?

---

## 2.6 References

---

- Alderman, Derek H. 2003. 'Street Names and Scaling of Memory: The Politics of Commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr. within African-American Community'. *Area*, 35 (2), pp. 167-173
- Bruyneel, Kevin. 2014. 'Martin Luther King, Jr. and Politics of Collective Memory'. *History and Memory*, 26 (1), pp. 75-108
- Bergs, Roger. 2006. *Martin Luther King Jr: A Biography*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Gracia, Kayla. 2020. 'Everlasting Impacts of Montgomery Bus Boycotts on Transit Rights'. [SolTrans](#)
- Kennedy, Randall. 1989. Martin Luther King's Constitution: A Legal History of Montgomery Bus Boycott'. *The Yale Law Journal*. 98 (6), pp. 999-1067.
- Harris, Jessica C. 2001. Revolutionary Black Nationalism: The Black Panther Party. *The Journal of African-American History*, 86(3).409-421.
- Kratz, Jessie. 2015. 'The Montgomery Bus Boycott' . [The Montgomery Bus Boycott – Pieces of History \(archives.gov\)](#)
- Manfredonia, John. 2021. 'Rhetorical Analysis: I have a Dream'. [Rhetorical Analysis: I Have a Dream | Work and Progress \(psu.edu\)](#)
- Szalay, Jessi. 2021.'Martin Luther King Junior: The Iconic Civil Rights Leader'.[Martin Luther King, Jr.: Biography, Speeches & Quotes | Live Science](#)
- Wayne, Phillips. 1956. 'Negro Minister Convicted of Directing Bus Boycott'. *New York Times*, March 23.
- Whitlinger Clarie and Fretwell, Joe. 'Political Assassinations and Social Movement Outcomes: martin Luther King and Memphis sanitation Workers' Strike'. *Sociological Perspectives*, 62(4), pp. 455-74.



## **NELSON MANDELA AND ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT**

### **Unit Structure**

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Nelson Mandela: A Brief Biographical Sketch
- 3.3 Apartheid as System of Racial Segregation and Oppression: A Brief History
- 3.4 Nelson Mandela and Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM)
- 3.5 Free Nelson Mandela Campaign and International opposition to apartheid and the release of Mandela in 1990
- 3.6 Post-Apartheid South Africa
- 3.7 Summary
- 3.8 Questions
- 3.9 References

---

### **3.0 Objectives**

---

1. This unit would introduce the readers to the policies of racial segregation and legal and material discriminations and violence exercised on the non-white, particularly the black communities within South Africa
2. It charts out the struggles of Nelson Mandela in fighting racism and oppressive regime of apartheid.
3. The readers will be able to familiarize themselves with the nature of apartheid and history of resistance against the same in certain chronological order.

---

### **3.1 Introduction**

---

The chapter begins with a brief biographical sketch of Nelson Mandela and his entry into the African National Congress (ANC). Following this the chapter provides a comprehensive discussion on apartheid. The next section delineates anti-apartheid movement under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. The movement was primarily aimed at opposing the discriminatory policies and practices of the all-white National Party government which came to power in 1948. The section after this dwells upon the Free Nelson Mandela Campaign and international opposition to apartheid resulting in the release of Mandela in 1990 and the subsequent end of apartheid regime in South Africa.

---

## 3.2 Nelson Mandela: A Brief Biographical Sketch

---

Nelson Mandela remains a universal symbol of social justice, and an exemplary figure connoting non-racialism and democracy (Boehmer 2008). Once a man without a face (photographs of political prisoners in South Africa being banned), he became after his 1990 release an internationally recognized image (ibid). He was the son of the Chief Henry Mandela of Madiba Clan of the Xhosa speaking Thembu People ([Nelson Mandela | Biography, Life, Death, & Facts | Britannica](#)). Thembu are Bantu-speaking people who inhabit the upper reaches of the Mzimvubu River in Eastern province, South Africa ([Tembu | people | Britannica](#)). The Thembu speak a dialect of Xhosa, a Bantu language of the Nguni group that is closely related to Zulu (ibid). Born on 18 July 1918 in the small hamlet of Mvezo, Nelson Mandela's birth name was Rolihlahla and his parents were Nonqaphi Nosekeni and Nkosi Mphakanyiswa Gadla of the Madiba clan ([Education of Nelson Mandela & His Inspirational Life Story - Leverage Edu](#)). His father was a principal counsellor to the acting king of the Thembu clan and passed away when Mandela was only 12 years old. He was left under the guardianship of Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo of Thembu in Mqhekezweni<sup>i</sup> (ibid). The secondary education of Mandela was completed at Wesleyan Mission School (ibid). Mandela attended South African Native College (later the University of Fort Hare in 1939) and studied law at the University of Witwatersrand ([Nelson Mandela | Biography, Life, Death, & Facts | Britannica](#)). He completed his law degree, however, much later from the University of South Africa<sup>ii</sup>. University College of Fort Hare was the only residential centre for higher learning for blacks in South Africa at that time. Mandela was expelled from Fort Hare because of his political activism; Mandela was sent home for participating in a boycott of university policies ([Remembering Nelson Mandela - HISTORY](#)). He joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1944 which was a black liberation group. The main objectives of ANC were to establish equality of all before the law, anti-racialism, recognition of local language, culture and right to receive and impart instruction in one's own language, multi-party system, voting rights to all and a democratic constitution (Mandela 1990)

With another ANC leader, Oliver Tambo, he established South Africa's first Black law practice in 1952 which was specializing in dealing with cases against blacks resulting from post 1948 apartheid legislation ([Nelson Mandela Biography: Early Life, Education, Work, Anti-Apartheid Movement, Presidency, Awards and Honours, and more \(jagranjosh.com\)](#)). 1948 was the time when National Party came to power and intensified implementation of policies related to racial segregation and white supremacy. The National Party consistently denied the welfare approach of governance and emphasized on Christian 'civilized life' wherein the responsibility of the subjects and citizens fall on family and not on the state (Seekings 2020). It was more interested in implementing policy to strengthen apartheid and favouring minority white citizenry.

## Check Your Progress:

Q.1. Discuss a brief biographical sketch of Nelson Mandela.

---

---

---

---

### 3.3 Apartheid as System of Racial Segregation and Oppression: A Brief History

South Africa is well known throughout the world as one of the countries which practiced racism despite criticism from all over the world including isolation from participation in world affair and politics (Mhlauli et. al. 2015). This country is situated at the southern tip of Africa and it borders the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique (ibid).

Apartheid was used to describe the discriminatory political and economic system of racial segregation which the white minority government<sup>iii</sup> imposed on non-whites ([Apartheid in South Africa | History, Start & End, Meaning, Facts - HistoryExtra](#)). It was implemented by the governing party, the National Party of South Africa from 1948-1994 (ibid). Apartheid is partly the legacy of British colonialism which introduced a system of pass laws in Cape Colony and Natal during nineteenth century ([History of South Africa in the apartheid era \(mcgill.ca\)](#)). Pass laws evolving from regulations imposed by Dutch and British in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were designed to control internal or domestic movements of Africans ( [South Africa: Overcoming Apartheid \(msu.edu\)](#)). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century new pass laws were enacted for the purpose of ensuring a reliable supply of cheap, docile African labour for the gold and diamond mines ([History of South Africa in the apartheid era \(mcgill.ca\)](#)). Brostelmann (1993) defines apartheid as a more rigorous system of segregation which accelerated racial polarization of the country.

A number of legal enactments were enforced to intensify racial segregation and deprive and oppress the non-white communities. The prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act 1949 was introduced to discourage miscegenation or mixing of races, Immorality Amendment Act 1950 which was subsequently amended in 1957 was to curb adultery and extra-marital relations between white and other races, Group Areas Act, 1950 enforced residential separation along racial lines and the Suppression of Communism Act was meant to punish any protest or call for any challenge to the government in power ([https://scnc.ukzn.ac.za/doc/hist/apartheid legislation in south africa.htm](https://scnc.ukzn.ac.za/doc/hist/apartheid%20legislation%20in%20south%20africa.htm)). Similarly, Bantu Building Workers Act 1950 was to ghettoize the black trained artisans to carry out work in designated area, Prevention of Illegal Squatting Acts of 1951 empowered the Minister of Native Affairs to remove the black communities from public and privately owned land and resettle them into camps designated for displaced people (ibid). Native labour (Settlement of Dispute) Act,

1953 prevented the blacks from initiating strikes, the discriminatory Bantu Education Act of 1953 was *aimed at training the children for manual labour and menial jobs that the government deemed suitable for their jobs* ([Bantu Education Act | Definition, Summary, & Facts | Britannica](#)). Reservation of Separate Amenities Act 1953 created a system of total segregation of races with facilities such as buses, restrooms, walkways at train stations and even benches divided into sections of ‘White’ and ‘non-White’ groups (Bezuidenhout 2011). The Bantu Self-government Act of 1959 was meant for facilitating self-government to Bantus (the non-white black communities), in reality, however, Bantustans were vast slum areas without industries and fertile soil for agriculture ([Bantustan - Oxford Reference](#)). The 1967 Terrorism Act though apparently meant for checking terrorism became an instrument of terror by prosecuting organizations and individuals opposing state oppressions (Clark and Worger 2011). From 1961 to 1994, more than 3.5 million people were forcibly removed from their homes and deposited in Bantustans, where they were plunged into poverty and hopelessness ( [Apartheid In South Africa: Laws, End & Facts - HISTORY](#)). So, the policies of racial segregation and discriminations through enactments and enforcements of various laws and suppression of dissent and protest were the mechanism to sustain apartheid in South Africa.

### **Check Your Progress:**

Q.1. Reflect on the polices of segregation through which apartheid operated.

---

---

---

---

### **3.4 Nelson Mandela and Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM)**

---

The Anti-apartheid Movement grew out of resistance movements both by the international community and non-white South Africans even before the arrival of Nelson Mandela on the Horizon. African National Congress was founded in 1912. It became the major force in opposing apartheid system’s oppression of 80 percent non-European population of South Africa (Kurtz 2010). Using mostly legal tactics of protest during its first four decades, the ANC became more militant in 1950s and begun using non-violent direct action (ibid). Until 1940s the ANC remained decorously circumspect: lobbying, submitting memorandums and relying heavily on white liberal intermediaries ([African National Congress | Encyclopedia.com](#)). The failure of peaceful tactics led to the radicalization of ANC with many of its members associated with the Communist Party (ibid). The ANC’s radicalization coincided with intensification of racial segregation and pauperization of the non-white communities through the initiatives of the (Afrikaner) National Party (NP)<sup>iv</sup>.

Nelson Mandela joined ANC in 1942 and along with his colleagues he co-founded the youth league of ANC in 1944 (Dakers 2014). The two events which inspired Mandela were the African Mine Workers Union Strike in 1946 and the mixed race and ‘coloured people’s’ rally and disobeying the racist rules in the same year (ibid). On 12<sup>th</sup> August, 1946, in response to a call by African Mine Workers Union, over 60,000 African workers at Witwatersrand Gold Mine stopped work in protest against low wages resulting in police firing and killing twelve workers and injuring over thousand (O’Meara 2008). Similarly, thousands of Indians from all walks of life held rallies, picketed white owned lands and disobeyed racist rules and more than two thousand people voluntarily went to jail for breaking laws that were meant to exclude Indians from “White only” areas (Dakers 2014).

In 1948, the National Party, an all-White Government came to power through White-only general election and intensified racial discrimination and apartheid through legal measures and violent suppression of democratic rights. Writing about the discriminatory policies of the National Party Dakers (ibid :48) writes-

People were classified by race-White, Bantu (black) and Coloured. Each race was to live in its own area, with separate education, transportation and health care systems. Whites-only libraries, movie theatres beaches and even park benches sprang up around the country. Black men had to carry passes to prove they have permission to enter White areas.

The intensification of racial segregation and oppression under the National party was compelling for the ANC to change its soft stand and turn more defiant in its tactics. A landmark event marking the affirmation of Nelson Mandela is the 1952 Defiance Campaign. The Defiance Campaign was the first large scale multi-racial political mobilization against the apartheid laws under a common protest- by the African National Congress, and the Coloured People’s Congress (South Africa: Overcoming Apartheid (msu.edu) ). More than eight thousand trained volunteers went to jail for defying “unjust laws” demonstrating large scale growing opposition to apartheid (ibid). As Nelson Mandela has become president of the Youth League and regional president of ANC, the government began monitoring his every movement and restricting his activities. In December, 1952, Nelson Mandela was forbidden to leave Johannesburg for six months and over next decade was subjected to ban after ban (Danie 2014). Another turning point was Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 of 21<sup>st</sup> March when the black communities under the leadership of Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)<sup>v</sup>, a splinter group of ANC organized a countrywide demonstration against Pass laws<sup>vi</sup>. In the Black township of Sharpeville Afrikaner police opened fire on the demonstrating public killing 69 and wounding 180 (Massacre in Sharpeville - HISTORY). In the aftermath of this massacre, protests broke out in Cape Town and more than ten thousand people were arrested (ibid). The incident convinced Nelson Mandela to abandon his non-violent stance and organize paramilitary groups to fight South Africa’s racial discrimination (ibid). Subsequently, Nelson Mandela and other members of ANC created a new aggressive organization called

*Umkhonto we Sizwe* or “Spear of the Nation” (Diane 2014). In 1961, Mandela was arrested for treason, and although acquitted he was arrested again in 1962 for illegally leaving the country (Nelson Mandela Released From Prison - HISTORY). In 1964, Mandela faced charges under Sabotage Act, 1962 whose scope was wide enough to include any activity challenging the government endangering law and order allowing detention without trial (1962. Sabotage Act General Laws Amendment Act No 76 - The O'Malley Archives (nelsonmandela.org)). In the Fall of 1963, Nelson Mandela and ten leading opponents of South Africa’s apartheid regime faced trial for their lives (The Nelson Mandela (Rivonia) Trial: An Account (famous-trials.com)). The charges under what is called “Rivonia<sup>vii</sup> Trial” were sabotage and conspiracy (ibid). Standing in the dock at the Palace of Justice in Pretoria Mandela announced that “the ideal of a free and democratic society” is one, “for which I am prepared to die” (ibid). Nelson Mandela along with six others were sentenced to life imprisonment. He later was shifted to Robban Island, a site of maximum security jail for political prisoners (Dakers 2014).

### **Check Your Progress:**

Q.1. Describe the role of Nelson Mandela as a leader of Anti-apartheid movement.

---

---

---

---

---

### **3.5 Free Nelson Mandela Campaign and International opposition to apartheid and the release of Mandela in 1990.**

---

Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) was formed in Britain in 1960 embracing a network of organizations including students’ bodies, trade unions, the Communist Party and sections of British Labour Party. The ANC and AAM cooperation led to proliferation of anti-apartheid movement worldwide (Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) - The O'Malley Archives (nelsonmandela.org)). Though 1970s and 1980s, South Africa was under intense international pressure to stop apartheid (Release of Nelson Mandela (bl.uk)). In late 1970s grassroot movement in Europe and United States succeeded in pressurizing their government into imposing economic and cultural sanction on Pretoria (Shamse 2018). After the US congress passed the comprehensive anti-Apartheid Act in 1986, many large multinational companies withdrew from South Africa (ibid). There was sports boycott of South Africa since 1970s (Murry 2009) and capital flight since 1980s (Mohamed and Finnoff 2004). By the late 1980s, the South African economy was struggling with internal and external boycotts as well as the burden of military commitment in occupying Namibia (Shamse 2018). Within South Africa, the protest, boycott and sabotage continued. In 1983, hundreds of organizations-churches, students groups,

trade unions, ethnic organizations and even sports teams banded together to form UDF or United Democratic Front (Diane 2014). By 1985, UDF had three million members and it continued the protests (ibid). Under these pressures and sanctions, in 1989, the president F.W. de Klark set about dismantling apartheid and establishment of multiracial government resulting in Nelson Mandela's release in 1990 ( Nelson Mandela Released From Prison - HISTORY). In 1994 ANC won an electoral majority in the country's first free election and Mandela was elected South Africa's President (ibid). Millions of black Africans-including Nelson- voted for the first time in their lives (Dakers 2014). The ANC won 62.2 percent of the vote (ibid).

---

### 3.6 Post-Apartheid South Africa

---

In post-apartheid South Africa, it was expected that democracy and equality will ensure for the oppressed and poor people and the majority black community. The process which frustrates the dream of reconstruction in post-Apartheid period in Africa is high unemployment rate, inadequate provision of basic services, a corrupt government, and the carelessness of middle-class bureaucrats (Mphambukeli 2019). In the post-apartheid era, a new form of segregation has been intensified through "economic apartheid" without basic service delivery and the spatial segregation, a legacy of apartheid is not fully dismantled (ibid). According to Geoffrey E. Schneider (2018), in the 1990s, Nelson Mandela and African national Congress (ANC) were persuaded by mainstream economists and south African business to pursue neoliberal policies by opening South African economy to international trade and financial flows, along with privation and austerity with only a modest increase in social expenditure. Unfortunately, neoliberal policies actually worsened the inequality created under apartheid, and failed to stimulate significant growth and development. The pressure from IMF and World Bank and a subsequent loan of 850 million dollar, led to a neoliberal commitment in terms of constrained state spending on social sector and the rejection of the original ANC focus on redistribution and nationalization of public resources (ibid). As per many studies conducted by economists, the prices changes remained anti-poor and worsened inequality in the latter half of 2000s (Leibbrandt et.al 2016). South Africa is still witness to grassroot movements and protest.

---

### 3.7 Summary

---

Nelson Mandela became an internationally recognized figure in 1990. He joined African National Congress, a black liberation group in 1944. Mandela's name becomes synonymous with the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. Having its roots in colonial history apartheid regime and its oppressive and discriminatory policies were intensified during the National party between 1948-1994. Many Acts were put in place to strictly enforce racial segregation pushing the blacks communities to poverty and precarity. The non-white people were even discouraged from protesting and opposing the apartheid regime. Despite these prohibitions sustain

apartheid the African national Congress (ANC) became the major force in offering resistance to the apartheid regime. Nelson Mandela joined ANC in 1942 and along with his colleagues he co-founded youth league of ANC in 1944. The intensification of racial segregation under National Party was instrumental in radicalization of anti-apartheid protest under the leadership of Mandela. In 1963 trial, Mandela along with six others were sentenced to life imprisonment. Apartheid regime faced both domestic and international pressure and had to release Mandela in 1990. In 1994, ANC owned the electoral majority in the country's first free election and Mandela was elected as South Africa's president.

## End Notes

- 
- i See [Exploring Qunu: Nelson Mandela's home village - Photo 3 - CBS News](#)
  - ii By his own admission he was poor student and left the University of Witwatersrand in 1952 without graduating ( [Biography of Nelson Mandela – Nelson Mandela Foundation](#))
  - iii 15 percent of population effectively subjugated eighty five percent of the population
  - iv The National Party was constituted by the White Minority Groups notorious for racial segregation and White Supremacy. See Grey, 1948
  - v A militant off-shoot of the African National Congress (ANC), it was formed in 1959 by Robert Sobukwe. He advocated forceful methods of political pressure and in 1960 sponsored the demonstration at Sharpeville, in which 67 Black Africans were killed and 180 wounded by police ([Pan-Africanist Congress - Oxford Reference](#)).
  - vi Pass laws were meant to restrict the movements of Non-White Africans to White designated areas in the cities. See, [Pass laws in South Africa 1800-1994 | South African History Online \(sahistory.org.za\)](#)
  - vii Rivonia, the suburb of Johannesburg was the location of hideout for a militant wing of the African national Congress.

---

## 3.8 Questions

---

1. Please reflect on the policies of segregation through which apartheid operated.
2. What do you consider as the landmarks in anti-Apartheid Movement?
3. Discuss Nelson Mandela as a leader of Anti-apartheid movement.

---

### 3.9 References

---

- Bezuidenhout, Vincent. 2011. *Separate Amenities: Topographies of Recreational Spaces in South Africa*. Minor Dissertation, Masters of Fine Arts, faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town.
- Boehmer, Elleke. 2008. 'Nelson Mandela: A Very Short Introduction'. OUP: Oxford.
- Brostelmann, Thomas. *Apartheid Reluctant Uncle: The United States and South Africa in early Cold War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Clark, Nancy and William Worger. 2011. *South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. New York: Routledge.
- Dakers, Diane. 2014. *Nelson Mandela: South Africa's Anti-Apartheid Revolutionary*. New York: Crabtree Publishing Company.
- Grey, Rodney. 1948. South Africa under Nationalist Party. *International Journal*,4 (1), pp. 52-59.
- Kurtz, Lester R. 2010. 'The Anti-Apartheid Struggle in South Africa (1912-1992)'. International Centre on Non-violent Conflict. [kurtz\\_south\\_africa\(nonviolent-conflict.org\)](http://kurtz_south_africa(nonviolent-conflict.org))
- O' Meara, Dan. 2008. 'The 1946 African Mine Workers' Strike and the Political Economy of South Africa'. *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*. 13 (2), pp. 146-73
- Leibbrandt et al. 2016. 'Poverty, Inequality and Prices in Post-Apartheid Africa'. *Growth and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa*. [Poverty, Inequality, and Prices in Post-Apartheid South Africa - Oxford Scholarship \(universitypressscholarship.com\)](http://Poverty, Inequality, and Prices in Post-Apartheid South Africa - Oxford Scholarship (universitypressscholarship.com))
- Mhlauli, Mavis B. et al. 2015. 'Understanding Apartheid in South Africa through Racial Contract'. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*. 5(4), pp. 203-219.
- Mandela, Nelson. 1990. 'African national Congress'. *Journal of Democracy*. 1(4), pp 32-35
- Mohamed Seeraj and Kade Finnoff. 2004. *Capital Flight from South Africa: 1980-2000*. Development and Policy Research, Cornell University.
- Mphambukeli, T.N. 2019. 'Apartheid'. *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Urban and Regional Studies* (ed) Anthony Orum. Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Murry, Bruce K. 2009. 'The Sports Boycott and Cricket: The Cancellation of the 1970 South African Tour of the of England'. *South African Historical Journal*. 46 (1), pp. 219-49.

---

Seekings, Jeremy. 2020. 'The National Party and Ideology of Welfare in South Africa Under Apartheid'. *Journal of South African Studies*, 46 (6), pp. 1145-1162

Schneider, Geoffrey. 2018. 'Post-apartheid Development Debacle in South Africa: How Mainstream Economics and Vested Interests Preserved Apartheid Economic Structures'. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 2 (2) pp. 307-322.

Shamse, M.Z. 2018. *The Role of International Community Towards Dismantling Apartheid in South Africa 1960-1990*. Doctoral Thesis, Department of History, University of Zululand.

\*\*\*\*\*

# GENDER: FIRST WAVE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

## Unit Structure

### 4.0 Objectives

### 4.1 Introduction

### 4.2 Background

### 4.3 First Wave Feminist Movement

### 4.4 First Wave Feminist Movement in Major Countries

### 4.5 Inequalities in the First Wave Feminist Movement

### 4.6 Summary

### 4.7 Questions

### 4.8 References

---

## 4.0 Objectives

---

- To introduce students to Gender Studies.
- To understand Feminism.
- To orient learners about the First Wave Feminist Movement

---

## 4.1 Introduction

---

It is a well-known fact that women across the world face gender discrimination. Most of the societies in the world are patriarchal societies. Men have enjoyed a superior position and women have suffered from an inferior status. This has led to protest from women for equal rights. The result is Feminism and the Feminist movement. Feminism refers to a range of social movements, political movements, and ideologies that aim to establish the political, economic, personal, and social equality between men and women. Feminism agrees with the position that societies focus on the male point of view, and that women are treated unjustly within those societies. Efforts to change that include fighting against gender stereotypes and establishing educational, professional, and interpersonal opportunities for women that are equal to those for men.

Feminist movements have campaigned and continue to campaign for women's rights, including the right to vote, hold public office, work, earn equal pay, own property, receive education, enter contracts, have equal rights within marriage, and maternity leave. Some scholars consider feminist campaigns to be a main force behind major historical societal changes for women's rights, particularly in the West. Feminist campaigns are credited with achieving women's right to vote, and the right to enter

into contracts and own property. Feminist theory, which emerged from feminist movements, aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles.

Numerous feminist movements and ideologies have developed over the years and represent different viewpoints and aims. Traditionally, since the 19th century, first-wave liberal feminism wanted political and legal equality through reforms within a liberal democratic framework. There were also labour-based women's movements that over time developed into socialist and Marxist feminism. Since the 1960s, radical feminism arose from the radical wing of second-wave feminism. They call for a fundamental restructuring of society to remove male supremacy. So there are different types of feminism like liberal, socialist and radical feminism. So this is how feminism has developed over the ages

Since the late 20th century, many newer forms of feminisms have emerged. There is criticism also of the feminist movement. Some forms of feminism have been criticized for taking into account only white, middle class, perspectives. That's why there are other forms of feminism such as black feminists. In India also the feminist movement has got many rights for women.

**Check your progress:**

**1] Define Feminism.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**2] Name the types of Feminism.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**4.2 Background**

Before we see the background of the first wave feminist movement, let us have a look at a brief history. In his classic Republic, Plato advocated that women possess natural capacities equal to men for governing and defending ancient Greece. Not everyone agreed with Plato. When the women of ancient Rome staged a massive protest over the Oppian Law, which restricted women's access to gold and other goods, Roman consul Marcus Porcius Cato argued that as soon as they began to be equals, they





into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). In 1869, Wyoming became the first state to grant suffrage to women.

An unexpected source of support for the movement came from the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in 1876. This movement encouraged against the sale and consumption of alcohol. Members believed that allowing women greater entry into the public sphere would allow them to exercise a positive influence on the world. They thought women were morally superior and could become maternal citizens, as a mother and caretaker. In 1916, the National Woman's Party (NWP) was formed by young feminist Alice Paul by breaking from NAWSA and aiming to achieve suffrage by working towards a constitutional amendment instead of state amendments. Inspired by British militant suffragists, the party staged demonstrations outside the White House and continued their campaign through the World War.

Members were arrested, went on hunger strikes, carried out picketing and used publicity to generate pressure on the Wilson administration in favour of suffrage. While they tried to refocus attention on the movement during the World War, the President of NAWSA supported the US's war effort, thus positioning NAWSA as a patriotic organization. This became useful when lobbying in favour of the Nineteenth Amendment and its ratification by all states. The Amendment declared, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Despite resistance from Southern Democrats, it passed in the Senate on 4th June 1919 and was ratified last by Tennessee on 18th August 1920.

In the common narrative of the Suffragist Movement, the first wave of feminism ends with this Amendment. This in itself shows the selective and exclusive nature of the movement. Women of colour were still practically disenfranchised, and the victory was only for white women. Black women were stopped from exercising their right to vote through boring marginalization tactics, facing bodily harm and even arrest. The first wave had marginalized black women, who faced discrimination based on race as well as gender. While the NWSA initially worked towards suffrage for white and black women, with the entry of younger feminists into the organization, the goal became white-centric.

Members saw the support of black women as a liability, which was a hindrance to their cause. Due to widespread racism, especially in the southern states, white women were afraid of letting black women gain political power. With this increase in exclusion, black women formed separate organizations to work towards black suffrage. The National Association of Colored Women (NACW) was founded in 1896 and the Alpha Suffrage Club founded in 1913 were some of the first bodies which fought for black suffrage and raised awareness amongst black communities. An argument used in support of white female suffrage was that of the educated voter.

White women campaigning in favour of suffrage claimed that their education and political awareness would make them good voters and allow them to make informed decisions. Black women, who didn't have access

to similar higher education became even more marginalized in the movement. When the case in favour of suffrage did not make space for the circumstances faced by black women, they could not share in the triumph of the Nineteenth Amendment. Another group whose contributions are ignored is the Asian community in the US at the time. Foreign-born Asians were not allowed to become US citizens, irrespective of how long they had resided in the US, and thus couldn't vote. This didn't mean that there were no contributions by Asians in the first wave.

In Portland, Oregon, 7 Chinese women attended a banquet of more than a hundred suffragists. There was also an organization for local equal suffrage for Chinese women run by S. K. Chan, a local physician. Another Asian member of the Suffrage Movement was Mabel Lee, the first Chinese woman to graduate with a PhD from Columbia University. She was a staunch advocate for women's right to vote and led a Chinese American contingent in a 1917 pro-suffrage parade in New York City. However, when the Nineteenth Amendment passed, she couldn't vote due to the disenfranchisement of Asian women being carried out. While the first wave lacked inclusivity, it gave the world some of the fiercest and most dedicated feminists who inspired the women around and after them. Susan B. Anthony, an abolitionist and renowned suffragist was an invaluable leader of the movement. She campaigned for black suffrage, published the periodical, *The Revolutionary*, was President of NAWSA till the age of 80, resisted abuse and judgement and upheld her beliefs.

She cast a vote in the 1872 Presidential Election in protest for suffrage and was promptly arrested and charged a fine, which she refused to pay. Undeterred by the backlash, she lobbied in Congress in favour of suffrage and when the Nineteenth Amendment passed 14 years after her death, it was commonly called the Susan B Anthony Amendment. A champion of black women's right to vote and the abolitionist movement was Sojourner Truth, a former slave who had become a preacher in the 1830s. She was charismatic and articulate and is remembered for her speech 'Ain't I A Woman' which she gave at a women's rights conference when the discussion revolved only around white women.

She said, "That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?" She successfully points out the double standard existing within the movement at that time and was a voice for the black women who felt unrepresented.

The first wave of feminism set the stage for the second, which had a more expansive purview and extended the struggle for equality to other sections of society. It's white-centric nature led to the extreme marginalization of black women in the feminist movement, a problem that arose again years later in the second wave.

As feminism became more fleshed out and developed as a concept, feminists often took the achievements of the first wave for granted. First wave feminists were viewed as decayed and part of a narrow-minded older



However, the Code Napoléon of 1804 eradicated the progress made during the revolution. Women's rights were supported by the rule of the Communist Paris Commune of 1870, but the rule of the Commune came to be temporary. An 1897 newspaper, *La Fronde*, was the most prestigious women-run newspaper. It maintained as a daily paper for 6 years and covered controversial topics such as the working women and advocating for women's political rights.

The First wave women's movement in France organized when the Association pour le Droit des Femmes was founded by Maria Deraismes and Léon Richer in 1870. It was followed by the Ligue Française pour le Droit des Femmes (1882) which took up the issue of women suffrage and became the leading suffrage society in parallel to the Union française pour le suffrage des femmes (1909-1945).

### **Russia**

In Imperial Russia, it was not legal to form political organisations prior to the 1905 Russian Revolution. Because of this, there was no open organised women's rights movement similar to the one in the West before this. There was, however, in practice a women's movement during the 19th-century.

In the mid 19th-century, several literary discussion clubs were founded, one of whom, which was co-founded by Anna Filosofova, Maria Trubnikova and Nadezjda Stasova, which discussed Western feminist literature and came to be the first genuine women's rights organisation in Russia. The Crimean War had exposed Russia as less developed than Western Europe, resulting in a number of reforms, among them educational reforms and the foundation of schools for girls. Russian elite women actually spoke for reforms in women rights through their literary clubs and charity societies. Their main interest was women's education and work opportunities. The women's club of Anna Filosofova, Maria Trubnikova and Nadezjda Stasova managed to achieve women's access to attend courses at the universities, and the separate courses held for women became so popular that they were made permanent in 1876. However, in 1876 women students were banned from being given degrees and all women's universities were banned except two.

In 1895, Anna Filosofova founded the "Russian Women's Charity League", which was officially a charitable society to avoid the ban of political organizations but which was in effect a women's rights organization. Anna Filosofova was elected to the International Council of Women in 1899. Because of the ban of political activity in Russia the only thing they could do was to raise awareness of feminist issues.

After the 1905 Russian Revolution political organisations was made legal in Russia and the women's movement was able to organise in the form of Liga Ravnopraviiia Zhenshchin, which started a campaign of women's suffrage the same year. The Russian Revolution of 1917 formally made men and women equal in the eyes of the law in the Soviet Union, but also banned all organised women's movement.

## England

The early feminist reformers were unorganized, and involved prominent individuals who had suffered as victims of injustice. This included individuals such as Caroline Norton whose personal tragedy where she was unable to obtain a divorce and was denied access to her three sons by her husband, led her to a life of intense campaigning which successfully led to the passing of the Custody of Infants Act 1839 and the introduction of the Tender years doctrine for child custody arrangement. The Act gave married women, for the first time, a right to their children. However, because women needed to petition in the Court, in practice few women had the financial means to petition for their rights.

The first organized movement for English feminism was the Langham Place Circle of the 1850s, which included among others Barbara Bodichon and Bessie Rayner Parkes. The group campaigned for many women's causes, including improved female rights in employment, and education. It also pursued women's property rights through its Married Women's Property Committee. In 1854, Bodichon published her Brief Summary of the Laws of England concerning Women, which was used by the Social Science Association after it was formed in 1857 to push for the passage of the Married Women's Property Act 1882. In 1858, Barbara Bodichon, Matilda Mary Hays and Bessie Rayner Parkes established the first feminist British periodical, the English Woman's Journal, with Bessie Parkes the chief editor. The journal continued publication until 1864 and was succeeded in 1866 by the Englishwoman's Review edited until 1880 by Jessie Boucherett which continued publication until 1910.

Jessie Boucherett and Adelaide Anne Proctor joined the Langham Place Circle in 1859. The group was active until 1866. Also in 1859, Jessie Boucherett, Barbara Bodichon and Adelaide Proctor formed the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women to promote the training and employment of women. The society is one of the earliest British women's organisations, and continues to operate as the registered charity Futures for Women. Helen Blackburn and Boucherett established the Women's Employment Defence League in 1891, to defend women's working rights against restrictive employment legislation. They also together edited the Condition of Working Women and the Factory Acts in 1896. In the beginning of the 20th century, women's employment was still predominantly limited to factory labor and domestic work. During World War I, more women found work outside the home. As a result of the wartime experience of women in the workforce, the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 opened professions and the civil service to women, and marriage was no longer a legal barrier to women working outside the home.

In 1918 Marie Stopes published the very influential Married Love, in which she advocated gender equality in marriage. The Representation of the People Act 1918 extended the franchise to women who were at least 30 years old and they or their husbands were property holders, while the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1918 gave women the right to sit in Parliament, although it was only slowly that women were actually elected. In 1928, the franchise was extended to all women over 21 by the

Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act 1928, on an equal basis to men.

Many feminist writers and women's rights activists argued that it was not equality to men which they needed but a recognition of what women need to fulfill their potential of their own natures, not only within the aspect of work but society and home life too. Virginia Woolf produced her essay 'A Room of One's Own' based on the ideas of women as writers and characters in fiction. Woolf said that a woman must have money and a room of her own to be able to write.

### **United States**

Judith Sargent Murray published the early and influential essay 'On the Equality of the Sexes' in 1790, blaming poor standards in female education as the root of women's problems. However, scandals surrounding the personal lives of English contemporaries Catharine Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft pushed feminist authorship into private correspondence from the 1790s through the early decades of the nineteenth century. Feminist essays from John Neal in *Blackwood's Magazine* and *The Yankee* in the 1820s filled an intellectual gap between Murray and the leaders of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, which is generally considered the beginning of the first wave of feminism. As a male writer insulated from many common forms of attack against female feminist thinkers, Neal's advocacy was crucial to bringing feminism back into the American mainstream.

'Woman in the Nineteenth Century' by Margaret Fuller has been considered the first major feminist work in the United States and is often compared to Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Prominent leaders of the feminist movement in the United States include Lucretia Coffin Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and Susan B. Anthony; Anthony and other activists such as Victoria Woodhull and Matilda Joslyn Gage made attempts to cast votes preceding to their legal right to do so, for which many of them faced charges. Other important leaders included several women who dissented against the law in order to have their voices heard, such as Sarah and Angelina Grimke, as well as other activists such as Carrie Chapman Catt, Alice Paul, Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, Margaret Sanger and Lucy Burns.

First-wave feminism involved a wide range of women. Some belonged to conservative Christian groups such as Frances Willard and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Others were women such as Matilda Joslyn Gage of the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) like the radicalism of much of second-wave feminism. The creation of these organizations was a direct result of the Second Great Awakening, a religious movement in the early 19th century, that inspired female reformers in the United States.

The majority of first-wave feminists were more moderate and conservative than radical or revolutionary—like the members of the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) they were willing to work within the political system and they understood the clout of joining with sympathetic men in power to promote the cause of suffrage. The limited membership

of the NWSA was narrowly focused on gaining a federal amendment for women's suffrage, whereas the AWSA, with ten times as many members, worked to gain suffrage on a state-by-state level as a necessary forerunner to federal suffrage. The NWSA had broad goals, hoping to achieve a more equal social role for women, but the AWSA was aware of the divisive nature of many of those goals and instead chose to focus solely on suffrage. The NWSA was known for having more publicly aggressive tactics such as picketing and hunger strikes whereas the AWSA used more traditional strategies like lobbying, delivering speeches, applying political pressure, and gathering signatures for petitions.

During the first wave, there was a notable connection between the slavery abolition movement and the women's rights movement. Frederick Douglass was heavily involved in both movements and believed that it was essential for both to work together in order to attain true equality in regards to race and sex. Different accounts of the involvement of African-American women in the Women's Suffrage Movement are given. In a 1974 interview, Alice Paul notes that a compromise was made between southern groups to have white women march first, then men, then African-American women. In another account by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), difficulties in segregating women resulted in African-American women marching with their respective States without hindrance. Among them was Ida B. Wells-Barnett, who marched with the Illinois delegation.

The end of the first wave is often linked with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (1920), granting women the right to vote. This was the major victory of the movement, which also included reforms in higher education, in the workplace and professions, and in health care. Women started serving on school boards and local bodies, and numbers kept increasing. This period also saw more women gaining access to higher education. In 1910, women were attending many leading medical schools, and in 1915 the American Medical Association began to admit women members. A Matrimonial Causes Act 1923 gave women the right to the same grounds for divorce as men. The first wave of feminists, in contrast to the second wave, focused very little on the subjects of abortion, birth control, and overall reproductive rights of women.

The rise in unemployment during the Great Depression which started in the 1920s hit women first, and when the men also lost their jobs there was further strain on families. Many women served in the armed forces during World War II, when around 300,000 American women served in the navy and army, performing jobs such as secretaries, typists and nurses.

### **State laws**

The American states are separate sovereigns, with their own state constitutions, state governments, and state courts. All states have a legislative branch which passes state laws. They also have an executive branch that circulates state regulations pursuant to statutory authorization, and a judicial branch that applies, interprets, and occasionally overturns both state statutes and regulations, as well as local ordinances. States



---

## 4. 5 Inequalities in The First Wave Feminist Movement

---

In the First Wave context there are two different fights for the equal rights of white women and black women. White women were fighting for rights equal to white men in society. They wanted to correct the discrepancy in education, professional, property, economic, and voting rights. They also fought for birth control and abortion freedom. Black women, on the other hand, were facing both racism and sexism, contributing to an uphill struggle for black feminists. While White women could not vote, black women and men could not vote. Mary J. Garrett who founded a group consisting of hundreds of Black women in New Orleans, said that black women strove for education and protection. It is true that black women in higher education were lonely, underutilized, and often disheartened, and they fought together against this. They were fighting against exploitation by White men and they wanted to lead a good and hard-working life. Black women were also fighting for their husbands, families, and overall equality and freedom of their civil rights. Racism restricted white and black women from coming together to fight for common societal transformation.

First Wave Feminism in the United States did not record the contributions of black women to the same degree as white women. Activists, including Susan B. Anthony and other feminist leaders spoke for equality between genders; however, they ignored equality between a number of other issues, including race. This allowed for white women to gain power and equality relative to white men, while the social inequality between white and black women increased. The exclusion helped the growing incidence of White supremacy, specifically white feminism while actively overlooking the power of impact black feminists had on the movement.

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were abolitionists but they did not advocate for universal suffrage. They did not want black men to be granted the right to vote before white women. The National American Woman Suffrage Association was created to distinguish themselves from advocating for black men to vote. The 15th Amendment states no person should be denied the right to vote based on race. Anthony and Stanton opposed passage of the amendment unless it was accompanied by a Sixteenth Amendment that would guarantee suffrage for women. Otherwise, they said, it would create a nobility of gender by giving constitutional authority to the belief that men were superior to women. Stanton once said that allowing black men to vote before women creates an hatred between black men and all women that will end in terrible crimes on womanhood. Anthony stated, she would cut off her right arm before demanding the ballot for the Black man and not the woman. Mary Church Terrell told her sisters of the dominant race, to stand up not only for the oppressed gender, but also for the oppressed race. The National American Woman Suffrage Association continued the inequalities between black and white women and also limited their capability to contribute to the movement. Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass together formed the American Equal Rights Association, advocating for equality.

**Check your progress:**

**1] Discuss the inequalities in the first wave feminist movement.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**2] Discuss the arguments of the first wave feminist activists.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**4. 6 Summary**

It is common to speak of three phases of modern feminism; however, there is little consensus as to how to characterize these three waves or what to do with women's movements before the late nineteenth century. Some thinkers have sought to locate the roots of feminism in ancient Greece with Sappho (d. c. 570 BCE), or the medieval world with Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179) or Christine de Pisan (d. 1434). Certainly Olympe de Gouge (d. 1791), Mary Wollstonecraft (d. 1797) and Jane Austen (d. 1817) are foremothers of the modern women's movement. All of these people advocated for the dignity, intelligence, and basic human potential of the female gender. However, it was not until the late nineteenth century that the efforts for women's equal rights merged into a clearly identifiable and self-conscious movement, or rather a series of movements.

First-wave feminism was a period of feminist activity and thought that occurred during the 19th and early 20th century throughout the Western world. It focused on legal issues, primarily on securing women's right to vote. The term first-wave feminism itself was coined by journalist Martha Lear in a New York Times Magazine article in March 1968 entitled "The Second Feminist Wave: What do these women want?" First wave feminism is characterized as focusing on the fight for women's political power, as opposed to unofficial inequalities. While the wave symbol is well established, including in academic literature, it has been criticized for creating a narrow view of women's liberation that removes the lineage of activism and focuses on specific visible performers. The first wave of feminism took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,

emerging out of an environment of urban industrialism and liberal, socialist politics. The goal of this wave was to open up opportunities for women, with a focus on suffrage. The wave formally began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 when three hundred men and women rallied to the cause of equality for women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton (d.1902) drafted the Seneca Falls Declaration outlining the new movement's ideology and political strategies.

In its early stages, feminism was interrelated with the temperance and abolitionist movements and gave voice to now-famous activists like the African-American Sojourner Truth (d. 1883), who demanded: "Ain't I a woman?" Victorian America saw women acting in very un-ladylike ways such as public speaking, demonstrating, and stints in jail, which challenged the trend of home life. Discussions about the vote and women's participation in politics led to an examination of the differences between men and women as they were then viewed. Some claimed that women were morally superior to men, and so their presence in the civic sphere would improve public behavior and the political process.

---

#### 4.7 Questions

---

1. Analyse the First Wave Feminist Movement.
2. Discuss the contribution of the various activists in the First Wave Feminist Movement.
3. Examine the growth of the First Wave Feminist Movement in the major countries of the world.

---

#### 4.8 References

---

Tara Anand, A Brief Summary of The First Wave Of Feminism in <https://feminisminindia.com/2018/04/24/summary-first-wave-of-feminism/>

Martha Rampton, Four Waves of Feminism, <https://www.pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism>

Hewitt, Nancy A. (2010). No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism. Rutgers University Press. pp. 1–12. ISBN 978-0-8135-4724-4. JSTOR j.ctt1bmzp2r.

Schneir, Miram, 1972 (1994). *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings*. Vintage Books. p. xiv. ISBN 978-0-679-75381-0.

Phillips, Melanie (2004). *The Ascent of Woman: A History of the Suffragette Movement and the Ideas Behind It*. London: Abacus. ISBN 978-0-349-11660-0.

What was the First Wave Feminist Movement? [Dailyhistory.org](http://Dailyhistory.org)

Dicker, Rory Cooke. (2008) *A History of U.S. Feminisms*. Berkeley: Seal Press. ISBN 1-58005-234-7

\*\*\*\*\*

## SECOND WAVE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

### Unit Structure

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Background

5.3 Second Wave Feminist Movement

5.4 Second Wave Feminism in the United States

5.5 Features of the Second Wave Feminist Movement

5.6 Criticisms of the Second Wave Feminist Movement

5.7 Summary

5.8 Questions

5.9 References

---

### 5.0 Objectives

---

To introduce students to Gender Studies.

- To understand the development of Feminist Ideology.
- To orient learners about the Second Wave Feminist Movement.

---

### 5.1 Introduction

---

Having understood the First Wave Feminist Movement, now let us shift our focus to the Second Wave Feminist Movement. The Second Wave of feminism is usually defined from the 1960s to the late 1980s. It was a reaction to women returning to their roles as housewives and mothers after the end of the Second World War. The men that had to leave the workforce to join the defence forces had returned and women were fired from their positions and replaced by men. So women found themselves in a difficult position. They lost their jobs.

38 percent of American women who worked in the 1960s were largely limited to jobs as teachers, nurses or secretaries. Women were expected to silently restart their lives as faithful and dominated wives. Housewives were estimated to spend an average of 55 hours a week on domestic chores. However, after having worked and been independent of male dominance during the war, women didn't want to resume these roles and this brought about the Second Wave of feminism.

This movement was initially concentrated in the United States of America and then spread to other Western countries. While the First Wave was largely concerned with the suffragette struggle for the vote, the Second



marital rape, created rape-crisis centers and women's shelters, and brought about changes in custody laws and divorce law. Feminist-owned bookstores, credit unions, and restaurants were among the key meeting spaces and economic engines of the movement.

The term "second-wave feminism" itself was brought into common use by journalist Martha Lear in a New York Times Magazine article in March 1968 titled "The Second Feminist Wave: What do These Women Want?". Many historians view the second-wave feminist era in America as ending in the early 1980s with the intra-feminist disputes of the feminist sex wars over issues such as sexuality and pornography, which steered in the era of third-wave feminism in the early 1990s.

The second wave feminist movement was triggered by the publishing of Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*, a renowned feminist text credited for daring to break social agreements regarding the depiction of women. Friedan was inspired by Simone de Beauvoir's book, *The Second Sex*, first published in Paris in 1949. This text was considered groundbreaking and became a landmark in the history of feminism. *The Feminine Mystique* discussed "the problem that has no name": the general unhappiness of American women in the 1960s and 70s. Friedan highlights the fault of the advertising industry and education system in restricting women to the household and menial tasks that resulted in a loss of individuality and independence. This book touched women all over the United States of America who were moved by it. Thousands of white middle-class women were thus drawn to the feminist cause, marking the start of the Second Wave of feminism.

Another distinction of this stage was through legislative measures. The Food and Drug Administration approved an oral contraceptive pill, made available in 1961 that was an important step towards letting women develop careers instead of being forced into family life. The Kennedy administration also set up a Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, which was chaired by former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. A report released by the commission on gender inequality recommended paid maternity leave, access to education and good childcare to help women. An organization called Women Strike for Peace mobilized 50,000 women in 1961 to protest against nuclear bombs and contaminated milk.

**Check your progress:**

**1] Describe the period of the Second Wave Feminist Movement.**

---

---

---

---

---



divorce greatly reduced the dependence of wives on their husbands and gave them the tools to live healthier lives. In 1975, a law requiring military academies to admit women was passed and the image of women as simply domestic deities was changed.

All these successes were impressive, and many believed that the objective of female liberation had been achieved. A massive let-down came in the form of the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution's failure to be ratified by 38 states in order to be implemented.

Many ambitious and resourceful feminist leaders like Friedan arose during this wave. A young journalist, Gloria Steinem, became a feminist leader when her writing about the Playboy Club and its chauvinist elements gained popularity with women. She was a staunch advocate for legalizing abortions and federally funding daycares.

Like Friedan and Steinem, there are other feminists who were forerunners of the Second Wave. In 1969, feminist writer Kate Millet wrote about how patriarchy led to gender oppression. She stated that discrimination began with gender and then occurred between race and class. Another writer that had an impact still felt today was Carol Hanisch. Her essay, 'The Personal is Political', argued that even the most private aspects of life like housework and gender roles are politically relevant for women and must be brought into the public sphere. The slogan, The Personal is Political is used often today at rallies and demonstrations advocating women's rights.

As a whole, the Second Wave can be characterized by a general feeling of solidarity among women fighting for equality. It also saw the creation of several types of feminism. Radical feminism was prevalent, which involved the complete elimination of male supremacy and challenging of all gender roles. Socialist feminism was also a form of feminism created post the Second World War. Like Marxism, it acknowledged the oppressive nature of a capitalist society and saw a connection between gender and racial discrimination. It differed from radical feminism in that it didn't see gender as the exclusive basis for all oppression. Eco-feminism was widely recognized. It related environmental justice and care with women's rights and liberation. In India Vandana Shiva is connected with eco-feminism.

While the Second Wave was a hugely successful movement that comprised many legal and cultural victories leading to greater equality, it had its shortcomings. At the time in the United States, the movement against racism was active too. Women of colour found themselves to be under-represented by the feminist movement. Prominent feminists were white middle-class women who wrote feminist theory centred on their own experiences and troubles. While there were many black, Latin, Asian and Native American members of the movement, they felt left out from

the story and ignored. The agenda of the leading white feminists was often different from theirs.

Many women felt that it was unwise to discuss gender equality without taking into consideration racial inequality too. This gap motivated women of colour to form their own organizations to represent their interests in the movement. One such organization was the Third Women’s World Alliance. In India, the feminist movement is significantly different than in the USA. India’s movement for gender equality was closely connected with the nationalist struggle for freedom. During the 19th century, those advocating for the protection of women’s rights were male reformers who made important advances by fighting for legal safeguards against social evils such as child marriage and sati.

A rise in consciousness about the oppression of women and their societal status was interlinked with a desire to escape the discrimination carried out by the British. The 20th century then saw the growth of women’s groups for empowering women in pre-Independent India, such as the All India Women’s Conference and National Federation for Indian Women.

Women were participating in the freedom struggle, and independence promised freedom from imperialism and their marginalized role in society. While the feminist movements in the West and India fought for the ultimate goal of equality, the problems they tackled and obstacles they hit were vastly distinct. While the Second Wave was invaluable to broadening the scope of the feminist cause, it had flaws and failures. It is from issues of racial discrimination within the Second Wave that rose Intersectional Feminism.

In feminist terms, it means taking into account differences in discrimination faced by different ethnicities and races and thus making feminism not selective, but all-inclusive equality. The Second Wave was essential to the feminist movement and brought women into the mainstream in many spheres, but it had its mistakes.

**Check your progress:**

**1] Describe the Second Wave Feminist Movement.**

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



Presidential Commission on the Status of Women released its report on gender inequality.

The administration of President Kennedy made women's rights a key issue of the New Frontier, and named women such as Esther Peterson to many high-ranking posts in his administration. Kennedy also established a Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt and comprising cabinet officials, senators, representatives, businesspeople, psychologists, sociologists, professors, activists, and public servants. The report recommended changing this inequality by providing paid maternity leave, greater access to education, and help with child care to women. In 1961, 50,000 women in 60 cities, mobilized by Women Strike for Peace, protested above ground testing of nuclear bombs and tainted milk.

In 1963, Betty Friedan, influenced by Simone de Beauvoir's revolutionary, feminist *The Second Sex*, wrote the bestselling book *The Feminine Mystique*. Discussing primarily white women, she openly objected to how women were depicted in the mainstream media, and how engaging them at home limited their possibilities and wasted potential. She had helped conduct a very important survey using her old classmates from Smith College. This survey revealed that the women who played a role at home and the workforce were more satisfied with their life compared to the women who stayed home. The women who stayed home showed feelings of anxiety and sadness. She concluded that many of these unhappy women had absorbed themselves in the idea that they should not have any ambitions outside their home. Friedan described this as "The Problem That Has No Name". The perfect nuclear family image depicted and strongly marketed at the time, she wrote, did not mirror joy and was rather humiliating for women. This book is widely credited with having begun second-wave feminism in the United States.

The report from the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, along with Friedan's book, led to the formation of local, state, and federal government women's groups along with many independent feminist organizations. The movement grew with legal victories such as the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the *Griswold v. Connecticut* Supreme Court ruling of 1965. In 1966 Friedan joined other women and men to found the National Organization for Women (NOW); Friedan became its first president.

In 1963, freelance journalist Gloria Steinem gained extensive fame among feminists after a diary she authored while working disguised as a Playboy Bunny waitress at the Playboy Club was published as a two-part feature in the May and June issues of *Show*. In her diary, Steinem alleged the club

was abusing its waitresses in order to gain male customers and exploited the Playboy Bunnies as symbols of male narrow-mindedness.

Many important laws were passed as a result. Some of them were a 1967 Executive Order extending full affirmative action rights to women, Title IX and the Women's Educational Equity Act, Title X (1970, health and family planning), the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (1974), the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, and the legalization of no-fault divorce, and a 1975 law requiring the U.S. Military Academies to admit women. However, the changing of social attitudes towards women is usually considered the greatest success of the women's movement.

Second-wave feminism also affected other movements, such as the civil rights movement and the student's rights movement, as women sought equality within them. Some black feminists who were active in the early second-wave feminism include civil rights lawyer and author Florynce Kennedy, who co-authored one of the first books on abortion, 1971's *Abortion Rap*; Cellestine Ware, of New York's Stanton-Anthony Brigade; and Patricia Robinson. These women tried to show the connections between racism and male dominance in society. The Indochinese Women's Conferences (IWC) in Vancouver and Toronto in 1971, demonstrated the interest of a multitude of women's groups in the Vietnam Antiwar movement.

The second wave of the feminist movement also marks the rise of women's studies as a genuine field of study. In 1970, San Diego State University was the first university in the United States to offer a selection of women's studies courses. The 1977 National Women's Conference in Houston, Texas presented an opportunity for women's liberation groups to address a multitude of women's issues. At the conference, delegates from around the country gathered to create a National Plan of Action, on matters such as women's health, women's employment, and child care.

By the early 1980s, it was largely perceived that women had met their goals and succeeded in changing social attitudes towards gender roles, repealing oppressive laws that were based on gender, integrating the military academies, the United States armed forces, NASA, single-gender colleges, men's clubs, and the Supreme Court, and making gender discrimination illegal.

Second-wave feminism was largely successful. Efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment continued. Ten states have adopted constitutions or constitutional amendments providing that equal rights under the law shall not be denied because of gender. Furthermore, many women's groups are still active and are major political forces. As of 2011, more women earn bachelor's degrees than men, half of the Ivy League presidents are women, the numbers of women in government and traditionally male-dominated



### **The liberal feminist movement**

After being removed from the workforce, by either personal or social pressures, many women in the post-war America returned to the home or were placed into female only jobs in the service sector. After the publication of Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, many women connected to the feeling of isolation and dissatisfaction that the book detailed. The book was a appeal for self-realization and consciousness raising among middle-class women throughout America. Many of these women organized to form the National Organization for Women in 1966, whose "Statement of Purpose" declared that the right women had to equality was one small part of the nationwide civil rights revolution that was happening during the 1960s.

### **The radical feminist movement**

Women who favoured radical feminism collectively spoke of being forced to remain silent and obedient to male leaders in New Left organizations. They spoke out about how they told to do clerical work such as filling envelopes and typing speeches. Many radical feminists had learned from these organizations how to think radically about their self-worth and importance.

### **Industries**

Feminist activists have established a range of feminist businesses, including women's bookstores, feminist credit unions, feminist presses, feminist mail-order catalogs, feminist restaurants, and feminist record labels. These businesses flourished as part of the second and third waves of feminism in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. In West Berlin sixteen projects emerged within three years (1974–76) all without state funding.

### **Melody and general culture**

Second-wave feminists viewed popular culture as chauvinist, and created pop culture of their own to respond to this. One scheme of second wave feminism was to generate 'positive' images of women, to act as a counterbalance to the main images circulating in popular culture and to raise women's consciousness of their oppressions. Australian artist Helen Reddy's song "I Am Woman" played a large role in popular culture and became a feminist anthem; Reddy came to be known as a feminist icon. Helen Reddy then began performing the song on numerous television shows. As the song gained popularity, women began calling radio stations and requesting to hear "I Am Woman" played. "I Am Woman" also became a protest song that women sang at feminist rallies and protests.

In 1973, a group of five feminists created the first women's owned-and-operated record label, called Olivia Records. They created the record label because they were upset that major labels were slow to add female artists

to their registers. It was a chance to create opportunities for women artists within an industry which at that time had insufficient opportunities for women. Initially, they had a budget of \$4,000, and relied on donations to keep Olivia Records alive. With these donations, Olivia Records created an album of feminist songs entitled *I Know You Know*. The record label originally relied on volunteers and feminist bookstores to distribute their records, but after a few years their records began to be sold in mainstream record stores.

Olivia Records was so successful that the company relocated from Washington D.C. to Los Angeles in 1975. Olivia Records released several records and albums, and their popularity grew. As their popularity grew, an alternative, specialized music industry grew around it. This type of music came to be known as "women's music".

Women's music consisted of female musicians who combined music with politics to express feminist ideals. Cities throughout the United States began to hold Women's Music Festivals, all consisting of female artists singing their own songs about personal experiences. The first Women's Music Festival was held in 1974 at the University of Illinois. In 1979, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival attracted 10,000 women from across America. These festivals encouraged already-famous female singers, such as Laura Nyro and Ellen McIllwaine, to begin writing and producing their own songs instead of going through a major record label. Many women began performing hard rock music, a traditionally male-dominated genre. One of the most successful examples included the sisters Ann and Nancy Wilson, who formed the famous hard rock band Heart.

### **Film**

Film Academy at Berlin gave chance to women. From 1968 on one third of the students were female. Some of them were pioneers of the women's movement and produced feminist feature films. In the 1970s in West Germany, women directors produced a whole series of films focusing on women's personal emancipation. In the 1980s the Goethe Institute brought a collection of German women's films in every corner of the world. German feminism is one of the most active women's movements in Europe. In 1979, German women film workers formed the Association of women film workers. The introduction of a quota system in Sweden has brought the proportion of women in key positions in film production around the same as the population share. As a result, the Swedish initiative calls also for the implementation of a gradual women's quota for the allocation of film and television directing jobs in order to achieve a gender-equitable distribution.

In the US, both the creation and subjects of motion pictures began to reflect second-wave feminist ideals, leading to the development of

feminist film theory. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, female filmmakers were involved in part of the new wave of feminist films.

### **Social changes**

Use of birth control became prevalent. The Food and Drug Administration passed their approval for the use of birth control in 1960. Liberal feminists took action in creating panels and workshops to promote conscious among women. These workshops also brought attention to issues such as venereal diseases and safe abortion. Young women on college campuses distributed pamphlets on birth control, sexual diseases, and abortion. The second-wave feminist movement also took a strong stance against physical violence in both the home and the workplace. In 1968, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission passed an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prevented discrimination based on gender in the workplace. This attention to women's rights in the workplace also added sexual harassment to its "Guidelines on Discrimination".

Domestic violence was rampant in post-war America. Married women were often abused by their husbands. It was socially acceptable and legal as women were seen to be the possessions of their husbands. Because of activists in the second-wave feminist movement, by 1982 three hundred shelters and forty-eight state coalitions had been established to provide protection and services for women who had been abused by men in their lives.

### **Education**

One debate which developed in the United States during this time period revolved around the question of coeducation. Most men's colleges in the United States adopted coeducation, often by merging with women's colleges. In addition, some women's colleges adopted coeducation. Radcliffe College merged with Harvard University. Beginning in 1963, students at Radcliffe received Harvard diplomas signed by the presidents of Radcliffe and Harvard and joint commencement exercises began in 1970. The same year, several Harvard and Radcliffe dormitories began swapping students experimentally and in 1972 full co-residence was instituted. The departments of athletics of both schools merged shortly thereafter. In 1977, Harvard and Radcliffe signed an agreement which put undergraduate women entirely in Harvard College. In 1999, Radcliffe College was dissolved and Harvard University assumed full responsibility over the affairs of female undergraduates.

### **Check your progress:**

**1] Discuss the liberal feminist movement and the radical feminist movement.**

---

---

---



historiography to an exclusive population of women. It assumed that all women experienced the same oppressions as the white and mainly middle-class women. But this is not true as there were other women and their issues.

This restricting view ignored the oppressions women faced according to their race, and class. It gave rise to women-of-color feminisms that separated from the women's liberation movement, such as Black feminism, and African womanism. Kimberly Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" in 1989 in response to the white, middle-class views that dominated second-wave feminism. Intersectionality describes the way systems of oppression have multiplicative, effects, on those who are multiply marginalized. It has become an essential principle of third-wave feminism.

Many feminist scholars see the generational division of the second wave as problematic. Second wavers are typically categorized as the Baby Boomer generation, when in actuality many feminist leaders of the second wave were born before World War II ended. This generational essentialism standardizes the group that belongs to the wave and asserts that every person part of a certain demographic generation shared the same ideologies, because ideological differences were considered to be generational differences.

Feminist scholars, particularly those from the late 20th and early 21st centuries to the present day, have returned to various writings, oral histories, artwork, and artifacts of women of color and working-class women, during the early 1960s to the early 1980s to focus on the dominant historical narratives of the second wave of the women's liberation movement. They want to allow the scope of the historical understanding of feminist consciousness to expand and transform. By recovering histories that have been erased and overlooked, these scholars want to establish the erased memory. This allows fragments of historical knowledge and memory to be discovered. New historical feminist subjects as well as new perspectives about the past also emerge.

**Check your progress:**

**1] Discuss the criticisms of the second wave feminist movement.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Western world, and aimed to increase equality for women by building on previous feminist gains. Whereas first-wave feminism focused mainly on suffrage and toppling legal difficulties to gender equality in the field of voting rights and property rights, second-wave feminism broadened the debate to include a wider range of issues such as family, the workplace, reproductive rights, actual inequalities, and official legal inequalities. It was a movement that was focused on criticizing the patriarchal, or male-dominated, institutions and cultural practices throughout society. Second-wave feminism also drew attention to the issues of domestic violence and marital rape, created rape-crisis centers and women's shelters, and brought about changes in custody laws and divorce law. Feminist-owned bookstores, credit unions, and restaurants were among the key meeting spaces and economic engines of the movement.

The term "second-wave feminism" itself was brought into common use by journalist Martha Lear in a New York Times Magazine article in March 1968 titled "The Second Feminist Wave: What do These Women Want?". Many historians view the second-wave feminist era in America as ending in the early 1980s.

The second wave feminist movement was triggered by the publishing of Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*, a renowned feminist text credited for daring to break social agreements regarding the depiction of women. Friedan was inspired by Simone de Beauvoir's book, *The Second Sex*, first published in Paris in 1949. This text was considered groundbreaking and became a landmark in the history of feminism. *The Feminine Mystique* discussed "the problem that has no name": the general unhappiness of American women in the 1960s and 70s. Friedan highlights the fault of the advertising industry and education system in restricting women to the household and menial tasks that resulted in a loss of individuality and independence. This book touched women all over the United States of America who were moved by it. Thousands of white middle-class women were thus drawn to the feminist cause, marking the start of the Second Wave of feminism.

---

## 5. 8 Questions

---

1. Analyse the Second Wave Feminist Movement.
2. Discuss the contribution of the important activists of the Second Wave Feminist Movement.
3. Examine the features of the Second Wave Feminist Movement.

---

## 5. 9 References

---

Tara Anand, A Brief Summary of the First Wave of Feminism in <https://feminisminindia.com/2018/04/24/summary-first-wave-of-feminism/>

Martha Rampton, Four Waves of Feminism,  
<https://www.pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism>

Hansen, Karen Tranberg; Philipson, Ilene J. (1990). Women, class, and the feminist imagination: a socialist-feminist reader. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. ISBN 978-0-87722-630-7.

Murray Knuttila, *Introducing Sociology: A Critical Approach* (4th ed. 2008 Oxford University Press)

Hunt, Michael (2014). *The World Transformed: 1945 to the Present*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 220, 221. ISBN 978-0-19-937102-0.

Farber, David (2004). *The Sixties Chronicle*. Legacy Publishing. ISBN 978-1412710091.

Baxandall, Rosalyn; Gordon, Linda, eds. (2000). *Dear Sisters: Dispatches From The Women's Liberation Movement*. Basic Books. ISBN 978-0-465-01707-2.

Hall, Simon (2011). *American Patriotism, American Protest: Social Movements Since the Sixties*. University of Pennsylvania Press. ISBN 978-0-8122-4295-9.

Hewitt, Nancy A. (2010). *No Permanent Waves : Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*. Nancy A. Hewitt. New Brunswick, N.J. ISBN 978-0-8135-4917-0.

Patterson, James T. (2000). *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974*. New York: Oxford University Press

\*\*\*\*\*

## THIRD WAVE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

### Unit Structure

#### 6.0 Objectives

#### 6.1 Introduction

#### 6.2 Background

#### 6.3 Third Wave Feminist Movement

#### 6.4 Features of the Third Wave Feminist Movement

#### 6.5 Criticisms of the Third Wave Feminist Movement

#### 6.6 Summary

#### 6.7 Questions

#### 6.8 References

---

### 6.0 Objectives

---

- To introduce students to Gender Studies.
- To understand the development of Feminist Ideology.
- To orient learners about the Third Wave Feminist Movement.

---

### 6.1 Introduction

---

Having understood the First Wave Feminist Movement and Second Wave feminist movement, now let us shift our focus to the Third Wave Feminist Movement. The third wave of feminism emerged in the mid-1990s. It was led by so-called Generation Xers who, born in the 1960s and '70s in the developed world, matured in a media-saturated and culturally and economically diverse environment. Although they profited significantly from the legal rights and protections that had been obtained by first- and second-wave feminists, they also criticized the positions and the incomplete work of second-wave feminism.

The third wave was made possible by the greater economic and professional power and status achieved by women of the second wave, the huge growth in opportunities for the spreading of ideas created by the information revolution of the late 20th century, and the maturity of Generation X scholars and activists.

Some early supporters of the new approach were factually daughters of the second wave. Third Wave Direct Action Corporation planned in 1992 became in 1997 the Third Wave Foundation, dedicated to supporting groups and individuals working towards gender, racial, economic, and social justice; both were founded by Rebecca Walker, the daughter of the novelist and second-wave activist Alice Walker. Jennifer Baumgardner

and Amy Richards, authors of *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (2000), were both born in 1970 and raised by second wave feminists who had belonged to organized feminist groups. They questioned the gender based division of labour in their households, and raised their daughters to be self-aware, empowered, eloquent, high-achieving women.

Influenced by the postmodernist movement in the academy, third-wave feminists wanted to question, and redefine the ideas, and words about womanhood, gender, beauty, femininity, and masculinity, among other things. As feminism has evolved, it has branched out into different areas of discourse. It has become more difficult to define a wave and define a time period within which activity is occurring. Feminist thought and culture have become increasingly present around the world. The Third Wave is a more recent and wider outpouring of feminist activity.

To understand the Third Wave, we must first understand the USA post the second wave 'sex wars.' The 'sex wars' was the name given to the open debate between groups within feminism over pornography. Anti-pornography feminists wanted to limit the porn industry because they believed it catered only to men and encouraged violence towards women. They wanted to end prostitution and saw it as a worst-case situation for any woman. Some other feminists, on the other hand, argued that sexual liberation was a vital component of equality for women and that banning pornography was repressive and undemocratic. They believed that there were women who deliberately chose that kind of work.

**Check your progress:**

**1] Define the Third Wave Feminist Movement.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**2] Examine some of the issues of Third Wave Feminism.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 6.2 Background

---

The Third Wave of feminism began in a generation that had grown up with feminism and took the hard-earned achievements of the First and Second wave for granted. Third Wave feminists were quick to criticize earlier feminists, and to point out the faults in their movements. An argument often made was of the exclusive nature of the movements, and the marginalization of minorities in the mainstream. The Third Wave thus primarily tried to bring in communities that were earlier left out of feminist goals and recognize the intersectionality of domination. It focused on race and gender and grew out of the sex-positive debates of the second wave.

It is often defined as beginning in 1991 with Anita Hill accusing Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment. Both parties were African American, and Thomas was seen as a popular candidate for the nomination due to the need for African American presence in the Supreme Court. Hill came forward in front of the all-white male Senate, and Thomas reacted by rejecting everything and claiming to be a victim. Hill was faced with tremendous backlash and her character was attacked instead of her testimony being believed. Her trial had been televised, and the sight of a black woman reporting the harassment to the Senate impacted women all over America.

Despite Hill's accusations, Thomas was appointed. In response to this, Rebecca Walker published a piece in *Ms Magazine*, supporting Hill and indicating the beginning of the Third Wave. She wrote that she was not a post-feminism feminist, but she was the third wave. Third wave feminists inherited a position of institutional power created by second wave feminists. They were women's studies programs at universities, feminist organizations, and well-established publications such as *Ms. magazine* and several academic journals.

In expressing their concerns, third-wave feminists actively played on seemingly chauvinist images and symbols. They used very strong language. They used slang language and were very proud of it. The spirit and intent of the third wave shone through the raw honesty, humour, and horror of Eve Ensler's play. The Guerrilla Girls were a group of women artists who put on gorilla masks in an effort to expose female stereotypes and fight discrimination against female artists.

The third wave was much more inclusive of women and girls of colour than the first or second waves had been. In reaction and opposition to stereotypical images of women as passive, weak, and faithful, the third wave redefined women and girls as assertive, powerful, and in control of themselves. In popular culture this redefinition gave rise to icons of powerful women that included the singers Madonna, Queen Latifah, and Mary J. Blige. Media programming for children increasingly depicted smart, independent girls and women in lead roles, including Disney heroines such as Mulan (1998) and Helen Parr and her daughter, Violet (The Incredibles, 2006), and television characters such as Dora (Dora the

Explorer, 1999–2006). The lively appearance of “Girl Power” merchandise also proved popular.

The increasing ease of publishing on the Internet meant that electronic magazines and blogs became abundant. Many serious independent writers, and organizations, found that the Internet offered a medium for the exchange of information and the publication of essays and videos that made their point to a possibly huge audience. The Internet drastically democratized the content of the feminist movement with respect to participants, aesthetics, and subjects.

The third wave of feminism began in the mid-90 and was informed by post-colonial and post-modern thinking. In this phase many constructs were destabilized, including the notions of "universal womanhood," body, gender, and heteronormativity. An aspect of third wave feminism that mystified the mothers of the earlier feminist movement was the readoption by young feminists of the very lip-stick, and high-heels that the first two phases of the movement identified with male oppression.

The "grrls" of the third wave stepped onto the stage as strong and empowered, avoiding victimization and defining feminine beauty for themselves as subjects, not as objects of a sexist patriarchy. They developed a rhetoric of mimicry, which appropriated derogatory terms in order to subvert sexist culture and deprive it of verbal weapons. The web is an important tool of "girlie feminism." E-zines have provided "cybergrrls" and "netgrrls" another kind of women-only space. Most third-wavers refuse to identify as "feminists" and reject the word that they find limiting and exclusionary. Grrl-feminism tends to be global, multi-cultural, and it shuns simple answers or artificial categories of identity, and gender. Its cross politics means that differences such as those of ethnicity, class, orientation, etc. are celebrated and recognized as dynamic, situational, and provisional. Third wave feminism breaks boundaries.

**Check your progress:**

**1] Describe the period of the Third Wave Feminist Movement.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**2] Describe the leading women under Third Wave Feminism.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 6.3 Third Wave Feminist Movement

---

Third-wave feminism is a restatement of the feminist movement. It began in the United States in the early 1990s and continued until the rise of the fourth wave in the 2010s. Born in the 1960s and 1970s as members of Generation X and grounded in the civil-rights advances of the second wave, third-wave feminists embraced individualism in women and diversity and sought to redefine what it meant to be a feminist. The third wave saw the emergence of new feminist undercurrents and theories, such as intersectionality, vegetarian ecofeminism, transfeminism, and postmodern feminism. According to feminist scholar Elizabeth Evans, the confusion surrounding the nature of third-wave feminism is its important feature.

The third wave is traced to the emergence of the riot grrrl feminist punk subculture in Olympia, Washington, in the early 1990s, and to Anita Hill's televised testimony in 1991 to an all-male, all-white Senate Judiciary Committee that African-American judge Clarence Thomas, nominated for and eventually confirmed to the Supreme Court of the United States, had sexually harassed her. The term third wave is credited to Rebecca Walker, who responded to Thomas's appointment to the Supreme Court with an article in Ms. magazine, "Becoming the Third Wave"

Walker sought to establish that third-wave feminism was not just a reaction, but a movement in itself, because the feminist cause had more work ahead.

The term intersectionality had been introduced by Kimberley Williams Crenshaw in 1989. It was used to describe the idea that women experience layers of oppression caused by gender, race and class. It was during the third wave that the concept flourished. As feminists came online in the late 1990s and early 2000s and reached a global audience with blogs, they broadened their goals, focusing on abolishing gender-role stereotypes and expanding feminism to include women with diverse racial and cultural identities.

The rights and programs gained by feminists of the second wave served as a foundation for the third wave. The gains included Title IX about equal access to education, public discussion about the abuse of women, access to contraception and other reproductive services the creation of domestic-abuse shelters for women and children, child-care services, educational funding for young women, and women's studies programs.

Feminist leaders rooted in the second wave and other feminists of color, sought to negotiate a space within feminist thought for consideration of race. They argued that second-wave feminism had focused primarily on the problems of white women. The emphasis on the intersection between

race and gender became increasingly prominent. In the interval of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the feminist sex wars arose as a reaction against the radical feminism of the second wave.

The emergence of riot grrrl, the feminist punk subculture, in the early 1990s in Olympia, Washington, marked the beginning of third-wave feminism. The triple "r" in grrrl was intended to reclaim the word girl for women. Riot grrrl and Sarah Dyer's Action Girl Newsletter formulated a style, rhetoric, and iconography that came to define third-wave feminism, and that focused on the viewpoint of young girls. Based on hard-core punk rock, the movement created art that talked about patriarchy and female empowerment, and supported and organized women in music. They wanted a safe space to be created for girls where they could reach out to each other without being threatened by the chauvinist society. They wanted to create mediums for girls. They were tired of boy band after boy band

Riot grrrl was grounded in the philosophy of an anti-corporate stance of self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Its emphasis was on universal female identity and separatism. Riot grrrl culture gave people the space to enact change on a macro, and micro scale. Riot Grrrl encouraged females to engage in multiple sites of resistance. At the macro-level, Riot Grrrls resisted society's dominant constructions of femininity. At the micro-level, they challenged gender constructions in their families and among their peers. Riot grrrl bands in general were very focused on making space for women at shows. They understood the importance of giving women a platform and voice to speak out against abusers.

The biggest challenge to third-wave feminism was that the gains of second-wave feminism were taken for granted, and the importance of feminism not understood. Essentially the claim was that gender equality had already been achieved, through the first two waves, and further attempts to push for women's rights were immaterial and needless, or perhaps even pushed the weight too far in women's favor. This issue manifested itself in the heated debates about whether affirmative action was creating gender equality or punishing white, middle-class males for the biological history that they had inherited. Third-wave feminism therefore focused on Consciousness raising which meant one's ability to open their mind to the fact that male domination did affect the women of this generation.

Third-wave feminists often engaged in micro-politics, and challenged the second wave's model as to what was good for women. Proponents of third-wave feminism said that it allowed women to define feminism for themselves. Describing third-wave feminism in 'Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism And The Future (2000)', Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards suggested that feminism could change with every generation and individual. They began challenging some of the received wisdom of the past ten or twenty years of feminism.

Third-wave feminists used personal narratives as a form of feminist theory. Expressing personal experiences gave women space to recognize that they were not alone in the oppression and discrimination they faced.

Using these accounts has benefits because it records personal details that may not be available in traditional historical texts. Third-wave ideology focused on a more post-structuralist interpretation of gender. Post-structuralist activists saw binaries such as male–female as a fake concept created to maintain the power of the dominant group.

The second wave of feminism is often accused of being elitist and ignoring groups such as women of colour and transgender women, instead, focusing on white, middle-class women. Third wave feminists questioned the beliefs of their ancestors and began to apply feminist theory to a wider variety of women, who had not been previously included in feminist activity. Second-wave feminists grew up where the politics tangled within the culture, such as Kennedy, the Vietnam War, civil rights, and women's rights. In contrast, the third wave sprang from a culture of punk-rock, hip-hop, products, consumerism and the Internet.

## **Issues**

### **Violence against women**

Violence against women, including domestic violence, and sexual harassment, became a central issue. Organizations such as V-Day formed with the goal of ending gender violence, and artistic expressions generated awareness. Third-wave feminists wanted to transform traditional notions of gender.

### **Reproductive rights**

One of third-wave feminism's primary goals was to demonstrate that access to contraception and abortion are women's reproductive rights. South Dakota's 2006 attempt to ban abortion in all cases, except when necessary to protect the mother's life, and the US Supreme Court's vote to uphold the partial birth abortion ban were viewed as restrictions on women's civil and reproductive rights. Restrictions on abortion in the US, which was mostly legalized by the 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, were becoming more common in states around the country. These included mandatory waiting periods, parental-consent laws, and spousal-consent laws.

### **Other issues**

Third-wave feminism regarded race, social class, and transgender rights as central issues. It also paid attention to workplace matters such as the glass ceiling, unfair maternity-leave policies, motherhood support for single mothers by means of welfare and child care, respect for working mothers, and the rights of mothers who decided to leave their careers to raise their children full-time.

### **Check your progress:**

#### **1] Describe the Third Wave Feminist Movement.**

---

---

---

---

---



television shows impacted the narrative of the Third Wave, such as *Thelma and Louise*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *30 Rock* and *Parks and Recreation*. Strong female feminist characters became more common when adolescent girls became a powerful demographic in media and a generation of girls grew up in a completely different feminist environment than their mothers.

The Third Wave was concerned with reclaiming terms used to oppress or label women by the patriarchy and use them as tools of liberation. Derogatory terms were embraced and claimed by feminists. Trans feminism was brought more into the mainstream in the Third Wave. The rights of trans persons were not included in feminism till recently and the need to recognize the legality of their concerns was persistent. The discussions of gender, and body image that defined the Third Wave of feminism made it more inclusive to Trans feminists. Even today there is ignorance among large sections of society about the identity of trans persons, but the Third Wave was important in taking the first steps towards educating others.

In India, the enfranchisement of women and equality by law were given at Independence. However, deep-rooted cultural and religious beliefs prevented the appearance of dreams of gender equality post British-rule. Implementation of the law was weak, and social evils and injustices were still largely unregulated.

The 1980s and 90s were characterised by national protests against rapes which polarised society and confronted hypocrisies entrenched in the mindsets of many Indians. Debates over a woman's culpability in her own rape and the prevention of rape by curtailing the movement of women were frequent. Cases such as those of Hetal Parekh, Bhanwari Devi, and Pratibha Murthy triggered demonstrations across the country which resulted in legal victories for Indian women's groups.

Women's representation in politics did improve, with Mayawati becoming the first Scheduled Caste Chief Minister in 1995 and Sonia Gandhi the first female Leader of the Opposition in 1999. Pratibha Patil became the first female President of India in 2007 and Meira Kumar the first female Speaker of the Lok Sabha in 2009. Despite these improvements, women in India still faced many issues such as unavailability of education, little right to property, domestic violence and sexual harassment to name only a few. There have been crucial changes to Indian law and politics but the issues of women from a variety of backgrounds still have to be resolved. While the notion of "feminism" was derived from the West, India has had a long history of women's movements throughout its history. Today's Indian feminism can only be effective if it is informed by the unique historical and geographical experiences of Indian women and does not replicate the activity of the West.

From being too radical to disrespecting the work of its predecessors, the Third Wave of feminism has faced criticism on many fronts. It was less united than the First and Second Waves. Its goals were less clear and grounds more unclear. The very need for feminism in the 21st century itself was called into question. However, its effect on societal perceptions

and expectations from women was crucial in bringing them closer to equality in more areas than ever before. The wave is said to have ended in 2012 when the social media-centered 'Fourth Wave' began.

Today, it's even more difficult to trace the description of feminism as it develops to tackle various conditions. Today's feminists have a responsibility to learn about those who shaped the world they live in as well as recognize those who have been sidelined in the past, for their work is still important and feminism has a long way to go.

**Check your progress:**

**1] Discuss the features of the third wave feminist movement.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**2] Discuss the areas in which the third wave feminism made an impact.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**6. 5 Criticisms of The Third Wave Feminist Movement**

---

One issue raised by critics was a lack of unity because of the absence of a single cause for third-wave feminism. The first wave fought for and gained the right for women to vote. The second wave fought for the right for women to have access to an equal opportunity in the workforce, as well as the end of legal sex discrimination. The third wave allegedly lacked a consistent goal and was often seen as an extension of the second wave. Some argued that the third wave could be dubbed the Second Wave, Part Two when it came to the politics of feminism and that only young feminist culture was "truly third wave". One argument ran that the equation of third-wave feminism with individualism prevented the movement from growing and moving towards political goals.

Kathleen P. Iannello wrote that the theoretical and real-world trick of choosing women's rights between work and home has led women to challenge each other rather than the patriarchy. Individualism conceived of as choice does not empower women; it silences them and prevents feminism from becoming a political movement and addressing the real issues of distribution of resources.

Feminist scholars such as Shira Tarrant objected to the "wave construct" because it ignored important progress between the periods. Furthermore, if feminism is a global movement, she argued, the fact that the first-, second, and third waves time periods correspond most closely to American feminist developments. This increases grave problems about how feminism fails to identify the history of political issues around the world. Critics argued that the "wave construct", also focused on white women's vote and continued to disregard the issues of women of color and lower-class women.

Third-wave feminists proclaim themselves as the most inclusive wave of feminism. Critics have noted that while progressive, there is still exclusion of women of color. Black feminists argue that the women rights movements were not exclusively for the freedom of Blacks or Black Women. Rather, efforts such as women's right to vote and elimination of slavery finally raised, strengthened, and benefited White society and White women

Third-wave feminism was often related, mainly by its critics, with the appearance of so-called "lipstick" or "girly" activists and the rise of "raunch culture". This was because these new feminists supported expressions of femininity as a challenge to objectification. Accordingly, this included the dismissal of any restraint to define or control how women or girls should dress, act, or generally express themselves. These emerging positions stood in blunt contrast with the anti-pornography tensions of feminism prevalent in the 1980s. Second-wave feminism viewed pornography as encouraging violence towards women. The new feminists suggested that the ability to make independent choices about self-expression could be an empowering act of resistance, not simply internalized oppression.

Such views were criticized because of the individual nature of empowerment and independence. Scholars were uncertain whether empowerment was best measured as an internal feeling of power and activity or as an external measure of power and control. Moreover, they criticized an over-investment in a model of free will and choice in the area of identities and ideas. Regardless, the girly feminists attempted to be open to all different selves while maintaining a dialogue about the meaning of identity and femininity in the contemporary world. Third-wave feminists said that these viewpoints should not be limited by the label "girly" feminism or regarded as simply advocating "raunch culture". Rather, they sought to be inclusive of the many diverse roles women fulfill.

Predictably, third wavers faced critics. Even as the third wave found its voice, some writers were declaring themselves postfeminist and arguing

that the movement had lived beyond its usefulness. Meanwhile, established feminists of the earlier generation argued that the issues had not really changed and that the younger women were not adding anything of substance. By about 2000, some writers from inside and outside the movement rushed to declare that the wave had broken. In addition, questions of behaviour raised debate on whether such things as revealing clothing, designer-label stiletto heels, and amateur pole dancing represented true liberation and gender equality or old oppressions in disguise.

As with any other social or political movement, cracks and disagreements were present in each wave of feminism. The third wave, to an extent almost unimaginable to the members of the first and second waves before it, was plural and multifaceted, comprising people of many gender, ethnic, and class identities, experiences, and interests. As such, its greatest strength, multiplicity, was attacked by some as its greatest weakness. Third-wavers countered this criticism by stating that the creation of a unified agenda or philosophy was a goal that was not only unrealistic but undesirable.

It is almost impossible to talk with any clarity about the third wave because few people agree on exactly what the third wave is, when it started, or if it's still going on. Feminist scholar Elizabeth Evans believed that the confusion surrounding what constitutes third wave feminism was respects its defining feature. But generally, the beginning of the third wave is attached to two things: the Anita Hill case in 1991, and the emergence of the riot grrrl groups in the music scene of the early 1990s.

In 1991, Anita Hill testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas had sexually harassed her at work. Thomas made his way to the Supreme Court anyway, but Hill's testimony sparked a flood of sexual harassment complaints, in much the same way that Harvey Weinstein accusations were followed by a flood of sexual misconduct accusations against other powerful men. Anita Hill testified in the Caucus room of the Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill on October 11, 1991. And Congress's decision to send Thomas to the Supreme Court despite Hill's testimony led to a national conversation about the overrepresentation of men in national leadership roles. The following year, 1992, would be dubbed "the Year of the Woman" after 24 women won seats in the House of Representatives and three more won seats in the Senate.

And for the young women watching the Anita Hill case in real time, it would become an awakening. Thousands of demonstrators gathered for the March for Women's Lives, sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW), in Washington DC, on April 5, 1992. Early third-wave activism tended to involve fighting against workplace sexual harassment and working to increase the number of women in positions of power. Intellectually, it was rooted in the work of theorists of the '80s: Kimberley Crenshaw, a scholar of gender and critical race theory who coined the term intersectionality to describe the ways in which different forms of oppression intersect; and Judith Butler, who tried to redefine gender. Crenshaw and Butler's combined influence would become introductory to



An argument often made was of the exclusive nature of the movements, and the marginalization of minorities in the mainstream. The Third Wave thus primarily tried to bring in communities that were previously left out of feminist goals and recognize the intersectionality of oppression. It focused on race and gender and grew out of debates of the second wave.

It is often defined as beginning in 1991 with Anita Hill accusing Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment. Both parties were African American, and Thomas was seen as a popular candidate for the nomination due to the need for African American presence in the Supreme Court. Hill came forward in front of the all-white male Senate, and Thomas retaliated by denying everything and claiming to be a victim. Hill was faced with tremendous backlash and her character was attacked instead of her testimony being believed. Her trial had been televised, and the sight of a black woman reporting the harassment to the Senate impacted women all over America.

Despite Hill's accusations, Thomas was confirmed. In response to this, Rebecca Walker published a piece in Ms Magazine, supporting Hill and signaling the beginning of the Third Wave. She famously wrote, "I am not a post-feminism feminist. I am the third wave."

In the 1990s, there was a great deal of improvement in political representation and equality for women. By 1993, 5 women had joined the US Senate, and 1991 was often called the 'Year of the Woman'. The first female Attorney General and first female Secretary of State took office. Hilary Clinton gave her famous 'Women's Rights are Human Rights' speech at the UN in 1995, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg became the second woman in the Supreme Court in 1993. The Family Medical Leave Act which allowed employees to take unpaid leave for family and medical emergencies became law in 1993. The Violence Against Women Act which improved justice for women who faced abuse was passed in 1995. These were significant achievements for the Third Wave and landmark decisions in US history.

The Third Wave of feminism was greatly focused on reproductive rights for women. Feminists advocated for a woman's right to make her own choices about her body and stated that it was a basic right to have access to birth control and abortion. When the Supreme Court upheld the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act and restrictions on abortion, there was a huge protest march called the 'March for Women's Lives' in Washington DC in 2004. Attended by activists, Second and Third Wave feminists and celebrities, the march showed how important the issue of reproductive rights was to the Third Wave. The Act was not cancelled, and methods of limiting access to abortion such as parental or spousal consent continued.

The Third Wave is different from the First and Second Waves as it spread further into pop culture and media, and laid emphasis on the voices of the young. Girl bands such as Riot Grrrl spread messages of female empowerment through punk rock and started discussions of patriarchy and body image amongst teenagers listening to their music. Trans feminism was brought more into the mainstream in the Third Wave. The rights of trans persons were not included in feminism till recently and the need to

acknowledge the legitimacy of their concerns was persistent. The discussions of gender, and body image that defined the Third Wave of feminism made it more inclusive to trans feminists. Even today there is ignorance among large sections of society about the identity of trans persons, but the Third Wave was important in taking the first steps towards educating others.

In India, the enfranchisement of women and equality by law were given at Independence. However, deep-rooted cultural and religious beliefs prevented the materialisation of dreams of gender equality post British-rule. Implementation of the law was weak, and social evils and injustices were still largely unregulated. The 1980s and 90s were characterised by national protests against rapes which polarised society and confronted hypocrisies entrenched in the mindsets of many Indians. Debates over a woman's culpability in her own rape and the prevention of rape by curtailing the movement of women were frequent. Cases such as those of Hetal Parekh, Bhanwari Devi, and Pratibha Murthy triggered demonstrations across the country which resulted in legal victories for Indian women's groups. In 1980, the Five-Year Plan decided to focus on the health, employment and education of women, marking the beginning of the third wave of Indian feminism. Women-led non-government organisations multiplied in a bid to provide support to other women. The movement also took up the rights of Dalit and marginalised women.

---

## 6.7 Questions

---

1. Analyse the Third Wave Feminist Movement.
2. Discuss the contribution of the important activists of the Third Wave Feminist Movement.
3. Examine the features of the Third Wave Feminist Movement.

---

## 6.8 References

---

Tara Anand, A Brief Summary Of The Third Wave Of Feminism in <https://feminisminindia.com/2018/04/24/summary-third-wave-of-feminism/>

Martha Rampton, Four Waves of Feminism, <https://www.pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism>

Rivers, Nicola (2017). Postfeminism(s) and the Arrival of the Fourth Wave. Palgrave Macmillan.

Tong, Rosemarie (2009). *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (Third ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press. ISBN 978-0-8133-4375-4.

Hansen, Karen Tranberg; Philipson, Ilene J. (1990). *Women, class, and the feminist imagination: a socialist-feminist reader*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. ISBN 978-0-87722-630-7.

Starr, Chelsea (2000). "Adolescent girls and feminism", in Code, Lorraine (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*. London and New York: Routledge. ISBN 0-415-30885-2.

Darms, Lisa, ed. (2013). *The Riot Grrrl Collection*. The Feminist Press at the City University of New York. ISBN 978-1558618220.

Walker, Rebecca (1995). *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*. New York: Anchor Books. ISBN 978-0-385-47262-3.

MacKinnon, Catharine A. (1989). *Toward A Feminist Theory of the State*. Harvard University Press

Evans, Elizabeth (2015). *The Politics of Third Wave Feminisms: Neoliberalism, Intersectionality, and the State in Britain and the US*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-1-137-29527-9.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/feminism/The-third-wave-of-feminism>

<https://www.vox.com/2018/3/20/16955588/feminism-waves-explained-first-second-third-fourth>

\*\*\*\*\*

## **CASTE: CONCEPT AND UNDERSTANDING**

### **Unit Structure**

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Definitions of Caste
- 7.3 Understanding of Caste
- 7.4 Theoretical Background
- 7.5 Mythical origin of Caste
- 7.6 Untouchability
- 7.7 Summary
- 7.8 Questions
- 7.9 References

---

### **7.0 Objectives**

---

- To Understand the concept of Caste
- To trace the various definitions of Caste
- To look into the caste system during ancient period.
- To make students aware of the caste system among India and its impact on society.
- To analyze the theoretical background of caste system.
- To understand the mythical origin of Caste
- To analyze the evil practice of untouchability.

---

### **7.1 Introduction**

---

Caste played a significant role in several aspects of our life. Caste is continuing to have strangled hold on the people. Caste in India is an ancient institution. There is some 3000 caste in India and it would need an encyclopedia to deal with them all. No religious community presents a homogenous picture from inside. Within each community there existed some communities in the form of castes, which are further divided into high and low categories. Each caste is a social unit in it. Some are derived from tribal or racial elements, some are occupational, being of the nature originally perhaps of guilds of artificers or craftsmen, some are territorial, some religious and so forth. All the social manners and customs of the Hindus are as modeled and interrelated as to fit the caste system. There was remote scope for flexibility in caste system in India. The more highly

organized a system, the harder it is to change and the caste system is no more exception to this rule.

---

## 7.2 Definitions of Caste

---

Caste is defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary* as "an endogamous and hereditary social group limited to persons of the same rank, occupation, and economic position." The word *caste* is derived from the Romance word *casta* (seen in Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian), which (in addition to representing the same concept as English *caste*) can mean "lineage" or "race." It comes from Romance *casto*, which can mean "pure" or "chaste." *Casto* in Latin means "chaste," which is derived from *castus*, meaning "pure, cut off, separated."

As a religious concept relating to Hinduism, the *Oxford English Dictionary* recognizes *caste* as "each of the hereditary classes of Hindu society, distinguished by relative degrees of ritual purity and of social status" and as "any exclusive social class". Anthropologists use the term more generally, to refer to a social group that is endogamous and occupationally specialized. Such groups are common in societies with a low degree of social mobility. In its broadest sense, examples of caste-based societies include colonial Latin America under Spanish and Portuguese rule, Japan, Korea, some parts of Africa, as well as across the Indian subcontinent.

(Britannica Concise Encyclopedia)

Any of the ranked, hereditary, endogamous occupational groups that constitute traditional societies in certain regions of the world, particularly among Hindus in India. There caste is rooted in antiquity and specifies the rules and restrictions governing social intercourse and activity. Each caste has its own customs that restrict the occupations and dietary habits of its members and their social contact with other castes. There are about 3,000 castes, or *jatis* (broadly, "form of existence fixed by birth"), and more than 25,000 subcastes in India. They are traditionally grouped into four major classes, or *varnas* ("colours"). At the top are the Brahmans, followed by the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Those with the most defiling jobs (such as those who dispose of body emissions and dead animals) are ranked beneath the Shudras. Considered untouchable, they were simply dubbed as "the fifth" (*panchama*) category. Although a great many spheres of life in modern India are little influenced by caste, most marriages are nevertheless arranged within the caste. This is in part because most people live in rural communities and because the arrangement of marriages is a family activity carried out through existing networks of kinship and caste.

(Buddhism Dictionary)

(*Portuguese, casta; Latin, castus, pure*). Term denoting the hierarchical social structure of south Asian society and the particular social classes or estates which compose it. The indigenous term used is varṇa (Pāli, vaṇṇa) which means ‘colour’. Classical Indian sources speak of four castes, namely the Brahmins (Sanskrit, Brāhmaṇas) or priests, the kṣatriyas or nobles, the vaiśyas or artesans, and the sūdras or servants. In Pāli these are known as Brāhmaṇa, khattiya, vessa, and sudda, although in early sources the fourth is rarely mentioned and a threefold grouping is more common. The classical framework of the four castes soon gave way to a system of many thousands of castes and sub castes known as jāti (Sanskrit, birth or race). The Buddha did not condemn the institution of caste as such, but regarded it as irrelevant to the religious life. He was, however, critical of the arrogance of the priestly caste and in numerous early dialogues ridicules the notion that the circumstances of birth

**Check your Progress**

**Give any two definitions of Caste.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**7.3 Understanding Caste System**

Man is a social animal; he has to be the member of some group or association. Every group, class, caste, organization, institution allowed to cultivate its distinctive styles of life in the matter of ideas, diet, dress, worship, marriage, in short a total life style. If this group psychology works for the welfare and progress of the human being, India would have been one of the progressive nations in the world if caste system had filled with democratic spirit. But stratification and segmentation are fundamental features of Indian social system. In Vedic Varna classification, the Hindu society is divided into four ranked non-hereditary functional Varnas namely Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Hindu society since Vedic times had recognized this fourfold division into Varnas. The untouchables were considered to be outside the Varna. They formed the fifth category; those were theoretically, textually and

doctrinally kept outside this classification but factually, contextually and existentially were an integral part of the local community.

Majority of historians and social scientist believes theory of chaturvarna is originated from Indo-Aryans and was based on mere division of labour. Then the question comes here why it was not prevalent in other part of the world and why flexibility was not permitted in later period. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his book 'Who were Shudras?' argues that, 'Chaturvarnya would have been a very innocent principle if it meant no more than mere division of society into four classes. Unfortunately, more than this is involved in the theory of Chaturvarna. Besides dividing society into four orders, the theory goes further and makes the principle of graded inequality the basis for determining the term of associated life as between the four varnas. Again the system of graded inequality is not merely notional. It is legal and penal. Under the system of chaturvarnya the shudras are not only placed at the bottom of the gradation but it is subjected to innumerable ignominies and disabilities so as to prevent him from rising above the condition fixed for him by law. Indeed until the fifth Varna of the untouchables comes into being, the shudras were in the eyes of the Hindus the 'lowest of the low'.

---

#### **7.4 Theoretical background-**

---

The origin of the caste system in India is shrouded in mystery. Vast data are available about the origin of the caste, the nature and function of caste system, structure of caste organization, status and dynamics of caste system. The most predominant and widely popular theory traces it to the Aryan invasion of India and links it to the process by which the invaders could subordinate the indigenous inhabitants and integrate them as peasants and slaves within a stratified society. This system considers the caste system, as a universal phenomenon in the traditional or the Hindu theory of caste. Its sources are to be found in the sacred texts of Hinduism and in the social and ethical codes of the Hindus.

Majority of the scholars believed the 'twice born' theory of castes that 'twice born' castes Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas are descended primarily from the original Aryans or later invaders from outside, while the sudras, Atisudras and tribal people are descended primarily from the conquered non-Aryan natives.

Aryan theory does not explain why Indo-European invasions should have given rise to caste in India only not elsewhere. It seems Aryan theory was quickly taken over by Indians at first by Brahman intellectuals who sought to use it to prove their superiority over low castes within India and their racial equality with the 'White men'. Morton Klass has also denied this theory by saying that there is no proof at all of many massive invasions by

racially distant groups in the 2000-1000 B. C. period and there seems to have elements of traits connected with caste that were indigenous to the pre-Aryan Indian societies. Klass argues that caste originated with the first development of an economic surplus in India and that it was the means by which tribal societies consisting of originally equalitarian class generated by this surplus. It means that caste in India has existed for a very long period and it had survived through major socio historical changes.

Caste has been defined in varied way by various scholars. An analysis of caste should begin with some basic definitions. According to Mr. Shridhar Ketkar, 'A caste is a social group having two characteristics,

- 1} Membership is confined to those who are born of members and includes all persons so born.
- 2} The members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group.

Each one of such group has a special name by which it is called several of such small aggregates are grouped together under a common name while these larger groups are but subdivisions of groups still larger which have independent names.

According to Dr. Iravati Karve caste is,

- {a} Castes are endogamous groups.
- {b} Caste is restricted to certain limited area.
- {c} Caste have a certain traditional behavior pattern which is enforced in many cases by a caste council made up of a member of respected elder men in a caste.
- {d} Caste live together with other caste without mingling except on certain occasions only. The intercourse between castes is peripheral or tangential.
- {e} A caste is generally a hereditary occupation which is however not exclusive to it.
- {f} Castes are arranged in hierarchical orders.

Gail Omvedt has somewhat similar opinion about caste system in India. 'Caste is a system in which a person's membership in the society is mediated through his/her birth in a particular group which is assigned a particular status within a broad social hierarchy of such group; this group has particular accepted occupation or range of occupations and only within it can a person marry and carry on close social relations such as interdining [roti beti vyavahar]. This group is a corporate group that has certain defined rules of behavior for its members and exercises some degree of authority over them including the right to expel those who defy



*muusaari* coppersmith, *karuvar* ironsmith, *ambattar* clothes washer, *parayar* cobbler.

In any given location in India five-hundred or more jātis may co-exist, although the exact composition could differ from district to district.

Endogamous marriages (including polyandry) and other associations within caste were strongly enforced. Since most marriages were arranged, based on the existing networks of kinship and caste, it was very unusual to marry someone of different status. People were born into their jāti, and that defined their occupation and lifestyle.

---

## 7.6 Untouchability

---

The primary defining feature of caste is the idea of hierarchy. Hierarchy means inequality. Untouchability is an inequity. It fosters festering inequality and spreads the contagion of incurable ill will. It petrifies the heart and panegyricizes sepulchral orthodoxy. It destroys all vestiges of decency and courtesy. It creeps in like a snake, saps like a leach, spreads like wildfire and devastates like thunderbolt. It is the ugliest of human institutions. It is a challenge to humanity.

For centuries together India's untouchables have been one of the world's most downtrodden and oppressed minorities. They lived in hamlets segregated from other villagers, were not allowed to use the wells of upper castes or to share food with them. They were forced to do menial labour, were denied the entry to temples, were kept away from acquiring Sanskrit knowledge of Hinduism. They were not allowed to wear good clothes, jewelry, and footwear. In short they were denied basic human rights and were treated worse than animals. Throughout India, condition of the various Varna was nearly similar with different degrees of severness. We cannot trace which province is originator or pioneer of system of untouchability.

Origin of untouchability- Various Historians, Sociologists, Anthropologists have opined differently about origin of untouchability. As many scholars from Irawati Karve to Morton Klass have pointed out that basic group of caste system is not actually jāti or caste but rather the sub caste or potjati. It therefore, seems that caste is primarily a social phenomenon, the sub caste which has been the most enduring element within it is primarily a unit of the social system of kinship, though the broader jāti was for a long time the basic unit of social division of labour i. e. part of the economy and even today caste still had definite economic effects.

Untouchability goes back into far dimmers of the Hindu past. Thus the origin of caste remains vague or unknown, interpretations contradictory and opinions controversial. But there is nothing vague about caste or about

untouchability itself. This system for elevating and debasing human being in rigidity separated compartments developed as the actuality of Hindu life while Hindu Philosophy was holding itself to be the most open and all inclusive of all ways of thought, the Hindu religion, the most tolerant of any on earth.

As earlier mentioned there are many theories about the originality of this system. The most commonly repeated version is that it all dates back to prehistoric times, perhaps four or five thousand years ago when otherwise unidentified 'Aryans' invaders made themselves the masters of the indigenous population they found in the land now known as India. Obviously, these nomad Aryans proved themselves superior by all the means because of their exposure to the different cultures, societies than local innocent Indians. The word 'Varna' actually means colour and Aryan said to be fair and 'dasa' or dasyus' the local people were 'dark'. To prove the superiority in social, political and economic sphere of life further theories of Varna might have established by Aryans themselves.

The Vedic Aryans were one of the branches of Indo European people had developed the exclusive spirit in social behavior and had cultivated an idea of ceremonial purity. When they conquered India they must have had among them at least three well-defined classes. It will have been noticed that in the earliest literature only the first three classes, the Brahmins, the Kshatriya and the Vaishyas are mentioned. The Shudra class was largely formed by those aborigines who had accepted the over lordship of the Indo-Aryans and had entered into their services is more than probable. Thus the Vedic opposition between the Aryans and the Dasa is replaced by Brahmanic classification of 'dvijata' and the 'ekajati' [the sudra] suggesting the transmutation of the Dasa into shudra in the minds of the writer of the Brahmanic and later periods.

Hence idea of purity is found to have been a factor in the genesis of caste is the very soul of the idea and practice of untouchability. The untouchables were set apart outside and below the four main division of Hindu society, the varnas or caste of priests [Brahmins] warriors [Kshatriyas], merchants [Vaishyas] and servitors [Shudras]. There is a clear distinction between top three varnas from the forth, the shudras. The top three are entitled to wear the 'sacred thread', which identified them as 'twice born' meaning that in symbolic second birth they have been admitted to the study of the Vedas or in effect recognized as more or less fully privileged.

Below top three were the shudras the once born who were forbidden to share the knowledge of holy writings. They were supposed to serve upper caste but they were kept low, they were also kept untouchable. It was in later Vedic period certain restrictions were placed on the use of and

intercourse with sudras in religious performance. As the system added refinements over the dim ages the untouchables were also made inseeable, unapproachable, unbearable. They were forced to stay out of the village. In many places they could not enter at all upon streets or lanes used by caste Hindus. In some of the southern region they were prescribed distances that untouchables had to keep from the different levels of upper caste people, 33 feet's from the lowest rated group, 66 feet from a second missing caste and 99 feet from the Brahmins, the highest rated of all. Untouchables women could not wear any clothes above the waist. They could not enter any Hindu temple, caste Hindu house or other establishment or take water from the common village well. The untouchables, cut out of the community altogether, served as scavengers and sweepers, the handlers of carcasses of its dead animals whose flesh they eat and whose skins they tan, the carriers of waste and night soil.

By ancient and holy writ, especially the Manusmriti or the law of Manu the untouchables were marked off as people whose touch pollute and elaborate regulations the conditions of their separation from the rest of the people. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar a social Philanthropist have rejected all given theories of untouchability. In his book 'Who were the Shudras?' he has raised two questions. 1] Who were shudras? 2] How they came to be the fourth Varna of the Indo-Aryan society? Dr. Ambedkar had summarized his answer as follows.

- 1} The shudras were one of the Aryan communities of the solar race.
- 2} There was a time when Aryan society recognized only three varnas namely Brahmins, Kshatriya and Vaishyas.
- 3} The Shudras did not form a separate Varna. They ranked as part of the Kshatriya Varna in the Indo-Aryan society.
- 4} There was a continuous fight between Shudra king and Brahmins in which Brahmin were subjected to many tyrannies and indignities.
- 5} As a result of the hatred towards the shudras generated by their tyrannies and oppressions, the Brahmins refused to perform the upanayana of shudras.
- 6} Owing to the denial of upnayana, the Shudras who were Kshatriyas became socially degraded, fell below the rank of the Vaishyas and thus came to form the fourth varna.

According to J. H. Hutton in his book 'Caste in India' for the term-depressed caste following possible test are to be considered.

- I] Whether the caste or class in question can be served by clean Brahmins or not.

- II] Whether the caste or class can be served by the barber, water-carriers, tailors who served the caste Hindus.
- III] Whether the caste in question pollutes a high caste Hindu by contact or by proximity.
- IV] Whether the caste or class in question is one from whose hands in caste Hindu can take water.
- V] Whether the caste or class in question is debarred from using public conveniences such as roads, ferries wells or schools.
- VI] Whether the caste or class in question is debarred from the use of Hindu temples.
- VII] Whether in ordinary socio-intercourse a well-educated members of the caste or class in question will be treated as an equal by high caste men.
- VIII] Whether the caste or class in question is merely depressed on account of its ignorance, illiteracy or poverty and but for that would be subject to no social disability
- IX] Whether it is depressed on account of occupation followed and whether but for that occupation it would be subject to no social disability.

---

## 7.7 Summary

---

Caste played a very important role in several aspects of our life. Caste is continuing to have strangled hold on the people. Caste in India is an ancient institution and had been defined by many scholars by various ways. Every group, class, caste, organization, institution allowed to cultivate its distinctive styles of life in the matter of ideas, diet, dress, worship, marriage, in short a total life style. Majority of historians and social scientist believes theory of chaturvarna is originated from Indo-Aryans and was based on mere division of labour. Then the question comes here why it was not prevalent in other part of the world and why flexibility was not permitted in later period. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his book 'Who were Shudras?' argues that, 'Chaturvarnya would have been a very innocent principle if it meant no more than mere division of society into four classes.

The origin of the caste system in India is shrouded in mystery. Vast data are available about the origin of the caste, the nature and function of caste system, structure of caste organization, status and dynamics of caste system. The most predominant and widely popular theory traces it to the Aryan invasion of India and links it to the process by which the invaders could subordinate the indigenous inhabitants and integrate them as

peasants and slaves within a stratified society. Untouchability goes back into far dimmers of the Hindus past. Thus the origin of caste remains vague or unknown, interpretations contradictory and opinions controversial. But there is nothing vague about caste or about untouchability itself. This system for elevating and debasing human being in rigidity separated compartments developed as the actuality of Hindu life while Hindu Philosophy was holding itself to be the most open and all inclusive of all ways of thought, the Hindu religion, the most tolerant of any on earth.

---

## 7.8 Questions

---

- Q. 1 Explain the different approaches to the concept of Caste?
- Q. 2 On what grounds was untouchability continued in the Middle Ages.
- Q. 3 Discuss the main features of the social order of the Indian society.

---

## 7.9 References

---

- Ambedkar, B, R., Who were Shudras?, Bombay, 1947
- Betteille Andrew., Caste class and power, Berkely, 1965
- Gail, Omvedt., [ed] Land Caste and Politics in Indian State, New Delhi, 1982,
- Ghurey, G, S., Caste, Class and Occupation, Bombay, 1950
- Havighrust, R, J., 'Education and social mobility in four societies', The Free Press, Glencoe, 1961.
- Hutton, J. H., Caste in India, Its Nature, Function and Origins, London, 1936,
- Isaacs, Harold., India's Ex-Untouchables, New Delhi, 1964
- Karve, Iravati., Hindu Society an Interpretation, Pune, 1961
- Ketkar, S, V., History of Caste in India, New York, 1909
- Klass, Mortin., The Emergence of the South Asian Social System, ISHI, Philadelphia, 1980
- Murthy, M, S., Depressed and Oppressed, New Delhi, nd.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CASTE AS TRADITION, POWER AND HUMILIATION

### Unit Structure

- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Introduction
- 8.3 Caste as Tradition
- 8.4 Caste as Power
- 8.5 Caste as Humiliation
- 8.6 Conclusion
- 8.7 Summary
- 8.8 Questions
- 8.9 References

---

### 8.1 Objectives

---

1. This is for the students to get acquainted with the Indian Society with the fabric of Caste System in it.
2. To understand how caste system in the Indian Society is looked upon as Tradition, Power and Humiliation

---

### 8.2 Introduction

---

India is one of the largest and highly populated countries in the world. During the Ancient period, India was the center of attraction for many foreigners. Travelers from Europe, West Asia and other parts of the world got attracted towards India because of its ancient civilization, its richness in natural resources and its number of rivers with fertile land all over the country. India's culture is said to be one of the ancient cultures in the world history. It is the birthplace of many religions like Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

Hinduism like every other religion has its own ideology and culture. Almost three-fourth of India's population follows Hindu religion. The Hindus are the mixture of several races and sects, and they all share certain common religious beliefs and customs. Hinduism is a part of India's culture and Chaturvarna is the foundation of Hindu culture. The ancient Indian society was a feudal society and completely based on Chaturvarna system. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar describes the formation of Indian society with an ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt.

During the early Vedic period the Hindu society was divided into four Varna's. The order of the four Varna's was Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. In this period people followed their occupation according to their Varna. The Brahmins did the job of learning and teaching; Kshatriyas ruled over the people; Vaishya's were traders and Shudras were menial

workers. People were not restricted to follow the same occupation that the family did; they could change the occupation according to their skills. Gradually in the later Vedic period the Varna System became rigid. People could not change their occupation. This gave rise to the emergence of the caste and the sub-caste system in the Hindu Society.

It is therefore necessary to emphasize on the study of Caste System prevailing in India, and the origin of the Untouchability. The untouchables were outside the Varna. They formed the fifth category. They were theoretically, textually, and doctrinally kept outside the classification but factually, contextually, and existentially were an integral part of the local community.

---

### 8.3 Caste as Tradition

---

We find that Caste and Caste system is one of the most significant institutions that divides or differentiates the groups of people prevailing in India. In other countries we see differentiation based on class, race, community, ethnicity etc. The caste system however is unique to India, and it is one of the oldest existing institutions in India. There are some 3000 castes in India, and it would need an encyclopedia to deal with them all.

Right from the Harappan period we find the existence of social segregation in India. Evidence unearthed during excavations such as 'ritual' objects, ornaments, seals, and weights provide evidence for social stratification. However, this evidence proves that social segregation did exist, but of what kind and on what basis is difficult to trace. In the early Vedic period, we find social segregation, but it was not rigid and there was occupational mobility. However, the later Vedic period we see a rigid social segregation and the evolution of the caste system. Scholars believe that India's entire population is the mixture of different races. People from different races like Aryans, Dravidians, Mongolians, and Scythians came from different parts of the world and got settled in India. Initially they fought with the original inhabitants of India. Later some of them got settled in India and some of them left India. Assimilation and acculturation took place among them and resulted in a new cultural identity.

Scholars from different subjects like History, Sociology, Anthropology and Political Science have taken efforts to explain the meaning of caste system, its origin, and its nature. The word *Caste* is a Portuguese word which means 'Purity of Race'. Caste and Caste System has been studied by many scholars as mentioned earlier right from the beginning of the Renaissance period of India in the nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century scholars like Mr. Senart, Mr. Nesfield, and Sir H. Risley have studied Caste in India and tried to give its meaning. Some of the indigenous scholars like Dr. S. Ketkar, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar have explained the meaning of Caste in a different manner.

Dr. Ambedkar explains in the theory of "infection of imitation" that the Brahmins followed a close-door policy in the Hindu society. This was imitated by the other Varna's or the classes and led to an endogamous

society. The origin of the caste can be traced to this development. “The superimposition of endogamy over the exogamy, created the caste.” Therefore, endogamy was the only characteristic of caste and hence “caste was an enclosed class.” Dr. Ambedkar presented a research paper on Caste at the Anthropology Seminar organized by Columbia University, New York, on May 9, 1916. Later it was published as “Castes in India: Their Genesis, Mechanism and Development.” He explains that the caste problem involves four main points:

1. Despite the composite make-up of the Hindu population, there is a deep cultural unity.
2. The caste is a parceling into bits of a larger cultural unit
3. There was one caste to start with, and
4. Classes have become Castes through imitation and excommunication.

According to Dr. Iravati Karve “A caste is a group which practices endogamy, has a particular area (generally within one linguistic region) of spread or dispersion, may have one or more traditional occupations, has a more or less determinate or flexible position in a hierarchical scale and has traditionally defined modes of behavior towards other caste.”

Sociologist M. N. Srinivas explains caste system as “While the traditional system allowed individual caste to move up and down the system itself remained unaltered.” In other words, there was only positional change, not a structural one. He further analyzes, “Moreover, while a caste struggled for a higher position for itself in the local hierarchy it resented the efforts of others in particular, the lowered caste to move up.”

There are some solutions given by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to solve the problem of caste system in India. Hindu society can be re-established based on equality, freedom, and brotherhood. The domination of Dharma (religion) over the Caste difference and Chaturvarna should be discarded. And lastly when the belief that the *Shashtra's* has come out from the Gods mouth will become a false belief the domination of *Dharma* over caste and Chaturvarna will automatically disappear.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that democracy was not only a form of Government, but it was essentially a form of society. It was Dr. Ambedkar’s conviction that political, social, and economic changes can be brought about only through Constitutional means.

The Indian society was based on the impregnable citadel of conservation, inequality, injustice, and exploitation.

**Check Your Progress:**

Q.1. Critically analyze the impact of the Caste system in India.

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 8.4 Caste as power

---

Indian society was a gradation of Castes forming an ascending scale of reverence and descending scale of contempt, where there was no scope of contempt, where there was no scope for the establishment of egalitarian society. The humiliations, indignities and atrocities were heaped on the lowest caste people. In the early twenties of the twentieth century Dr. B. R. Ambedkar emerged as a promising leader to break the centuries old shackles and liberate the Untouchables from the age-old bondage of the Hindu Society.

Hindu caste society came into existence before modern ideas affected its course. One must break up the history of India into four periods to study Caste as a tradition. First, the Vedic period up to B. C. 600, second, the post-Vedic period extending up to third century of the Christian era. This period shows the glimpse of the caste as an institution as it appeared to those who rebelled against it. It provides us with the Dharma-shastras and ends with the tenth or eleventh century A.D. The fourth period may be called the modern period, and it brings us down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The present customs and beliefs of Hindus are there that were mostly fixed and classified by the writers of this period.

The literature during this period that accounts the important aspects of caste moves around the four orders in society namely Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishya, and Shudra and not the present-day castes.

The earliest literary work of this period i.e., 'Rigveda' mention prominently the first three classes of society. It talks about Brahma, Kshatriya and Vaishya and Shudra, who are said to have come respectively from the mouth, the arms, the thighs, and the feet of the Creator. The description probably indicates their status in the society of the time although there is direct interpretation given the hymn.

The laws of Manu ordained the lowest status to the Depressed Classes. The untouchables where the victims of the Hindu social order have been made to suffer silently. The humiliations, indignities and atrocities were heaped on them. It needs to be mentioned that graded inequality is the fundamental principles of the Hindu social which nurtures the spirit of social order which nurtures the spirit of social separation and segregation. Promotion of discriminative attitudes among the innumerable castes and sub-castes generates perpetual caste conflicts and mutual hatred. In short, the pernicious principle eats into the vitals of the society. Dr. Ambedkar once said that if Bal Gangadhar Tilak would not have declared "Swaraj is my birthright." but, would have proclaimed that restoration of human dignity and eradication of Untouchability as his primary duty. He further claimed, had if Lenin would have born in India, he would have first fought to eradicate Untouchability and then would have taken up the program of revolution.

The power in Britain were made to see reason and understand the dire necessity to ameliorate the conditions of the Depressed Classes who for centuries were mercilessly thrown into the quagmire of social segregation, political deprivation, economic destitution, and perpetual subjugation.

Dr. Ambedkar realized that the problem of the Untouchables was a political problem. To put it in his own words: “Essentially, it is a problem of a quite different in nature, it is a problem of securing liberty and equal opportunity to a minority at the hands of the hostile majority, which believes in the denial of liberty and equal opportunity and conspires to enforce its policy on the minority. Viewed in this light the problem of Untouchables is fundamentally a political problem.”

---

## 8.5 Caste as Humiliation

---

During Mahad Chowdar Tank Satyagraha Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his speech, tweaked self-respect of the untouchables by telling them that it was utterly disgraceful to sell their human rights for a few crumbs of bread and appealed to them fervently to do away with the humiliating, enslaving traditions, to abandon their Vatan’s and seek forest lands for agricultural pursuits. The humiliation towards untouchables in the country was so much so that the Mahad conference was forced to pass the resolution that appealed to the Caste Hindus to help the Untouchables to secure their civic rights, to employ them in services, offer food to Untouchable students, and bury their dead animals themselves.

### Check Your Progress:

Q.1. How is caste system in the Indian society looked upon as Tradition, Power and Humiliation?

---



---



---



---



---

## 8.6 Conclusion

---

There are some solutions given by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to solve the problem of caste system in India. Hindu society can be re-established based on equality, freedom, and brotherhood. The domination of Dharma (religion) over the Caste difference and Chaturvarna should be discarded. And lastly when the belief that the *Shastra’s* has come out from the Gods mouth will become a false belief the domination of *Dharma* over caste and Chaturvarna will automatically disappear.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the political resolutions in India were preceded by the social and religious reforms led by saints. But during the British rule, issue of political independence got procedure over the social reform and therefore social reform continued to remain neglected. He pointed the Socialists that they will have to fight against the monster of caste either before or after the revolution. Dr. Ambedkar asserted that the caste in India was not based on division of labor. It was a division of laborer. He further pointed out that as an economic organization also, caste is a harmful institution. He called upon the Hindus to annihilate the caste which was a great hindrance to social solidarity and to set up a new social order based on the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity in consonance with the principles of Democracy. Dr. Ambedkar advocated

inter-caste marriage as one of the solutions to the problem. But he stressed that the belief in the ‘Shastras’ is the root cause of maintaining castes. He therefore suggested, “Make every man and woman free from the thralldom of the ‘Shastras’, cleanse their minds of the pernicious notions founded on the ‘Shastras’ and he or she will interdine and intermarry.” According to him, the society must be based on reason and not on atrocious traditions of caste system.

---

## 8.7 Summary

---

Caste has been one of the significant feature of Hindu Society. The emergence of caste system in India and forming the root cause of apartheid in the Indian society has become a part of culture, tradition and power in the nation. However, this can be made as a strong aspect of Indian society if the society stops discrimination on the basis of caste in the society.

---

## 8.8 Questions

---

1. Examine the racial theories explained by different scholars in your study.
2. Critically analyze the impact of the Caste system in India.
3. Mention the solutions discussed to overcome with the problem of apartheid in India.

---

## 8.9 References

---

1. H. G. Rawlinson, A Concise History of the Indian People, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1994.
2. Hari Narake, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Volume I, (Marathi), Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, 1979.
3. Romila Thapar, India: Historical Beginnings and the Concept of the Aryan, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 2009.
4. B. R. Ambedkar, Castes in India, Kaushalya Prakashan, Aurangabad, 2003.
5. Iravati Karve, Hindu Society—An Interpretation, Deccan College, Postgraduate and Research Institute, Poona, 1961.
6. M. N. Srinivas, Social Changes in Modern India, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1972.
7. Bhalchandra Phadke, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Shrividya Prakashan, Pune, 1985.
8. V. R. Shinde, Bharatiya Asprushatecha Prashna, (Marathi), Kausalya Prakashan, Aurangabad.
9. V. R. Shinde, Bharatiya Asprushyatecha Prashna, (Marathi) Kausalya Prakashan, Aurangabad, 2003.
10. B. R. Ambedkar, The Untouchables, Kaushalya Prakashan, Aurangabad, 2003.
11. Ghanshyam Shah, Untouchability in Rural India, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2009.

12. M. S. Murthy, Depressed and Oppressed, (Forever in Agony), S. Chand and Co. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
13. N. R. Phatak, Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India, Volume III, Part I, 1915-1922, Maharashtra State, Bombay, 2008.
14. Vasant Moon, (edited), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Yanche Bahishkrut Bharat Aani Muknayak, (Marathi), Published by Main Sachiv, Higher and Technical Education Department, Maharashtra Government, Mantralay, Mumbai, 2008
15. 15. B. R. Ambedkar, Bhagwan Buddha Aani Tyancha Dhamma, (Marathi) (edited), and (translated), Ghanshyam Talvatkar, M. B. Chitnis, S. S. Rege, Siddhartha Prakashan, 6th edition, Mumbai, 1985.

\*\*\*\*\*

## ANTI-CASTE MOVEMENTS OF DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR

### Unit Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Anti-caste Movements of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
  - 9.2.1 Southborough Committee
  - 9.2.2 The Mahad Chowdar Tank Satyagraha
- 9.3 Significance of the First Mahad Conference
- 9.4 Second Conference of Mahad Satyagraha
- 9.5 Resistance and Protest Apartheid
- 9.6 Kalaram Temple Entry Satyagraha, Nasik
  - 9.6.1 Other Movements of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
- 9.7 Summary
- 9.8 Questions
- 9.9 Reference

---

### 9.0 Objectives

---

1. To understand the Indian society through these anti-caste movements in India.
2. To understand the anti-caste movements led by Dt. B. R. Ambedkar.

---

### 9.1 Introduction

---

The liberation movements such as Mahad Satyagraha (1927) and Kalaram Temple-entry-struggle (1930), Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar attempted to change the Hindu mindset. The aim of Mahad satyagraha was to unfurl “the banner of equality” and to smash the “steel frames of the caste system”. December 25, 1927 was a ‘Red letter’ Day in the annals of history, when Manu-smriti was consigned to flames as a symbolic protest social order.

Dr. Ambedkar retorted communal people who criticized Mahad Satyagraha by declaring that the Satyagraha was to end the special privileges enjoyed by the caste Hindus.

Dr. Ambedkar’s brainstorming; striking and thought-provoking speeches at the Round Table Conferences bear ample testimony to his depth of knowledge. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar impressed upon the conference to recognize the fact that Depressed Classes were not a part of Hindu society

and hence deserved Separate Electorates and due share in power for their political advancement.

The Communal Award declared by J. Ramsay Mac Donald, the then Prime Minister of Great Britain, conceded Separate Electorates to the Depressed Classes was the crowning glory of the splendid and stupendous work done by Dr. Ambedkar at the Round Table Conference. But opposition and fast unto death by Mahatma Gandhi led to "Poona Pact". The crux of the Poona Pact was Separate Electorates granted by the Communal Award which were ultimately withdrawn, and the method of Joint Electorates was introduced with the principle of reservation of certain seats for Depressed Classes in the Central as well as the Provincial Assemblies. Despite innumerable hurdles, political setbacks, sociocultural shackles, Dr. Ambedkar with his limited trusted lieutenants like Rao Bahadur R. Shrinivas, Rao Bahadur N. Shivraj, Dadasaheb B. K. Gaikwad, Jogendranath Mandal, Hardas L. N., Khusru-e-Deewan B. S. Venkat Rao, B. H. Subbaiah, Eli Vadapally, Nandanar Hari, Justice R. R. Bhole, B. H. Varale, D. G. Jadhav. Barrister B. D. Khobragade, B. C. Kamble, R. D. Bhandare, Subhedar V. M. Sawadkar, S. A. Upshyam, Dr. P. J. Solanki, R. D. Dolas, G. M. Jadhav Madkebuwa, D. L. Patil, Pt. Rewaram Kawade, Shantabai Kuril, G. T. Parmar etc. waged a relentless war against his adversaries in Hindu social order for social equality, human dignity, and politico-economic empowerment.

The Hindu reform which Dr. Ambedkar dreamed through the Hindu Code Bill met with a steel resistance from the Hindu orthodoxy. Dr. Ambedkar resolved to renounce Hinduism. He fulfilled his Yeola pledge of 1935 by embracing Buddhism in 1956 at Nagpur along with his five lakh faithful followers. Dr. Ambedkar opted Buddhism because it was built on the foundation of liberty, equality, fraternity, morality and professes scientific, rational, and humanistic outlook. The principal aim of Buddhism is to emancipate suffering humanity. It is worth mentioning that even while selecting a religion for himself and his followers. Thus Dr. B. R. Ambedkar proved himself to be hardcore Nationalist and patriot.

Dr. Ambedkar strongly advocated the spread of universal education among Depressed Classes who were denied the same for centuries. Denial of education has thrown the Depressed Classes into the morals of ignorance, a slew of despond, perpetual bondage, and eternal deprivation. According to Dr. Ambedkar, education is not only the birthright of every human being but also a weapon of social change. The People's Education Society that Dr. Ambedkar founded in 1945 along with dozens of institutions functioning thereafter at Mumbai, Aurangabad, Mahad, Sholapur, Nanded etc. testify his significant contribution to the field of education. It is noteworthy that Dr. Ambedkar persuaded Lord Linlithgow, the then Viceroy of British India, to sponsor few Scheduled Caste students for prosecuting their higher studies in foreign Universities.

To realize the political goals Dr. Ambedkar felt the need for a separate political identity. He, therefore, established Independent Labor Party on August 15, 1936, a contested general election under the Government of

India Act, 1935. The success achieved by the Independent Labor Party singly was commendable. Out of 17 candidates of the Independent Labor Party 14 got elected for Bombay Provincial Assembly. Similarly, some candidates of Independent Labor Party were also elected in other provinces. They were Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, B. K. Gaikwad, R. R. Bhole, D. G. Jadhav, B. H. Varale, G. G. Bhatankar, K. S. Sawant, J. H. Aidale, P. J. Roham, V. A. Gadkari, A. V. Chitre, G. R. Ghatge, S. V. Parulekar, D. W. Raut. In April 1942 he wound up the Independent Labour Party and founded the All India Scheduled Castes Federation with Rao Bahadur N. Shivaraj as its President. As the Second General Election in 1957 was approaching. Dr. Ambedkar felt the need to invigorate the democratic forces in India. He, therefore, declared his intention on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1955 to form a new political party called the “Republican Party of India”. He desired to make it open to all those who accepted three guiding Principles - liberty, equality, and fraternity.

---

## **9.2 Anti-caste Movements of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar:**

---

### **9.2.1 Southborough Committee:**

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar played a very prominent role before the Southborough Committee. He gave the evidence before the Southborough Committee which was his first assay in political writings. The evidence comprises of a written statement submitted to the franchise Committee under the Chairmanship of Rt. Hon’ble Land Southborough and of the oral evidence before the same committee on January 27, 1919.

Dr. Ambedkar argued theoretically that any scheme of franchise and constituency that fails to bring about representation of opinions as well as representation of person falls short of creating a popular Government. He showed how very relevant the two factors were in the context of the Indian society which was ridden into castes and religious communities. Each caste group tends to create its own distinctive type of like-mindedness which depends upon the extent of communication, participation, or end osmosis, which was pronounced between touchable and untouchable Hindus, more than between the religious communities have on secular plane common material interests. There will be in such group’s landlords, laborers, and capitalists. The untouchables are, however, isolated by the Hindus from any kind of social participation. They have been dehumanized by socio-religious disabilities almost to the status of slaves. They were denied the universally accepted rights of citizenship. Their interests were distinctively their own interests and no one else could truly voice them.

On the population basis Dr. Ambedkar demanded for the untouchables of the Bombay Presidency eight to nine representatives in the Bombay Legislative Council with franchise pitched as low for them as to master a sizable electorate. While reviewing the various schemes proposed by different organizations, he criticized the Congress schemes which offers communal representation only to the Muslims and leaves untouchables in plural constituencies as this does not give them effective representation.

He brushes aside the proposal of the Depressed Class Mission for nomination by co-option by the elected members of the Council, as an attempt to dictate to the untouchables what their good shall be, instead of an endeavor to agree with them so that they may seek to find the good of their own choice. The communal representation with reserved seats for the most depressed community he holds at, will act as a potent solvent for dissolving them by providing opportunities for contact co-operation and re-socialization of fossilized attitudes. Moreover, it was the demand of the untouchables for self-determination which the major communities too were claiming from the British bureaucracy.

### **9.2.2. The Mahad Chowdar Tank Satyagraha**

The Mahad Chowdar Tank Satyagraha had its origin in the important resolution of the Bombay Legislative Council. It was Rao Bahadur S. K. Bole who was the key person to pass this resolution. He persuaded the British to pass the resolution to throw all the public water resources open for everyone. The resolution is also known as the Bole resolution. It was passed by the Bombay Legislative Council in 1923 and was reaffirmed with a slight change in 1926. Due to which the Mahad Municipality acting on this had kept the Chowdar Tank open for the Untouchables. However, the resolution of the Municipality remained a mere gesture because the Untouchables had not exercised their right owing to the hostility of the caste Hindus.

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and the Kolaba District Depressed Classes decided to hold a conference at Mahad on March 19 and 20, 1927. The prominent leaders of the Conference had notified Dr. Ambedkar the date of the Conference in the first week of the previous month. The arrangements for the Conference were made with care by Mr. Surendranath Tipnis, Subhedar Savadkar and Mr. Anantrao Chitre. The leaders visited the villages near Mahad and the Bombay city and organized small meetings for Depressed Classes and explained them the importance of the Conference. As a result, men, and women along with their children and old men, workers and so many plodded over the distance of hundred miles with whatever food they could bring along with them and reached Mahad. It is very difficult to give the exact number of how many untouchables reach to Mahad for the 'Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha', that is what the conference was named as. But more than three thousand delegates were present for the conference.

The organizers had taken, every care to provide every facility to the masses and to make the Conference a success. Water worth rupees forty was purchased from the Caste Hindus to satisfy the needs of the Conference, for water was not available to the Untouchables at the place of the Conference.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar delivered his presidential address in the conference which was very simple and in forceful sentences. In his speech he described the conditions of Dapoli, because he had his sweet memories of his childhood there. He said, "There was a time when we, who are

condemned as Untouchables, were much advanced much ahead in education compared with communities other than the advanced classes....”

He convinced the people in his speech that demilitarization was one of the causes of their downfall.

Dr. Ambedkar in his inspiring tone asked his people to take a vow that they will renounce eating carrion. He also urged his people to agitate against the Government ban on their entry into the Army, Navy and Police, and impressed upon them the importance of entering Government services and of education.

The conference passed resolutions on important subjects like civic rights to Untouchables, employment, food for students and prohibit the Untouchables by special laws from eating carrion. And most importantly making the ‘Bole Resolution’ a living reality.

It was decided that the Conference should go in a body to the Chowdar tank and help the Depressed Classes to establish their right to take water. Next morning the Conference called upon two caste Hindu spokesmen to support the resolution regarding the duties and responsibilities of the Caste Hindus.

In pursuance of the resolution of the Mahad Municipality which in 1924 had declared to have thrown open its Tank to the depressed classes, it was now decided to take water from the Tank and establish the right of the Untouchables. The delegates accordingly began to march peacefully in a body to the Chowdar Tank to assert their right of taking water from the tank. The momentous event took place. Anti-slavery, anti-caste, anti-priest movement. Dr. Ambedkar, who represented the awakened spirit of the Untouchable Hindus, was marching towards the tank from which the Muslims and Christians took water along with the so-called touchable Hindus. He was now standing on the verge of the tank. Dr. Ambedkar took the handful of water from the tank and drank it. The others present there followed it. After that the processional returned peacefully to the pandal.

Two hours after their event, some evil-minded caste Hindus raised a false rumor that the untouchables were also planning to enter the temple of Veereshwar. At this a large crowd of armed bamboos and sticks collected at street corners. All orthodox at Mahad was up in arms and the whole town at once became a surging mass of rowdies. They said that their religion and God was in danger of being polluted.

The orthodox Hindus had now lost their senses. And the untouchables were bitten black and blue. Due to this they ran into Muslim houses for shelter. The local Mamlatdars and the Police Inspector, who failed to check the rowdies met Dr. Ambedkar.”

In such a situation Dr. Ambedkar could have taken the decision to any extent. But he very poise and concerned towards his own people too. He said to the Police Inspector, “you control others, I will control my people.”

When he went to the place, he saw about twenty persons from the Untouchables were seriously wounded. A doctor was called and immediately treated the wounded.

Meantime the rowdies sent messages to their henchmen to punish the delegates of the conference in their respective villages. And people of the villages followed it. Number of Mahar men and women were assaulted either before or after they had reached their villages.

The struggle of the untouchables was however non-violent and constitutional. Dr. Ambedkar with his friend and one of the organizers, Mr. Anantrao Chitre, left the bungalow as it was booked by a Government Officer from that evening, and took up his residence in the police station rooms. He completed his inquiry into the riot and returned to Bombay on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

However, the policemen appeared on the scene after everything was over. They arrested the nine orthodox rowdies. But only five were sentenced on June 6, 1927, by the District Magistrate to four months' rigorous imprisonment. Then leading newspaper, 'The Bombay Chronicle' has reported about the event of Mahad Conference. It reported, 'The Mahad Conference has shown that the Upper Classes are not willing to allow the Depressed Classes to enjoy such elementary civic rights as taking water from public water-courses.'

### **Check Your Progress:**

Q.1. Discuss the Anti-caste movements of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

---

---

---

---

---

### **9.3 Significance of the First Mahad Conference:**

---

On 20<sup>th</sup> March the Mahad Conference passed the resolution regarding what the Upper Classes should do for the Depressed Classes and put before the conference. By members of Depressed Classes, the president requested Messrs.

Purushottam Prabhakar Joshi and Govind Narayan Dhariya as the representatives of the Upper Classes to speak on the resolution. They both accepted all the clauses in the resolution except for that of inter-marriages.

When we analyze the first conference of Mahad Satyagraha we understand that if the Resident Magistrate had not allowed two precious hours to pass without doing anything the riot would have probably been averted. Yet the conference was a great epoch in the history of India. It not only changed Dr. Ambedkar's personal life but also changed the current of social and national reorganization.

The Chowdar Tank after the Mahad Conference was declared to have been desecrated by the touch of untouchable Hindus. The orthodox and reactionary Hindus called a meeting at the temple of Veereshwar to discuss on the purification of the tank water. As according to them it was polluted due to the touch of the untouchables. To them a mixture of cow-dung, cow-urine, curd, and water was the potent remedy for all manner of pollution.

Dr. Ambedkar was deeply wounded by this act and therefore decided to launch a satyagraha struggle for the vindication of his people's rights.

Accordingly, he announced on June 26 1927, in his own 'Bahishkrit Bharat', that those members of the Depressed Classes who wanted to wash out the stigma of pollution attached to their whole class by the Mahad Hindus by their act of purification of the Tank, and who wanted to denounce the act of assaults committed on their representatives for having taken water from the Chowdar Tank, should enlist themselves at the office of the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha in Bombay.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1927 a public meeting organized by Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha, a public meeting of the Depressed Classes was held at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall in the evening. The meeting was called to protect against the hardships inflicted on the untouchables of Mahad in Kolaba District. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji

Ambedkar presided over the meeting. About 1,000 people were present for the meeting. It was decided to carry on a peaceful agitation against this treatment, to enlist volunteers and collect funds. They would first have a conference at Mahad after the Diwali holidays and then it would be decided to start Satyagraha to enforce their rights as citizens. A resolution to this effect was passed.

The untouchables called upon another meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> October 1927 at Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall under the president ship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. A resolution was passed by which it was decided to hold a conference at Mahad on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1927, to establish their right of using water at the public tank and in the event of any prohibition to launch a Satyagraha movement.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Committee members like Sambhaji Santoji Waghmare, Nimandarkar, Kholwadekar and Junnarkar advised people to join the Satyagraha Movement, on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1927. Therefore 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> December 1927 were the dates decided offering the Mahad satyagraha.

Mahad began to stir again this time. The opponents of the struggle held a meeting on November 27, 1927, at the Veereshwar temple to formulate a plan to flout the attempts of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the Depressed Classes to take water from the Chowdar Tank.

They filed a suit against Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the untouchable leaders of the Depressed Classes on December 12, 1927, in the Civil Court. They

wanted the court to issue a temporary injunction. The Court issued a temporary injunction on December 14, against the defendants pending the decision of the suit.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar currently was fighting on two fronts. On the one side was standing an indifferent foreign Government and on the other was the caste Hindu section headed by the Orthodox Brahmins.

---

#### **9.4 Second Conference of Mahad Satyagraha:**

---

The Untouchables had done elaborate preparations for holding the conference. As no Hindu landlord allowed the use of his land for the pandal, a site for the Conference was secured with great difficulty from a Muslim. As the local merchants refused to have any dealings with the men connected with the conference, the Reception Committee had to purchase corn and other materials from out-side, sufficient to last for ten days. Mr. Anantrao Chitre managed the work very efficiently. Mr. Subhedar Ghatge was entrusted with the food arrangement and maintenance of order and discipline. All the Chief Government Executives of the District gathered at Mahad on December 19. Police were posted on all sides of the Chowdar Tank Delegates and spectators began to pour in Mahad from December 21. The District Magistrate visited their camp every day to dissuade the delegates from the proposed Satyagraha.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar along with two hundred delegates and leaders left Bombay on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1927 in the morning. The next day they got down at noon at Dasgaon, five miles off Mahad. At Mahad more than 3,000 satyagrahis were waiting for Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. When they saw their leader, they greeted him with tumultuous applause.

After the reception, the Police Superintendent handed over a letter from the District Magistrate to Dr. Ambedkar requesting him to see the District Magistrate at his Mahad office without loss of time. Dr. Ambedkar, along with one of his committee members, Mr. Sahastrabudhe went to District Magistrate Office. The District Magistrate in a swift and soft tone advised Dr. Ambedkar to postpone the struggle. They argued, but it was agreed that he should be given an opportunity to address the Conference. In the mean-while, the procession of the delegates had left Dasgaon and accompanied by police officers, it reached Mahad at half past two in the afternoon, singing songs which were punctuated by sky-rending slogans. The vast shouts of 'Shivaji Maharaj ki Jai.' In the pandal proverbs hanging from pillars displayed inspiring immortal truths. In front of the gate there was a pit.

Dr. Ambedkar after interviewing the District Magistrate reached back to pandal and had his lunch in the company of his common followers. He refused to have any special food.

The Conference commenced its proceedings at four-thirty in the evening messages from several prominent persons wishing the Satyagraha success were read out. Dr. Ambedkar rose to address the Conference amidst

deafening cheers, shouts and slogans raised by a mammoth gathering of fifteen thousand people. Most of them had no clothes to their backs. Their old turbans were torn, their chins were unshaven; but their sunburnt faces shone with a peculiar enthusiasm and hope. The vast audience calmed down, and Dr. Ambedkar gave his speech in a very low, dignified but forceful voice.

In his Presidential address during the second conference of Mahad Satyagraha Dr. B. R. Ambedkar reminded the *Satyagrahis* about the unfortunate ending of the first conference where many of the Untouchables were assaulted by the caste Hindus. The reason was they committed the offence of drawing the water from a Public Tank named "*Chowdar*". Dr. Ambedkar in his speech made it clear that, "we (the untouchables); are resorting to this *Satyagraha* not because we believe that the water of this particular tank has any exceptional qualities, but to establish our natural rights as citizens and human beings." Dr. Ambedkar always thought of India as a nation with its identity. In his speech he also said, "If we achieve success in our movement to unite all the Hindus in a single caste, we shall have rendered greatest service to the Indian nation in general and to the Hindu community in particular."

The speech was encouraging to the delegates present for the conference. After Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's speech Mr. G. N. Sahastrabudde, a Brahmin, read extracts from *Manusmriti* those portions which were related to the treatment to be meted out to the *Sudras*.

The first resolution that was passed during this conference was to bonfire of *Manusmriti* which was quite intentional. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar expressed that, "we made a bonfire of it because we view it as a symbol of injustice under which we have been crushed across centuries." It is very important to note, that Mr. D. V. Pradhan, a touchable also supported the burning of the *Smriti*. On this occasion the Collector, the Superintendent of Police and 100 armed police were present. In the night of the conference of the first day, *Hari kirtan* composed by an "Untouchable" and hitting at Brahmins was enthusiastically sung.

On the second day of the conference i.e., on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1927 Dr. Ambedkar read a letter from the Collector which said that it was the desire of Government that the "Untouchables" should obey the injunction of the Civil Court. In view of the temporary injunction granted Government was helpless and desired that the Untouchables should not embark on *Satyagraha* at this moment. Dr. Ambedkar advised the delegates to embark on Satyagraha against the Civil Court's injunction provided the delegates were prepared for the consequences of their action and to undergo imprisonment and other sufferings in a cheerful and voluntary manner.

Dr. Ambedkar then suggested that to gauge correctly the intensity of feeling, those delegates who were in favor of *Satyagraha* should be asked to give their consent in writing for practicing *Satyagraha*. Accordingly, 3,884 delegates had registered their names as ready to offer *Satyagraha*.

When the Collector was informed about the desire of the delegates for the *Satyagraha*, he expressed a desire to address the Conference personally.

The *Satyagraha* Conference assembled at 5-30 p.m. The then Collector Mr. Hood, accompanied by the Superintendent of Police attended the Conference. The Collector addressed the meeting in Marathi. In his address the Collector said, "I advise you to prepare your case and fight it constitutionally and legally. I sincerely hope that the decision may be in your favor." However, till seven in the evening many speakers supported or discouraged the *Satyagraha*. Finally, Dr. Ambedkar again adjourned the discussion till the next morning.

At night Dr. Ambedkar and other chief men took up the decision. They decided to postpone the struggle in view of the case pending before the court, but it was also decided to march in procession winding its course around the tank. Accordingly, this decision was notified to the District Magistrate.

On the morning of December 27, Dr. Ambedkar rose to postpone the *Satyagraha*. The delegates were restless. But he explained to the delegates present, that we should not antagonize the Government and put it on the side of our opposition. He softly concluded, "My brothers, you rest assured that a postponement of this struggle will not mean that we have given up the struggle. The fight will go on till we establish our claims to this Tank."

The resolution was passed that the *Satyagraha* will be postponed till the decision of the Civil Court. The Conference agreed with it. The delegates immediately formed themselves into a procession and the volunteers raised with slogans, boards, and placards. The procession reached the Tank and took its round. After one hour and a half, the procession returned to the pandal about noon without any mishap.

The case, Hindu versus Untouchables regarding ownership of Chowdar Tank was fixed for hearing on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1928 in the court of Second-Class Sub-Judge: Mahad. The Sub-Judge of Mahad dissolved the interim injunction. He found that the assertion of civil rights by the so-called Untouchables can now be made without involving the risk of being jammed in between the judiciary on the one side and the orthodoxy on the other.

The court case of Mahad was fought at three different courts. And every time the Untouchables were victorious.

### **Check Your Progress:**

Q.1. Write a detailed note on Mahahd Satyagraha.

---

---

---

---

---

## 9.5 Resistance and protest Apartheid

---

India is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-religious country. However, in India Hindu religion continues following caste system even today. The Mahar Wada that earlier used to be on the outskirts of the villages has remained there and there, only the name has changed. People now know it as Boudha Wada. Dr. Ambedkar converted himself with thousands and thousands of Untouchables to Buddhism on 14 October 1956. Therefore, the Untouchables came to be called as Boudha or Buddhist or Neo-Buddhist. Their conditions have changed now. They are educated and financially sound. It is difficult to differentiate in between the upper caste Hindu and the Buddhist person in the city. But in certain villages of India even today the Untouchables face the same problems that they faced when the Mahad Chowdar tank Satyagraha took place. Even now they have separate wells to draw water, sometimes they must walk great distances from their residences to get water.

Mahad Chowdar Tank Satyagraha took place in 1927. However, the Mahad Chowdar Tank Satyagraha seemed to be completely planned. The organization of the first Conference of Kolaba Zilla Bahishkrut Parishad at Mahad particularly was decided by Dr. Ambedkar based on the deep study of the place at Mahad i.e., Chowdar tank, its owner, and its declaration as public water resource by the Mahad Municipality itself in 1924 and revised in 1926. Another thing was that Mr. Anant Vinayak Chitre's announcement in the conference on 20 March 1927 asking the delegates to walk in the procession was based on a lot of deliberation. The committee members had taken a meeting in the night after the end of the first day of the conference and taken the decision. The activities of the second day conference were completely planned.

The Mahad Chowdar tank Satyagraha was successful in creating general awareness of human rights amongst the Untouchables. The untouchables were not in government services during the time of Mahad Chowdar tank Satyagraha and they were not educated. Previously majority of the untouchable families in Western India were in the military services of British East India Company. Because of their military services they were educated as the British East India Company had made compulsory education for every family member of those who were in military services. Later after Queens Proclamation of 1858 India was ruled by Queen Victoria and the Mahar Battalion was disbanded. Yet, the number of delegates present for the first conference of the Kolaba Zilla Bahishkrut Parishad almost numbered 3000 and during the time of second conference of Mahad Chowdar tank Satyagraha on 25 and 26 December 1927 the number went up to 10,000 delegates. The increase in number itself proves that the Mahad Chowdar tank Satyagraha was successful in bringing awareness amongst the untouchables. After Mahad Chowdar tank Satyagraha Dr. Ambedkar continued the Dalit movement on various fronts and was successful in it. This shows the Satyagraha at Mahad was successful.

It was in true sense the act of assertion by the Untouchables for their human rights. For centuries they were not given their basic human right by the upper caste Hindus. Taking birth in the untouchable caste was almost like a curse for every individual who was born as an untouchable. They were not allowed to drink water from water resources that were used by the public in general. They ate stale food and did menial jobs. Their social, economic, cultural, and political condition was worse. Therefore, Mahad Chowdar tank Satyagraha proved their assertion. Assertion against the exploitation they faced by the untouchables through ages.

Mahad Chowdar tank Satyagraha was the action against the customs that were followed by Hindus. The custom was that, that the untouchables should not be treated equal to other upper caste Hindus. Therefore, although they were part of Hindu religion, they were downtrodden and were not treated equally. The upper caste Hindus looked down upon them and felt insulted if they tried to come up to their level. The customs were such that in comparison to upper caste Hindu the untouchable should not wear a particular type of metal ornament, should not wear a particular type of cloth material, should not eat a particular type of food. There were restrictions on the consumption of water too. This was part of Hindu custom. Whatever Dr. Ambedkar did was against the custom that was followed in Hindu religion and not against any person or individual.

Mahad Chowdar tank Satyagraha was the landmark in the history of Dalit movement in India. Before the Satyagraha there were many such events that were taken by the leaders of Untouchables. However, the Mahad Satyagraha is marked as the mass movement of the Untouchables. The untouchables earlier fought for their rights, but they were either individual or in small groups. It was for the first time that they were not only in masses, but they had shaken the entire system. The British Government now had to think in earnest about the reforms introduced by them. They were worried about the legal documents. Initially after the first conference of the Mahad Satyagraha, the British Government's attitude was neutral. However, later the government realized that legal action was needed when Dr. Ambedkar and his followers decided to organize second Satyagraha of Mahad. Therefore, the event has been marked as a landmark in the history of Dalit movement.

The Mahad Satyagraha is one of the unique Satyagraha's in world history because nowhere such kind of Satyagraha took place. People have struggled and fought for their rights. Some of these struggles were for securing human rights but nowhere do we witness a struggle for the right to drink water. The Black Americans, the South Africans were also called as downtrodden in their own country. However, they did not face the problem of water. Nowhere people fought for the right to allow them to drink water at public places. Therefore, this Satyagraha was a unique one.

Lastly to conclude the untouchables were not always denied access to water from public places. We do not know whether this custom existed in the early ancient period. This custom originated later probably in the later Vedic period, and we see evidence of such discrimination in the medieval

and modern period of Indian History. The analysis of the writings of Dr. Ambedkar after the Satyagraha proves that even after the Satyagraha of Mahad their fight for their right continued. Dr. Ambedkar in one of his speeches has given the example of one of the report of *Times of India* of 4 January 1928. According to the report the lower caste people called Ballia's were informed by the upper caste Hindus from all the respective villages of Indore State that if they wished to live among them, they must conform to certain rules. Along with other social rules they followed, they were also instructed that they were not supposed to get water from the village wells, and many other things. This shows that despite the Satyagraha that took place and the hardship taken by Dr. Ambedkar and his followers, things were not changing. The Ballia's had submitted petitions to the Darbar against these persecutions, but they had no relief and were asked to live the villages and to migrate to adjoining States for generations. Another incident quoted by Dr. Ambedkar was, in November 1935, in village of Zanu in Ahmedabad district, some of the women from well-to-do families went in fetching water and carried the metal pots. The Hindus found the use of the metal very insulting for them, and therefore assaulted the women. Dr. Ambedkar made the untouchables realize the fact that, the people knew that it was impossible to continue denying them their civil rights, but the upper caste Hindus were finding it difficult to adjust with the social upcoming of the untouchables.

In case of social reforms, Dr. Ambedkar asks the question to the then politicians that "Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow them (untouchables) the use of Public wells" There are many such unanswered questions. Dr. Ambedkar said that he agreed with the words of Mill, "That one country is not fit to rule another country must admit that one class is not fit to rule another class". That is to say that people in India do not face the fact that until un then one is born in a particular caste or religion will not understand the problems of that caste. Therefore, the caste or class remains unfit to rule the other caste or class.

The different Hindu caste people reacted to the first conference of Mahad Satyagraha in different ways. One Mr. Vithal Shankar Dhariya participated from the untouchable's side in the Satyagraha. When Mr. Dhariya's community people came to know about it, they fined him Rs. 10/- to permit him to come back in the community. Mr. Bapurao Joshi was another Brahmin who participated in the Satyagraha. The other Brahmins in Mahad kept him and his family in isolation for 3 years.

The early attempts of social reformers like Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Gopal Baba Valangkar and others fought for the basic human rights of untouchables. However, their fight was limited geographically. But, Mahad Satyagraha had far reaching repercussions and was an inspiration for the toiling masses of India.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar took up the question of water first because being a man of law he realized that although the Municipal Corporation had declared the permission for the use of water by the public, yet the

resolution was not practiced and was not allowed to practice by the people. Therefore, Dr. Ambedkar took up the question of water first.

The new method of history i.e., Subaltern Studies explains that no movement is successful without the masses. The Mahad Chowdar tank Satyagraha is the good example of the involvement of the masses. It was not the movement of the leader. Although the leaders played a prominent role in the Satyagraha, it became successful only because of the untouchables who participated in it.

---

## 9.6 Kalaram Temple Entry Satyagraha, Nasik

---

The year 1930 was the year of action and reaction for India. It was the age of Satyagraha. It was in this year that Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated his great movement i.e., Dandi March for the liberation of the country on March 12, 1930. It was just ten days before this movement Dr. B. R. Ambedkar launched his temple entry movement at Nasik. Preparations for this movement had been going on for over three months. Dr. Ambedkar was guiding this movement through his letters from Bombay and through his followers. The Depressed Classes at Nasik had formed a *Satyagraha* Committee and through its Secretary, Bhaurao Gaikwad, informed the Trustees of the famous Kalaram Temple that they would launch Satyagraha, if the Trustees did not throw the temple open to the Untouchable Hindus before a particular date. Simultaneously, a clarion call was issued to the Depressed Classes to come to Nasik to assert their right of worshipping Shree Rama in the said temple. In response to this call of the Satyagraha Committee, about 15,000 volunteers and representatives assembled in a specially erected pandal in the Depressed Classes locality at Nasik. Imminent persons like Deorao Naik, Rajbhoj, Pradhan, Shivtarkar, Patitpavandas and B. G. Kher were present over there.

On Sunday, March 2, 1930, in the morning at ten, a conference was held under the Presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the pandal to consider the situation and adopt ways and means for launching the Satyagraha.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his presidential speech said, “today, we are about to enter the temple. But the entry in the temple would not solve the whole problem. Our problem is comprehensive. It is political, social, religious, economic, educational etc..... The high caste Hindus looked down upon us and treated us even worse than cats and dogs. We wish to know whether those very Hindus would give us the status of man or not.... This Satyagraha is one of the efforts for bringing about a change of heart among the high Caste Hindus..... Our real problem is not going to be solved by the entry into the Ram Temple. It will not bring any radical change in our life... this is a test to judge the high caste Hindu mind... “man must be treated as man...”

At three in the afternoon, the congregation divided itself into batches of four extending itself over a mile-long procession. It was the biggest procession in the history of Nasik. The processionists walked with an

exalted spirit, but with a full sense of discipline, order, and determination. As soon as the procession came up to the eastern gate of the temple, the District Magistrate, the Police Superintendent, and the City Magistrate moved towards the gate of the temple. As all the gates of the temple were closed, the processionists proceeded to the Godawari Ghat. There the procession transformed itself into a meeting.

At eleven O'clock that night the leaders again discussed the issue and decided to launch a non-violent struggle before the gates of the temple. This historic struggle thus commenced on the morning of March 3, 1930. The first batch of 125 men and 25 women was posted at the four gates of the temple, and over 8,000 enlisted Satyagrahis were awaiting their turn. A strong force of armed police was posted at each gate. Two First Class Magistrate were on duty at the place since early morning to meet any emergency. Reynolds, the Police Superintendent, had shifted his office to a tent pitched right in front of the temple.

The touchable, too, were precluded from entering the temple as the gates remained closed, and their leaders were deliberating behind closed doors to find a way out of the impasse. A difficult situation would have developed had the gates been opened to the Caste Hindus.

At night, a public meeting of the citizens of Nasik was held under the Presidentship of Dr. Kurtakoti, the Shankaracharya, but it ended in pandemonium due to the predominance of the orthodox people. The *Sanatanists* by now had got panicky and rowdy. They pelted the meeting with stones and shoes.

The Satyagraha struggle continued for about a month. April 9 was the day of the chariot procession of the image of Rama. A compromise was patched up between the Caste Hindus and the Untouchables. It was decided that strong men from both sides should draw the chariot. However, the upper caste Hindus ran away with the chariot as per their secret plan. One Bhandari youth namely Kadrekar managed to capture the chariot but was badly wounded. Dr. Ambedkar too was injured. There was free fighting between groups of Untouchables and Caste Hindus all over the city.

This Satyagraha provoked the ill-feelings in the minds of the orthodox Hindus. The result was the children of Untouchables were thrown out of the schools, roads were closed for them, they were denied from the necessities. Despite these sufferings, the struggle at Nasik was carried on. Attempts were being made to persuade both the parties to reach a compromise. Dr. Moonje and Dr. Kurtakoti the Shankaracharya, were trying to reach a settlement. The great multi-millionaire Birla also saw Dr. Ambedkar in Bombay in the middle of April 1930. However, Dr. Ambedkar and the Depressed Classes were so firm that the orthodox Hindus had to keep the temple close for the whole year.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had written two letters to His Excellency Governor of Bombay regarding the problems created by the bureaucracy during Kalaram Temple Entry Satyagraha at Nasik.

Similar kind of Satyagraha was followed at different places during the period of Kalam Temple Entry Satyagraha. In 1931 there was a Temple Entry Satyagraha at Trichur and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar at this time advised the Satyagrahis to, "Win Freedom by Your Own Efforts." He advised them not to take help of the Congress in their campaign. For, otherwise, the task of misrepresenting the Congress would be rendered still more difficult. There was a struggle going on at Mukkhd between Touchable and Untouchables. During 1931 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was at London as the representer of the minorities in the country. Therefore, he was not able to give proper guidance to his people. However, the Satyagraha Committee at Nashik continued with the Satyagraha. They were waiting for his decision whether they should continue with the Satyagraha, as the Commissioner C. D. was asking them to stop the Satyagraha. Dr. Ambedkar was again firm with his decision of continuing the Satyagraha. He was also not much happy with the role played by the government and appealed the government to treat all the communities equally.

The court case of the Kalam Temple Entry Satyagraha was fought between the Sanatanists and Untouchables. At this time the Courts of law held that entry in the temples by the Untouchables was illegal being against the established custom. Therefore, several Bills were intended to be introduced in the Central Legislature as well as the Provincial Legislatures. The most important were those of Dr. Subbaroyan's Temple-Entry Bill and Ranga Iyer's Untouchability Abolition Bill. The Bills, however, was approved by the Sanatana Hindus, like Pandit Madan Malaviya, Konda Venkatappiah and S. T. Ramanuja Iyengar, Srinivasa Iyengar. The bill was refused initially, afterwards Ranga Iyer drafted a second Bill based on Dr. Subbaroyan's which the Viceroy permitted to introduce it in the Central Assembly subject to the same qualification as in the case of his forerun Bill.

Lord Willington, then Viceroy introduced the bill at the Central Legislative Assembly. It was decided that the fullest opportunity would be given to every section of the Hindu Community to express on its provisions. Mahatma Gandhi saw that the Ranga Iyer's Bill should be supported by everyone. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Mr. G. D. Birla and Mr. Devdas Gandhi rendered their services in canvassing in support of the bill. When the Bills had come to the stage of appointment of a Select Committee, the British Government had taken a decision to dissolve the Assembly and order election. The mover of the Bills Ranga Iyer was deeply hurt and came up heavily on C. Rajagopalachari. Against this background, two great stalwarts-Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar-met at Yeravada Prison on February 4, 1933. However, the Kalam Temple Entry Satyagraha was not successful, yet it is great landmark in the history of Untouchables movement.

### **Check Your Progress:**

Q.1. Discuss in brief the Kalaram Temple Entry Satyagraha.

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Untouchables movement continued by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

#### **9.6.1. Other Movements of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar realized that Congress would never further give the support to the movements and fulfill the demands of the Untouchables. Therefore, it was necessary to establish their own political platform. He therefore decided to establish 'The Independent Labour Party'. Through they the party resolved the problems of the labors and untouchables. The party won at several places and was successful in representing themselves in the political Scenario of India.

The three Round Table Conferences (1930-1932) attended by Dr. B. R; Ambedkar was successful in representing the demands of the untouchables at London. This every conference proved his deep knowledge of the Indian society and gave the solutions to British India, about how the untouchables can be given equal opportunities to rise in the society by giving them representation as the separate electorates.

On 13, October, 1935 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar delivered his gigantic speech at Yeola, Nashik. In this speech he declared that although he was born Hindu, but he will not die Hindu. He made his words come true on 14, October 1956. It was on this date Dr. B. R. Ambedkar with thousands and thousands of Dalits converted himself into Buddhism.

This was a great decision on behalf of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. He gave his people what they wanted. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar as an architect of Indian Constitution, was successful in writing the lengthiest constitution. In which he kept the reservation for all the downtrodden for uplifting the social, economic, and political conditions. The Dalits always feel that if at all Dr. Babasaheb would have lived some more years. The conditions of the Dalits would have been much better. However, this great Mahamanav left this world on 6, December 1956. He was not only the leader of the Dalits but was also the National Leader.

---

## 9.7 Summary

---

The understanding of the Dalit Movement from the perception of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is almost understanding the real conditions of the untouchables during the given period. Every movement led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar seemed to be a great contribution towards human rights. It was not only the movement for the Dalits but were the movements for mankind in general. The impact of these movements was far reaching and has been continued by today's masses. It has also given a way to new thinking in the methodology of the study of History. It helps us to understand that the leader in no more a leader until the masses accepts him or her as a leader. Therefore, giving a new methodology and a school of thought i.e., 'Subaltern Studies'.

---

## 9.7 Questions

---

1. Discuss the significance of the anti-caste movements led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.
2. Mention the role played by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in Southborough Commission.
3. Briefly describe the Mahad Chowdar Tank Satyagraha as the first attempt of untouchables towards right to human beings.
4. Discuss in brief the Kalaram Temple Entry Satyagraha.

---

## 9.9 References

---

1. H. G. Rawlinson, *A Concise History of the Indian People*, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1994,
2. Hari Narake, *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*, Volume I, (Marathi), Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, 1979.
3. Ratnakar Ganveer, *Mahad Samata Sangar*, (Marathi), Ratnamitra Prakashan, Jalgaon, 1981.
4. *Maharashtra Shasan, Maharashtra Rajya Gazetteer, Raigad Zilla* (Marathi), (edited) K. K. Choudhari, Published by Karyakari Sampadak Va Sachiv, Darshnika Vibhag, Maharashtra Shasan, Mumbai, 1993.
5. A. R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), Oxford University Press, 1954.
6. C. B. Khairmode, *Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar*, Vol. 3, Pratap Prakashan, Bombay, 1978.
7. Michael.Mahar, *The Untouchables in Contemporary India*, The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona, 1972.
8. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Kolaba District*, The Government Photozincographic Press Pune, (Revised Edition), 1989.

9. *Suwarna Mahotsav Smaranika*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Mahad Kranti Suwarna, Mahotsav Samiti, Dr, Babasaheb Ambedkar Mahavidyalaya, Mahad, 26<sup>th</sup> December 1986.
10. Vasant Moon, *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkars Bahishkrut Bharat and Muknayak*, Second Ed., Maharashtra State Government, 2008.
11. Hari. Narake, M. L. Kasare, N. G. Kamble, and Ashok Godghate, (Edition) *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 17, Part 1, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Source Material Publication Committee, Higher Education Dep. Govt. of Maharashtra, 2003.

\*\*\*\*\*

## ANTI-CAST MOVEMENT OF RAMASWAMY PERIYAR

### Unit Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Ramaswamy Periyar-Early Life
- 10.3 Periyar and Congress
- 10.4 Self Respect Movement
- 10.5 Periyar and Women Emancipation
- 10.6 Publications of Periyar
- 10.7 Philosophy of Periyar
- 10.9 Periyar and Rationalism
- 10.9 Summary
- 10.10 Questions
- 10.11 References

---

### 10.0 Objectives

---

- To study the anti-cast movement in Tamilnadu.
- To understand the early life of Ramaswamy Periyar.
- To make student aware about the role of Periyar in Congress Party.
- To throw light on Self Respect Movement in Tamilnadu.
- To analyse the role of Periyar in women emancipation.
- To understand the importance of Periyar's Philosophy and rationalism.

---

### 10.1 Introduction

---

Reform and revolution were the by-product of the colonial system in India. A galaxy of social reformers and a few organization emerged from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to weed out societal obstacles that stood in the way of normal human development. Especially, the individual reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, M. G. Ranade, Jyotirao Phule, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Periyar EVR and organizations like Satya Shodak Samaj of Jyotirao Phule, and Periyar EVR's Self Respect Movement have worked for the cause of women who represent about the half of the human society. They attacked for the first time, ideological basis of the 'enslavement of women' in a society. Periyar for his seven

decades of service fought for the cause of women with a well-developed organization called Self Respect Movement, his brainchild coming to his defense against vituperative attack and brickbats.

EMPOWERMENT has become a fashionable and buzzword. It essentially means decentralization of authority and power. It aims at getting participation of deprived sections of people in decision-making process. In other words giving voice to voiceless. Activists want government to empower poor people including women by legislative measures and welfare programmes. Unless capacity is built in those sections in reality, the power is used by others rather than the sections for which they are meant, empowerment would not be sensed in a real terms

---

## 10.2 Ramaswamy Periyar-Early Life

---

The "revolution" which Periyar brought about was a bloodless one and he had to spend more than fifty years of his life opening the eyes of People to their want of education-and consequent backwardness, their faith in superstitions, the deception and exploitation to which they are subjected by cunning people and also on the need for them to develop self-respect and self-confidence. It is interesting to note the Term '*self-respect*' as used by Periyar includes the three concepts **liberty, equality and fraternity** which Voltaire and other French revolutionists exhorted their countrymen to acquire. Periyar repeatedly and feelingly spoke about Women's liberation.

Periyar Ramasami (1879-1973) was known as the Voltaire (1694-1778) of South India, particularly, in Tamil Nadu. Both were rationalists who aroused their people to realize that all men are equal and it is the birthright of every individual to enjoy liberty, equality and fraternity. Both opposed religion virulently because the so called men of religion invented myths and superstitions to keep the innocent and ignorant people in darkness and to go on exploiting them. In one of his articles, Voltaire said "They (the religious men) inspired you with false beliefs and made you fanatics so that they might be your masters. They made you superstitious, not that you might fear god but that you might fear them"

E.V.Ramaswamy is a notable social reformer of the twentieth century. He was born to rich and prosperous parents in a Kannadiga Balija Naicker community in Erode on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1879. His father name was Venkatappa Naicker and mother was Chinnathayammai. EVR's father was a prosperous businessman and was once elected as councilor in Erode Municipality. EVR's family was a reputed non-Brahmin orthodox family. Naicker's family had made enough money to lead an honorable life along with their four children and even could afford to spend some money for their spiritual attainment. EVR's parents were of God fearing, religious

mindful people. They used to hold regular religious functions at their residence. Many sadhus or sanyasis were entertained to give religious discourses. Huge amount was denoted for religious endowments. There is nothing wrong if parents expect their children to follow their footsteps. But EVR had disappointed them a lot, from childhood itself he had a sense of protest against the act of social discrimination and all irrational religious practices. EVR's educational career ended at the age of twelve.

Periyar E.V.R {1879-1973} was a most remarkable person in every way. He was, in some respects, a very unusual person too. Born in rich and deeply religious parents, he discarded wealth and religion. Starting with negligible formal education, he became one of the greatest teacher of Tamil Society about social equality and social justice. Without any paper qualification, he became the **Chairman of Erode Municipality, the President of the State Congress Committee, the President of the Justice Party and the founder of Dravidar Kazhagam** the greatest non-political Party in south India. Untutored in elocution, he developed the power to hold large audience spellbound for long stretches of time, not with verbal firework or verbal melody but with facts and figures and convincing arguments. Above all, without being a philosopher of any kind, he showed the greatest philosophical detachment in being able to expose ruthlessly the weakness found in groups of people concerned. His dynamism grows with years and even until the day before his death in his 95<sup>th</sup> year he was vituperate condemning social evils an injustice.

---

### 10.3 Periyar and Congress

---

Periyar did not join the congress accidentally or suddenly. He had joined the congress on the specific understanding that the congress should work for the salvation of the suffering of non-Brahmin communities. In the beginning of 1920, EVR enrolled himself as one of the member of the congress party in Tamilnadu. As soon as he joined the congress, he began to adopt Gandhiji's principles punctiliously. He had cast away all expensive mill clothes and foreign clothes and too to hand-spun Khadi. As a congressman and followers of Gandhi, he sincerely worked to strengthen the Congress Movement.

His contribution to Khaddar Movement, prohibition and eradication of untouchability and other causes are all glorious pages in the annals of the congress party. Periyar during his stay in the congress movement for six years had not only contributed for spreading the message of freedom to the people but also strengthened the congress organization as political body. From 1923 onwards, EVR began to suggest that the congress should accept the principles of communal representation for all elective bodies both local and provincial. At the Annual Conference at Conjeevaram in

November 1925. EVR insisted upon accepting principle of communal representation. It was not accepted by the congress leaders. This proved to be last straw on the camel's back. EVR quit the congress, establishing the fact that the congress party was meant only to safeguard the interest of the Brahmin community.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Why did Ramaswamy Periyar quit the Congress?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

## **10.4 Self Respect Movement**

---

Periyar decided that he should undertake a crusade against caste tyranny and social autocracy of the superior Brahminical caste. After deep thought he decided to start a movement, called Self-Respect Movement and gathered around him quite a number of young men with revolutionary zeal and organized to preach that no man should be considered superior by birth and that all men are equal. Periyar wrote a series of articles in Kudi-Arasu, [a newspaper started by himself] exposing the mean minded and mischievous propounds of Brahmins. The editorial of the first issue of Kudi Arasu expressed its aim and objectives thus-, "We would certainly see those who are interested to know about the ideals of our news medium that our mother country should develop its society, economy, politics and morality. ----- It is not the intention of our magazine just to make a call to the nation and nationalism should develop self-respect, socialism and fraternity among the people who in turn should be bound by love and affection. High and low differences add fuel to the fire of burning caste-conflicts in the society. Equality should be maintained devoid of all these social evils. Religious feuds and the evil of bringing gods to the courts of law should be discouraged.

Periyar's ambition was to recreate humanity on a firm rationalistic foundation and establish a new society. As a true philosopher, he was progressive in thinking, individualistic in outlook, radical in action and was endowed with rare intellectual potentialities, impulses and desires, initiatives and originality. Periyar also agitated, criticized and opposed everything that stood in the path of progress of mankind. He was successful in creating social and political awareness. In 1927 Periyar launched the **Self-Respect League** to achieve his aim. He explained the meaning of Self-Respect and the reason for its emerging thus, 'The Self-Respect Movement was inaugurated not for talking ill of a particular

community or sect but to destroy social evil as a whole.’ **The Self Respect Movement** [SRM] could be undertaken in an atmosphere where the status of women was raised on par with men. SRM insisted on equality of women with men in all matters including **education, right to property, inheritance and in securing government jobs**. It encouraged **widow-remarriages** and **discouraged prostitution** in any form including devdasi system, **Child marriages** were condemned and the need of **increasing women’s marriageable age** and their **right to divorce** were advocated.

---

## 10.5 Periyar and Women Emancipation

---

Periyar advocated such enlightened ideas as early as 1929, long before even the developed countries enabled women to attain their legitimate right in society. When first Self Respect conference was held at Chengalpattu he adopted new policy guidelines to empower women in our country. The resolution reads as follows, ‘This conference resolve that women should be given equal rights with men for property and for the privilege of succession and the rights and facilities to employed in any profession or jobs and that necessary steps should take [by the government] to employ a greater number of women teachers in schools including primary schools’ EVR under whose President ship the South Indian Social Reformer’s Conference was held in Madras in 1928, spoke in his Presidential address that the education of women was essential to establish a enlightened society. Similar resolutions were passed at the second and third Self Respect Conference held in 1930 and 1931 respectively. As a result The Justice Party, which was in power from 1921 to 1936, seemed to have taken a sympathetic attitude towards women’s progress as part of its welfare programmes. The SRM on its own tries to set the matters to an extent by establishing and sponsoring several non-formal and private institutions and centers to impart education to the needy girls and women. In 1935 under the leadership of Kanadukathan V. S. Shanmugam self respectors had established a, ‘**Development League for Women**’. It was declared that, among other aims and ideas the proposed body might work for the literacy of girls and women.

Another milestone in the empowering the women in Tamilnadu was **reform in Marriage practices**, Not satisfies with the existing system of marriage, the SRM aspired for a total change in the system and performance of marriages in society. Periyar rightly diagnosed the cause and relentlessly tries to popularise the **Swayam Maryada** type of marriage [**self-respect marriage**], which was free from all the problems associated with traditional marriage. On marriage problem Periyar wrote, ‘I would say that holding a feast, buying and distributing new clothes, making jewels just for the wedding are all unnecessary and wasteful. If the money intended for the wedding expenses is not borrowed and belongs to

either of the marriage parties then that amount could be deposited in a bank in the bride's name for many years so that the accrued amount could be used by her to bring up her children and to educate them'. Periyar wanted all marriages to be registered and practice of wasteful expenses and unwanted customs to be done away with. He wrote, 'Why can't the Act enforce that all **wedding should be registered** like the birth or a death in the above places and also warn any lapse with severe punishment or cancellation of the concerned wedding. I would like the government to empower all the Registration Officers the Municipal Commissioners, Village Officers and the Co-operative Inspectors to register all wedding conducted without priests.

The simple, expense free and trouble free 'Swayam Maryada' type of marriage devised by Periyar has modernized the institution of marriage. The legal objection to this type of marriage were removed by Annadurai's government retrospectively and it was legalized in 1967.

Periyar takes his place alongside other great Indian reformers who liberated widow from a life of perpetual misery and drudgery. Traditionally **widow marriage** was not allowed. In order to impress upon people on the need for widow marriage he gathered statistics from the 1921 census of India and highlighted the plight of 26,31,788 widows in the country. He argued that widow non-marriage was perpetuated by men to make women subservient to them like slaves and to keep them under control. Thus he championed the cause of widows arranged several widow's marriages, popularized them and helped greatly in the emancipation of the most depressed section of women in human society. In 1932, the Tamilnadu Anti Purohit League, an auxiliary body of the SRM under the secretary ship of S.M.S. Paramasivam took efforts to establish at Uraiyoor, Tiruchi, a **Widow' Home** to protect the unfortunate widows.

Periyar emphatically supported the **right of women to divorce** when they could not get along with her husband. **Child marriage** was strongly opposed by SRM. Periyar also strongly condemned **polygamy**. All these ideas of Periyar now have become popular and part of antigender discrimination perspective all over the world.

The self-respect philosophy of Periyar refers to the assertion of one's individuality against exploitation, discrimination and injustice. According to him if women do not have the right to property that would be against their self-respect. Hence while speaking on the EVR emphasized the need in his editorial in Kudiarasu in December, 1929 thus, '**Like men, the women should have property rights** and like women, the men should have all virtues and good character and laws enforcing these should be made without any delay.' Through his writings and speeches he continuously hammered the idea of right to property for women. In 1937, the

Government of India passed the Hindu women's Right to Property Act in the Legislative Assembly. Periyar's aim was to drive home the point that the people should recognize the rights of women to property.

As early as in 1920s Periyar gave serious thought for the important of **family planning** as a principal step for the emancipation of women. He advocated not only family planning methods to limit unwanted births but propagated the education and employment of women, celibacy higher age of marriage of girls and the limiting of the family to one to two children without gender discrimination. He even supported the extreme step of removing uterus to save mothers from the risk of unwanted pregnancies. For the emancipation of women, Periyar held rather extreme views on pregnancy and bearing more children. He said, "They [women] forfeit their self-respect and work like slaves because of more children. It is mainly because they shoulder the responsibility to protect their many children...It is more applicable to women folk. Why? ... This pregnancy is the root cause for premature death." Periyar wanted women in particular to have the option of postponement of marriage, late marriage, postponement of conception, even foregoing children and limiting children to one or two irrespective of gender. Regarding the implementation of family planning he said, "We have to educate them through women propagandist. We should make good and respectable women do the propagandist work... Rationalist outlook should be deemed as qualification for carrying on family planning propaganda".

Another evil practice against which EVR fought for was the Devdasi system. **Devdasi system** began with a noble intention of enlisting the services of the devoted women well-versed in dancing and singing from a particular community for the cause of serving God at His altar, as His wife till death. This system, over the years had degenerated into a system that gave room for the practice of prostitution inside and outside the premises of temples. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy strongly opposed this system both in and out of the Madras Legislative Council. Along with other reformers and associations SRM wholeheartedly supported the genuine efforts of Dr. Mthulakshmi. At a Self Respectors Women's Conference held at Ponoor in North Arcot district, under the Presidentship of Rajalingam in the year 1942, among other resolutions a resolution to remove the Devadasi system from practice in Tamilnadu was passed.

The SRM from 1930's pursuing a method of 'deplore and educate' had encouraged articles and books on women. EVR was aware that the denial of right to women to own or to inherit property, absence of love and widow remarriage and right to divorce would lead to other social problems. Periyar's concept of women's status is different from the notion of several educated women today. Urging women to respect themselves as individuals in their right he believed in the development of women

through education and employment, which would help them to attain status and empowerment in society. A women for Periyar grows in beauty by modern and higher education. He believed that ‘What gives beauty to a women is not the hair or the pattern of her dress or the saffron on her face, but only education’. He gave certain practical suggestion to empower women. He advocated that all teaching jobs in schools must be given to girls and those job-oriented institutions like nursing school, polytechnics and engineering colleges exclusively for training women should be started. He established such institutions in Trichy. Thus he not only preached the ideology of women’s development but also established suitable human resource development programmes for attaining this goal long before many others had thought about it. Periyar’s scientific understanding of social problems and his mature wisdom led him to analyze all complicated human problems rationally. His philosophy of gender equality, removal of outdated customs for the emancipation of women, his views on a scientific life-style, family formation and family planning were all unique contribution at a critical juncture in India. Thus SRM had shown a definite sense of commitment towards women’s cause and made sincere efforts in creating the most constructive awareness among women and men of their rights and duties.

### **Check Your Progress**

**1 Describe the contribution of Ramaswamy Periyar in Women’s emancipation?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## **10.6 Publications of Periyar**

---

Periyar published several journals in Tamil to publicize his ideas. As mentioned earlier he started publishing *Kudi Arasu* (Republic) in 1924. Besides, he also published *Puratchi* (Revolt), *Pagutharivu* (Rationalism), *Viduthalai* (Freedom) and *Unmai* (Truth). In 1970 the English monthly *The Modern Rationalist* was inaugurated by Periyar.

Periyar wrote a number of articles in Tamil journals founded by him. He delivered many extempore speeches in different parts of Tamil Nadu. These speeches, too, were printed in these journals. From these journals, which form part on an archival material in the library situated in Periyar Thidal, a series of volumes have already been published by the Self-

Respect Propaganda Institution, including *Collected Works of Periyar E.V.R.* Besides, Emerald Publishers have published English translations of several of Periyar's works, namely, *Periyar Is There God?*, *Periyar on Religion* and *Periyar on Women's Rights*.

---

## 10.7 Philosophy of Periyar

---

Periyar has expressed his views on many issues, including on political issues. However, he is best known as the founder of the Self-Respect Movement. In this book, I will concentrate on Periyar's views on issues, which are of relevance to rationalism, humanism and atheism. I have used *Collected Works of Periyar E.V.R.* as my main source for this chapter. Besides, I have also drawn from other English books mentioned above.

The first chapter of the book *Collected Works of Periyar E.V.R.* is titled "Genesis of My Self-Respect Movement". Periyar has very clearly mentioned his life's mission and the aims of the Self-Respect Movement in it:

My mission was decided by me. I resolved to eradicate the evils of casteism. I decided to fight against god and superstitions...

I started the Self-Respect Movement with the same motive. If my ambition is fulfilled the class hatred in society will cease.

Thus, Periyar started the Self-Respect movement, with the aim of establishing a casteless society based on complete equality. Eradication of social evils, promotion of rationalism, and freeing the society from the shackles of superstitions and blind faith in God and religion were high on his agenda. Ensuring social justice for "Shudras" (non-brahmins) by way of reservations in educational institutions and in government jobs was an important objective for him. Periyar made it clear that such reservations should continue as long as castes exist.

---

## 10.8 Periyar and Rationalism

---

Periyar gave an important place to rationalism in his philosophy. One of the Tamil journals published by him was named *Pagutharivu* which means "rationalism" in Tamil. He was also the founder of the English journal *The Modern Rationalist*.

As noted earlier, Periyar founded the Rationalist Forum in Tamil Nadu. In fact, Periyar gave an important place to rationalism in his Self-Respect Movement. In an article published in *Viduthalai* in 1963, Periyar has described his social movement as being "based on rationalism". In *Collected Works of Periyar E.V.R.*, the words "Self-Respect Movement" and "Rationalist Movement" are used interchangeably.

In his “The Genesis of My Self-Respect Movement”, Periyar has emphasized the importance of rationality in human life.

In another chapter of *Collected Works*, titled “Rationalist Thinking!”, which is a speech delivered by him in 1971 while inaugurating a Rationalist Association, Periyar says:

We want the people to live as rational beings. We do not propagate anything unbelievable. We do not talk anything based on god, children of gods, incarnations, religion, *shastras*, customs, and so on. We talk of things acceptable to our sense of reasoning. All of you are endowed with the same sense of rationalism. Think over what is right and acceptable to your reason in all matters we talk about.

According to Periyar, adoption of a rationalist outlook in society would have solved many of its problems. Nevertheless, people were prevented from adopting a rational outlook by those who claimed that what they were saying were “words of god”, and that they themselves were not ordinary human beings but “incarnations of god”, and so on. Such people, maintains Periyar, actually wanted to impose their own ideas on the society, and that is why they did not want people to think independently. Periyar emphasizes that the capacity of reasoning alone distinguishes human beings from other animals. In case of human beings, sense of reasoning can lead to mental development and a happy life.

### **God**

Periyar was very strongly opposed to the idea of god, as well as to idol-worship. He has used strong language and strong agitation methods for expressing his opposition. In his later life, he used to start his public meetings by categorically asserting the non-existence of god:

Thus, Periyar gave highest importance to the eradication of the god-idea in his Self-Respect Movement.

The "revolution" which Periyar brought about was a bloodless one and he had to spend more than fifty years of his life opening the eyes of People to their want of education-and consequent backwardness, their faith in superstitions, the deception and exploitation to which they are subjected by cunning people and also on the need for them to develop self-respect and self-confidence. It is interesting to note the Term 'self-respect' as used by Periyar includes the three concepts liberty, equality and fraternity which Voltaire and other French revolutionists exhorted their countrymen to acquire. Periyar repeatedly and feelingly spoke about Women's liberation.

## Check Your Progress

Describe the Self-respect Movement of Ramaswamy Periyar.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 10.9 Summary

---

E.V.Ramaswamy is a notable social reformer of the twentieth century. Periyar Ramasami (1879-1973) was known as the Voltaire (1694-1778) of South India, particularly, in Tamil Nadu. Periyar during his stay in the congress movement for six years had not only contributed for spreading the message of freedom to the people but also strengthened the congress organization as political body. Periyar decided that he should undertake a crusade against caste tyranny and social autocracy of the superior Brahminical caste. After deep thought he decided to start a movement, called Self-Respect Movement. In 1927 Periyar launched the Self-Respect League to achieve his aim. Periyar's ambition was to recreate humanity on a firm rationalistic foundation and establish a new society. As a true philosopher, he was progressive in thinking, individualistic in outlook, radical in action and was endowed with rare intellectual potentialities, impulses and desires, initiatives and originality. Periyar also agitated, criticized and opposed everything that stood in the path of progress of mankind. He was successful in creating social and political awareness.

The Self Respect Movement [SRM] could be undertaken in an atmosphere where the status of women was raised on par with men. SRM insisted on equality of women with men in all matters including education, right to property, inheritance and in securing government jobs. It encouraged widow-remarriages and discouraged prostitution in any form including devdasi system, Child marriages were condemned and the need of increasing women's marriageable age and their right to divorce were advocated.

### 10.10 Questions

---

1. Write an essay on anti-caste movement in Tamilnadu?
2. Describe in brief about role of Periyar in women emancipation.
3. Elaborate in detail, the views of Ramaswamy Periyar about Caste system in India.

4. write short notes on
  - [a] Self Respect Movement
  - [b] Philosophy of Periyar
  - [c] Periyar and rationalism

---

### 10.11 References

---

- Gopalkrishnan M. D, *A Garland To Periyar*, Emerald Publication, Madras, 1999
- Chandrababu, B, S., *Social Protest in Tamilnadu*, Madras, 1993
- Gopalkrishnan M. D., *Periyar Father of the Tamil Race*, Emerald Publication, Madras, 1991
- Kudi Arasu, 24.2. 1929
- Veermani K. *The History of the Struggle for social Justice in Tamilnadu*, D. K. Publication, Tamilnadu, 1998
- Kudi Arasu, 1.12. 1928.
- Kudi Arasu, 25.5. 1935
- Chandrababu B. S *Social Protest and Its Impact on Tamilnadu.*, Emerald Publication, Madras, 1993

\*\*\*\*\*

## MARXIST AND NEO-MARXIST UNDERSTANDING OF CLASS

### Unit Structure

- 11.0 Objective
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Meaning of the Class
- 11.3 Historical background of the Class
- 11.4 Karl Marx's Concept of Class
- 11.5 Critical overview of Karl Marx's Class
- 11.6 Neo-Marxist Class
- 11.7 Critiques of Neo- Marxist Class
- 11.8 Summary
- 11.9 Questions
- 11.10 Reference

---

### 11.0 OBJECTIVE

---

- To understand the idea of class
- To know Marx's class theory
- To assess the New Marx's theory
- To analyse the limitations of the class theory

---

### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

---

A human is a social animal therefore cannot live alone. Natural force of human need bind the people in a group which gradually took the shape of a society. With the growth of human culture into human civilization has transformed a simple society into a complex society. In fact complexity of a society is not due to society itself but it is various social groups who are divided into specific order. In Marxist view division of society into distinctive groups are called Class. In your surrounding you can see division of society in various exclusive groups, based on their profession, religion, economy, community, culture and so on. The social division is not a picture of today but was profoundly existed in every ancient civilization and history of the world. Further all the historical sources shows a relation among the social groups.

In this context the Neo- Marxist theory and Karl Marxist theory are an important academic research in a social history. To great deal the traditional Marx class theory or Neo Marx theory help to understand a society of all ages. The concept of class throw light on the factors of social structure in a capitalist society. It explains that how does a society functions either by its internal forces or by the external forces like economy, culture, politics etc.

The so called class theory has brought huge acceptance in the academic world and in public. From the historical point of view, the Marxist class should not be treated as a principle or a theory of sociology because in larger term most of the historical events related to social movements, labour movements could be understood through the idea of class. Not only that, some of the functional system of government like communism, socialism are influence by the Marxist class theory.

According to Marx all social history of the world is a history of class struggle. In fact Marx views on social class help to understand the historical events pertaining to labour and social and economic history. This paper aims to unveil the important aspects of Karl Marx's class theory and the later development of this idea as Neo Marx theory of class.

---

## **11.2 MEANING OF THE CLASS**

---

In various ways the word 'class' is used and known to us. To ask about the level of a child in a school we usually say –“which class do you study?” Similarly position in job, public transportation, commercial products, brands and so on the term class is invariably used. Class derived from the Latin word *classis* which has multiple meanings and in history first time used by the Romans to describe the Roman people according to their age and property. Thus, earlier to Karl Marx the notion of class confined only to division in a society. The intervention of Karl Marx concept of class made huge change in the meaning of class. It is not only about division in a society. In fact it is a mixture of socio-economic structure of a society and individual reaction, behaviour and consciousness towards the structural frame of a group of people, created due to economy. Take the example of India for understanding the phenomena of Marx's class. In India the caste is the main attribute of determining the position of a person in a society similarly in Marx's class theory the economic attribute is the decisive factor of class ranking in a society.

Thus according to Marx class is the two broad division of a capitalist society due to unequal distribution of property.

---

## 11.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUD OF THE CLASS

---

The social set up in terms of division in a social structure is already been noticed by the sociologist and was well known subject in sociology pretty back to Karl Marx. Let us begin with the era of industrial revolution in Europe that started in Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and from there it spread to other parts of Europe. For many reasons the period of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century are quite transitional because it had brought renaissance in all sphere. One can compare it with the foundation of modern world of today. However in global prospective this historical event has brought immense changes like imperialism, capitalism, communalism, industrialization etc. Another consequence appeared in the area of social structure. Earlier the social division was minor but after the industrialization the social stratification has further parted eventually transformed the society into a structural division of two poles i.e. the capitalist and the labour.

The historical journey of class can be divided into two broad categories 1. Class defined by the allocation of position in a society and 2. Class defined in relation to production and property. Apart from capitalist environment of a society the idea of Marx's class was also influenced by Hegel's dialectical method and Feuerbachian materialism. Before Marx it was Adam Ferguson and Millar who first time used the word "class" in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, for describing social level similar to our present understanding of any rank in jobs or in terms of wealth. By the advent of nineteenth century the word "class" gradually inferred by deeper meaning other than social strata like the work of Adam Smith talks about "labouring class". So the development of Marx class trace back to early days of social structure and ideas of many philosophers who have influenced Marx.

---

## 11.4 KARL MARX'S CONCEPT OF CLASS

---

Karl Heinrich Marx was born Trier, Prussia, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1818. He was a philosopher and economist. The theory of class is one of the most fundamental theory of sociology. However his concept of class cannot be confined within a bracket of sociology or economics only. According to him a society has two fold division one is the oppressor or owner of capital called by him-bourgeoisie and other is the oppressed class or labour class which he calls proletariat. He also said that these two classes is formed as a reaction of economic activities or mode of production. He further says that due to exploitation by the capitalist resulted into conflict between the two classes. Thus, the class of Marx reveals following points:

- a. The class is a unique feature of capitalist society.
- b. The class is determined by one's relationship with the means of production.
- c. Marx talks about division in society i.e. class, which are antagonist in nature. That's why there is a conflict in between the two major groups.

Through the concept of class he advocated many other theories in economy, sociology and political science. According to him class and class struggle are vital components that are responsible for the evolvement of a society from generation to generation. Karl Marx's "class" critically examine the inner aspects of social system. It uncovers structure, and internal function of a society that influence the economics, politics and cultures. Thus Marxist class analysis can be explained in terms of three thesis.

- Class and social revolution
- Class and capitalist society
- Class and political revolution

**A. Class and social revolution:**

Marx defined the society in the periphery of class that occurs due to its emergence in dialectic line. Unlike in India the origin of four varna system (caste) was occurred due to different professions but later on it followed dialectic lines because the division was not cordial but conflicting between the lowest class and rest of the three upper classes. In a society such dialectic lines bring about tussle between the two opposite classes which eventually turns into social revolution. Marx concept of class and social revolution was formulated at the background of the English society where he argues that the capitalist system forces people into one of the two class i.e. proletariat and bourgeoisie. He argues that proletariat (oppressed) and bourgeoisie (oppressor) are two opposite poles of a society who always struggle with each other for their vested interest. The ongoing struggle, especially in extreme phase like in capitalist society the amount of production achieved through the means of deprivation and exploitation of oppressed class. The difference between the two classes will increase more and more that means the rich becoming richer and poor becoming poorer. This will create huge gap between the two and polarize the society. Marx says the exploitation by the capitalist led class consciousness in which the proletariat realized their exploited condition. The class consciousness in the working group created revolution. Through revolution the power of earlier mode of production, social

organizations overthrown, by the new one which is more acceptable and liked by the mass i.e. the oppressed class. Thus the class within the social system bound to reach at revolutionary phase which ends up at new society in order to get equal distribution of the wealth which will led to classless society.

He said throughout the history of the world class struggle existed yet in older days it was the bourgeoisie whose revolutionary wars have changed the society for gaining the political power. So the bourgeoisie revolution was the social uprising of the past and proletarian revolution is the social revolution of the future. In this connection Marx's phases of social evolution is mention worthy in which he talks about three social phases i.e. the slave state, the feudal society and last the capital society.

### **B. Class and Capitalist Society:**

This is another consequence of the class that is based on socioeconomic background. Marx explains class from the angle of economics without excluding society. To him the progress in economy leads to change the structure of a society where the class play important role. According to Marx the idea of capital is not merely related to economy it is about economy and society both. So capital is a social relation of production. In other words the capital society in nothing but a class society. Here the class means two fold division that comprises on one hand a class with property and on other hand class without property who sell their labour. Marx called them capital or bourgeoisie and proletariat or wage labour respectively.

The property of the capital consists of various means of industrial production like land, factories, machines, mine, wealth whereas the wage labour only possess man power and dependent on capitalist. However the capitalist too is dependent on labour for industrial production. Thus there is an interdependent yet antagonist relation between both the classes. As a result a conflicting situation developed between them in which one supports the legitimacy of the possession of property while the other one raise the demand of equal distribution of property or larger share in the profit.

Marx talks about one more class who live in the capitalist society as a peasant, intellectuals, lawyers, doctors, and landlords. Their role in the society limited to their service only and therefore they don't come within the antagonist relationship of the two classes. Since they are minority in number that's why their counting during the class struggle hardly affects two opposition classes.

### **C. Class and political revolution:**

Political revolution is the other consequence of class. Marx simply says that, in course of class struggle people tends to change the old system through political power. Therefore, on one side the capital society is an immediate effect of class and social revolution is reaction of the capital society where as on the other side political revolution is the final result of the class. In this context the Marx idea of political revolution is not just implies change in leadership, government but a change that involve social stratum too. So the change in political sphere is not coming within itself but a social structure explode in political revolution. In deeper sense Marx's theory of social revolution is used for a political revolution that denotes to social revival through transformation of state power to a new political structure.

Thus, how the social revolution could bring political revolution? Answer to this question Marx argues that new form of government immerged with the emancipation of the proletariat class. If the proletariat at the time of struggle with the bourgeoisie, could able to accumulate the power by the force of miserable situation then it makes itself the ruling class. In such condition proletariat would alter the old social structure into classless society, and old condition of production. The idea of political revolution is well explained in Marx's communist manifesto.

In Marx's communist manifesto he suggested that the political revolution leaded by proletariat which would eliminate all sorts of personal properties and production and the ownership of communication, transportation will transfer in the hand of state power.

---

### **11.5 Critical Overview of Karl Marx's Class**

---

Most of the Marx's class concept is still applicable like the social change and class conflict, social structure and social change etc. But some of the aspects of Marx's class theory have to be rejected. Due to change in economic activities, organizations, labour force the class theory of Marx's could not fit in the present socioeconomic condition. In social structure too other segments have increased owning to increase in the economic activities. The economy is not limited to industries only. As a matter of fact the service sector- government as well as private have got prominent place in today's economy. Consequently, the social structure has rapidly changed. Even the role of a state has changed a lot. The emergence of new middle class, its role in society and politics has augmented. The questions pertaining to new middle class cannot be answered satisfactorily through



various means of production created new class of workers who are coming in between labour and capitalist. They are one who are qualified, educated and skilled. The managers, administrators, service men comes under this category. Since they come in between the labour and capitalist therefore they are known by the name middle class. The emergence of new middle class is also indicates the development in social structure. It comprises a large sum of working groups like bureaucrats, clerk, managers, teachers, doctors, lawyers etc. This new class is also known as White-collar worker or Black coat workers.

- C. The New Marxist class theory rejects polarization of a society and supports social mobilization. According this principle, due to expansion in economic activities the working class gets various job opportunities, as a result a labour moves out from one class to other class. For example a labour working in a factory move out to a job of manager in a bank. Therefore the process of polarization does not take place. The social mobility has become an integral part of modern society. Thus social mobility also made change in the family occupation because no social class remain stable after one generation. In the modern society one can see great deal of mobility upward as well as downward and sometimes at the same level within same generation and inter generation.
- D. According to Neo Marxist class the antagonist position of worker class and capitalist class work on the structural way means the position of both the class make decisive role in production and that position is determined by interest, education, skill, property and so on.
- E. The Neo Marxist class also incorporate non-class relation in the functioning and transformation the class society. Non-class relation means race, gender, community etc.

---

### **11.7 Critiques of Neo Marxist Class**

---

Looking at the concept of Neo Marxist class gives sense of satisfaction because those who are convinced with the traditional Marxist class theory would obviously tend to answer the questions of modern society through the eyes of Marxist dogmas. But it seems like in order to answer the unsolved questions of modern society, the Neo Marxist class theory has been formulated without systematic research. Thus the Neo Marxist theory has been criticized for manipulating the original Marxist theory.

The Neo Marxist class theory has further rejected on the argument of class conflict. Neo Marxist class suggests that the class conflict is the outcome

of social structure which is arranged in a dialectical line. But to some scholars it is a result of social function.

However the Neo Marxist class is very effective to explain the social stratification of modern society. Without arguing the two divisions of class the Neo Marxism show more leniency towards flexibility in social class division that's why easily accommodates middle class within the frame of two existing class.

### **Check your Progress**

**Q.** Discuss the Neo Marxist class theory.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## **11.8 Summary**

---

The class is the central theme of Karl Marx's socioeconomic studies. Through the concept of class he tries to answer the imbedded issues of capitalist society. However, the class theory of Marx has primarily explained social structure, social consciousness, social revolution and class struggle. He argues that class component of a society affect and sometimes decide the fate of government society and economy.

The development of Marx's class is visible in the Neo Marxist class theory. That basically talks about new middle class, social mobilization and superiority of education over capital production.

## **11.9 Questions:**

---

Q.1. What is Marxist class? How does class consciousness would bring social revolution?

Q.2. Describe the Neo Marxist class with reference to new middle class and social mobility.

Q.3. Explain the role of education in the Neo Marxist class.

Q.4. What are the drawbacks of Marx's class theory?

---

## 11.10 References

---

1. Anupam Sen, The State Industrialization and Class Formations in India: A New Marxist Perspective on Colonialism, Underdevelopment and Development, Routledge Library Edition British in India, 2017
2. Raju J. Das, Marxist Class Theory for a Skeptical World, Haymarket Books, 2018
3. Erick Olin Wright, Debate on the Classes, Verso, London 1990
4. Erick Olin Wright (edited), Approaches to Class Analysis, Cambridge University Press, 2009
5. Andrew Arato, From Neo Marxism to Democratic Theory, Routledge, London 2016

\*\*\*\*\*

## NATURE OF LABOUR MOVEMENT IN INDIA

### Unit Structure

12.0 Objectives

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Definition and Meaning of Labour Movement

12.3 Growth of Capitalism in India

12.3.1 Growth of Labour Movement in India

12.3.2 Labour Movement before 1926

12.3.3 Emergence of Trade unions in India

12.4 Growth of Labour Movement in India

12.4.1 Trade Union Act, 1926:

12.4.2 Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Indian Labor Movement

12.5 Labour Movement in Pre Independent India

12.5.1 Labour Movement in Mumbai

12.6 Summary

12.7 Questions

12.8 Glossary

12.9 Reference

---

### 12.0 Objectives

---

After going through this unit the students will be able to understand...

1. To understand the meaning of the Labour Movement
2. To know the nature of the Labour Movement in India
3. To Analyse the various phases of Labour Movement in Pre and Post-Independent India.

---

### 12.1 Introduction

---

The Labour movement was begun in Europe during the period of the Industrial Revolution particularly in Great Britain in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The Industrial revolution was taken place in Britain later on slowly and gradually it was spread to other European countries. The origins of the large-scale, organized Labour movement in the United

Kingdom can be traced back to 1808 with the failure of the 'Minimum Wage Bill' in the British parliament. Before that there was no political group or organization was existed in Britain. Therefore, the origin home of the Labour movement was in Great Britain. In the 19th and 20th centuries, industrialization was spread rapidly in other countries in Europe, therefore the labour class was increased.

The impact of the industrial revolution was started in colonies of the Britishers and other imperialistic countries in Asia and Africa. The various industries were established in the colonies like India. Thus, the unequal class system was created and it gave birth to the labour class and disturbed the social life of the workers. The conflict between owners and labourers was started because of the exploitation policy of the owners or capitalist class. Hence, the labour organization came into force to protect the rights of the workers. The small group of workers was converted into a mass movement. The goal of the labour movement was to protect and strengthen the interests of labour within capitalism and to replace the capitalist with socialism entirely. Marxism made a powerful impact on the emergence of labour movements in the European continent. The formation of socialist Political Parties in 1869 was the outcome of his thoughts.

Though the origin of the labour movements was traced in India back to the 1860s, the first labour agitation in the history of India has occurred in Bombay (now Mumbai), 1975. It was organized under the leadership of S.S. Bangalee. The agitation was concentrated on the plight of workers, especially women and children. British govt. had taken serious concern of the agitation and appointed factory commission in 1875, it was the first factory Commission was appointed by the Britishers, subsequently, the first factories act was passed in 1881 in India. In 1890, Shri. M.N. Lokhande the pioneer of the labour movement was established the first labour union in India in the name of Bombay Mill Hands Association. It was the first organized labour union established by Narayan Meghaji Lokhande, his intention was very clear to create awareness among the labourers of mill workers in Mumbai to protect their rights.

---

## **12.2 Definition and Meaning of Labour Movement**

---

The Cambridge dictionary has well defined the meaning of labour movement that is "An organized group of working people who join together to protect their rights and improve their pay and working conditions. "As per this definition, the main intention of the labour movement was to protect the basic rights of the workers or employees of any organization. Another dictionary Merriam- Webster defined the labour movement as follows: "An organized effort on the part of workers to improve their economic and social status by united action through the

medium of labour unions." this dictionary meaning it has focused on the united efforts and collective action through the labour unions to improve the socio-economic status of the labourers. If we study the labour movement through the sociological point of view then it is a broad concept, a multidimensional social formation that is generated from the social structures of work and industry in the society.

The main object of the labour unions is to provide better facilities and power to negotiate to create favourable working conditions and socio-economic benefits and welfare schemes to the labourers and their families through collective bargaining which is the soul of the labour unions.

---

## **12.3 Growth of Capitalism in India**

---

Capitalism was introduced in India in the 19th century under colonial rule. It was introduced in plantations and railways because it was the initial enterprise. Tea and coffee companies were established in the name of Asam Tea Co. in 1839 and Coffee plantations were started in South India in 1840. The expansion of railways was started after the revolt of 1857 which was provided with a favourable atmosphere for the development of capitalistic enterprises in India. The major port cities in India like Mumbai, Kolkata, and Madras became the modern centres of capitalist enterprises in India. The colonial rule focused on transportation and raw materials which can be helpful for the major production and transportation and also utilized the same services for selling the finished product in the open market. Therefore, the port cities became the centres of the capitalist economy. Thus, the labour class increases and got victims of atrocities from the owners of the factories. Hence the conflict was started and it was concerted to the establishment of the labour unions to protect their rights and to achieve their basic rights and facilities for livelihood.

### **12.3.1 Growth of Labour Movement in India:**

The growth of Trade unions in India was the result of industrialization and rapid increase of labourers in the industry and the approach of the owners of the industry towards the labourers was oppressive, not progressive. Therefore, the owners and working-class were created, slowly and gradually the gap between both the classes was rapidly increased which was converted into class struggle. Karl Mark a German philosopher well defined the structure of class struggle in the world.

According to Karl Marx, there were two important classes of people in the society, namely, the bourgeoisie and the Labor class. The bourgeoisie class always controls the capital and means of production and controls the labour class for their benefits, and the labour class is always oppressed and exploited by the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the gap between both the classes increased in the society and started struggle among both the classes which

is known as class struggle. Such a kind of class struggle was traced in the whole world. In India, the struggle between these two classes is in different forms which are known as the caste hierarchy system where the lower caste people are always victims of exploitation from the upper caste people in the Indian society to control this kind of exploitation and to provide them equal opportunity and equal rights. The labour organizations were necessary to protect the rights of labourers, therefore, various labour unions and organization was established in India at the end of the 19th century. The growth of the trade unions movement in India was initiated by M.N. Lokhande in Bombay (now Mumbai), presently, there are more than 16000 trade unions with a collective membership of around 1 corer (10 million) labourers. These memberships of labourers are available in various industries and public and private sectors even small-scale industries too in India. The rapid growth of labour unions in India began with multiple problems of labourers like the uncertainty of work, low wages, 12-51 working hours, unhygienic conditions of work, poor living conditions, no insurance against accident or and death incidence, no pension, and no provision to family members for their welfare after the loose of earning member in their family.

Day by day the problems of labourers were increased because of their disunited, therefore; mill owners exploited them in different forms. The colonial govt. was trying to minimize the issues of labour but it was not a satisfactory attempt for the labourers.

During the period of colonial govt. some prominent leaders like Mahatma Phule with his associate M.N. Lokhande started creating awareness among the workers through their newspaper 'Dinbandhu' which was started in 1880. M.N. Lokhande was the man who created awareness among the workers to fight against injustice. As a result of the unity and awareness among the workers, there were around 26 important strikes was organized by then the Bombay labour Unions between 1882 to 1901. The work of M.N. Lokhande regarding the awareness among the labourers and organizing them against their exploitation was appreciated by the Dyanodaya newspaper. Hence, the power of Narayan Meghaji Lokhande was increased.

Shri M.N. Lokhande was continuously perusing the labour issues to the mill owners and govt. As a result, the govt. has passed the factory Act in 1892 to protect the rights of labourers. But some of the mill owners in Bombay (now Mumbai) were not ready to provide the basic right to the workers; unfortunately, they used the strike as a weapon to achieve their basic rights which were purposely neglected by the mill owners or capitalists. In 1889, Shri. Lokhande had explained to the Tata Mill owner regarding the labourers' issues and how they are deprived of their basic rights and how labour security will also be helpful to mill owners to

increase their productions. Shri Lokhande further called a meeting of around 10,000 labourers at the Mahalaxmi racecourse on 24th April 1890. In that meeting, a resolution was passed unitedly about a weekly holiday on 'Sunday' at the workplace. The initiative about labour issues was taken by Shri Lokhande was very relevant to the labourers, hence the leadership of Shri Narayan Meghaji Lokhande emerged and he became mass leader of labourers. As a result, then the governor of Mumbai was appointed Factory Labor Commission in which Shri Sorabji Shaharpurji Bengali and Shri Narayan Meghaji Lokhande were given representation from Mumbai.

The commission was submitted their report and it was accepted by the govt. in which some positive recommendations are suggested about women and child labour. They had given some relaxation at the workplace. Working hour for women at the workplace was fixed, 11 hours allotted to the women and children from 9 to 14 age groups should not deprive of education. It was a great contribution of Shri Narayan Meghaji Lokhande for labourers. He has created a base for the labour movement in India. Therefore, Narayan Meghaji Lokhande is known as a pioneer of the labour movement in India. Hence the growth and development of the labour movement started in India.

**Check Your progress:**

Which Indian leaders were given representation in Factory Labor Commission?

---

---

---

---

**12.3.2 Labour Movement before 1926:**

At the end of the 19th century, the status of the labour movement was very unstructured but after the passing of the factory act in 1892 the labour movement had taken grip and it was started functioning properly and got organized structured. Shri Narayan Meghaji Lokhande had taken tremendous efforts to create awareness amongst the labourers of mill workers in Mumbai. Hence the various organizations and small unions came forward in different industries and raised their voice for their basic rights. Thus, the labour movement in Mumbai and Calcutta had organized several strikes against their exploitations at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The Swadeshi movement had created a favourable atmosphere in the country after the partition of Bengal in 1905 which helps to create more awareness among the working class in various industries. The dominating leaders of the Indian National Congress took active participation in the Swadeshi Movement, after the imprisonment of

Lokmanya Tilak, the labourers were declared 6 days' strike against the 6 years' imprisonment of B. G. Tilak in 1908. Hence, the power of labourers had been increasing day by day and it started marching to become the mass movement.

### **12.3.3 Emergence of Trade unions in India**

After World War First the labour movements came forward to protest against the burning issues of the workers like low wages, long working hours, inhuman conditions at the workplace, no welfare schemes to the employees, no security after the serious casualty of the labourers. But the Association of the various Industries and Mill Owners was not ready to provide such facilities easily. Therefore, the British govt. had appointed Smith Commission in 1911. The Commission had submitted their report and suggested valid recommendations in favour of labourers. Hence, some issues of the workers were resolved.

The roadmap of the labour movement was initiated by NM Lokhande but Shri Narayan Malhar Joshi has given proper shape to the trade union movement. He had been associated with Servants of India society in 1909 which was established by Gopal Krishna Gokhale and in 1911, he started the Social Service League. As a labour leader, he started taking interest in the labour issues and started labour welfare centres, night schools, medical centres, and industrial classes in labour areas in Bombay (now Mumbai). He was instrument leader for the formation of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1921 under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai and he worked as its Secretary till 1929. Because of his efforts, the Trade Union Act was passed by the British govt.in 1926. Hence, the labour organizations got recognition under the trade unions act and were secured by the act.

The emergence of trade unions in India was after the first world war before that the workers were united and were associated with different labour organizations in various parts of the country.

Many factors led to the emergence of trade unions in the post-war period, mainly was the rising prices of essential commodities in the real wages of the workers, increase in the demand for the industrial products resulting in the expansion of Indian Industries, Gandhi's call for non-Cooperation Movement, Russian Revolution of 1917, etc. was the major factors for the emergence of trade unions in India.

#### **Check your Progress:**

Trace the emergence of Trade Unions in India.

---

---

---

---

---

---

## **12.4. Labour Movement in Pre- Independence India:**

---

At this point let us discuss the growth and development of Trade Unions in India and their contributions to the welfare of workers. World War First was ended in 1918, after that the formation of trade unions started in India. The first trade union was formed at Madras in 1918 in the name of 'The Madras labour Union'. Dr. Annie Besant and nationalist leader Shri B.P. Wadia was associated with this movement and they were instrumental in its formation. This organization was based on workers of Carnatic and Buckingham Mills in Madras, though it was formed for the mill workers. field workers have also joined this union at the initial stage. It was the first organized union that was functioning with the help of members' membership contributions. The union had decided on 1 Anna as their monthly subscription. During the same period, the Ahmedabad Mill workers started their agitation for the bonus to compensate for the rise in prices. Anusayaben Sarabhai, the first women trade union leader was leading this agitation, she was getting in touch with Mahatma Gandhi regarding the workers' issue. She requested Mahatma Gandhi to visit Ahmedabad to support the valid demands of Mill workers. Accordingly, Mahatma Gandhi visited Ahmedabad and stood by the sides of Mill workers and he also demanded that the workers should get a 35 per cent bonus. But the Mill owners refused the demand of labourers. Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi called workers to strike peacefully and insisted that the principle of arbitration should be accepted. Mahatma Gandhi himself went on fast for the workers' issue. Finally, the Mill owners accepted arbitration and as a compromise, the arbitrator recommended 27.5 per cent increases in their wages. The struggle of Anusayaben Sarabhai was unique in the history of the workers' union. Anusayaben Sarabhai was a role model in front of many Indians to fight for their rights and an equal world for all people.

In this way, the trade unions were becoming very strong and this movement picked up momentum. By 1920, many more trade unions were formed at various places to protect workers' rights. During the period around 125 unions were formed in India with consisting of 250,000 members. The nature of all trade unions was quite different, some unions were very small and working temporarily and were not much competent to resolve the worker's issues, even there was no consistency in their way of functioning most of the unions were not able to collect the regular membership. Therefore, during that time it was needed for the hour that a

national organization must be formed to protect the workers' rights and to fight legally for their rights, welfares, and safety. Accordingly, in 1920 'The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was formed with the efforts of prominent Indian leaders like B.G. Tilak, N.M. Joshi, B.P. Wadia, Dewan Chamanlall, Lala Lajpat Rai, Joseph Baptista, Motilal Nehru, Vitthalbhai Patel and many others leaders. Lala Lajpat Rai became the first president of AITUC and Joseph Baptista became the first Vice President of AITUC and N.M Joshi was the first Secretary of the AITUC. It was the first organized Trade Union formed at the national level in association with the Indian National Congress, within a very short time AITUC received huge support from the workers and other unions. There were 107 unions were affiliated with AITUC. This union was continuing up to its split in 1929.

The AITUC was very strong at the advanced industrial centres like Bombay (now Mumbai), Calcutta (now Kolkata), Madras (now Chennai), Kanpur, Ahmedabad, etc. there were many numerous strikes were initiated by the workers all over India. The dominating industries were the union was very strong which was cotton, Jute textile, railways, Shipping, Iron and steel, Post and Telegraphs.

In terms of Indian politics, the most important phenomenon in the field of the labour movement in India was the emergence of the Communist party. After the Russian revolution in 1917, the impact of ideology of Karl Marks and Lenin has influenced the Indian labour movement and its leaders.

Later on, it was reflected in the formation of the 'Communist Party of India' (CPI) in 1920. M.N. Roy was the moving force behind the establishment of CPI. After the formation of CPI, the communist leaders became active in the labour movements of India.

The communist leader concentrated on labourers working in the Cotton and Jute mills of Mumbai and Kolkata. The domination of leftist leaders in the labour movement has existed in pre and post-independent periods. But slowly and gradually their influence was reduced after the globalization and privatization in 1991 onwards. In the year 1928-29, the communist leaders were able to gain the marginal majority in the AITUC, it was resulted in the 10th session of AITUC at Nagpur, in that they were able to pass the resolution calling for the boycott of the Royal Commission in this session headed by Jawaharlal Nehru. Therefore, the AITUC split in 1929 due to demanding dissociation from ILO and association with the League against imperialism. The senior Moderate and Reformist leader N.M.Joshi, Dewan ChamanLall, V.V. Giri, and B. Shiva Rao were unable to digest these moves and left the AITUC along with 30 unions with more than 95 thousand members and formed the new organization called 'Indian

Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). It was the vertical split in a national organization of workers. In the year 1931, another split occurred in the labour organization due to a divergence of opinion between the nationalist and communist leaders. The communist leaders severely criticized Mahatma Gandhi and Round Table Conference where congress has participated. This kind of difference came out several times and it has resulted in another split in the union. The Communist group of leaders formed a new trade union in the name of 'Red Trade Union Congress (RTUC). In the year 1931, there were three national federations of trade unions was existed: The AITUC, The IFTU, and The RTUC.

#### **12.4.1 Trade Union Act, 1926:**

The outcome of the struggle of the labour organizations and the worker's union in the country was to pass the Trade Union Act 1926 by the British govt. This act had provided a constitutional safeguard to the trade unions and it was made for the welfare and protection of labour rights. The act has provisions for the official registration of trade unions, regulation, benefits, and protection to the trade unions to fight for their rights against capitalists and govt. After the passing of the Trade Union Act 1926, the number of trade unions registered under the act and the membership of the labourers also increased. This act is still existed to protect the registered worker's union under this act. After the Indian Independence, this act was amended in 2019.

#### **12.4.2 Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Indian Labor Movement:**

Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar was one of the prominent, multidimensional leaders in the history of Modern India. His significant role and outstanding contribution have resulted in the socio-economic and political development of the country. As a labour leader, he has resolved many labour issues and created consciousness among the labourers. with His scientific approach, labour consciousness, and great vision to strengthen the Indian labour movement, he adopted steady, effective, and democratic constitutional methods for the upliftment of the marginalized section of the Indian society. Dr Ambedkar contributed immensely to the upliftment of the labour class in various capacities. In the round table conference, he forcefully pleaded for living wages, decent working conditions, and freedom of Indian labourers and peasants from the clutches of cruel landlords and capitalists. Dr Ambedkar was a practical leader who always believe in the democratic way of functioning to resolve the labour and peasant's issues, therefore, he formed 'Independent Labour Party' in 1936 to concentrate and resolve the issues of the workers, farmers, poor tenants, agriculturist, etc. Independent Labour Party under the leadership of Dr Ambedkar was getting huge responses from the Indian masses as a result in the poll of 1937, his party got huge success by winning 15 out of 17

seats in the Bombay Legislative Assembly. His constant fight against the Khoti system in the Konkan region was remarkable. He forced govt. to abolish the Khoti system in 1937 and gave justice to the poor farmers in the Konkan region. He has also opposed the Introduction of Industrial disputes Bill, in 1937 because it removed the workers' right to strike. Dr Ambedkar was constantly focusing on the downtrodden issues from 1919, and in the election of 1937, he proved his mass leadership. Hence, his outstanding works were recognized by the govt. and in the year 1942, his profound knowledge of labour and farmer's issues was universally acknowledged and appointed as a labour member in the Viceroy's Executive Council from 1942 to 1946. It was a very crucial period, world War Second was going on and the whole world was directly or indirectly involved in the world War, at that time Dr Ambedkar was guiding Indian labourers. As a Minister of Labour in Viceroy's Executive Council, he introduced measures for labour welfares by laying the foundation for the basic structure for the government's labour policy. He introduced The Indian Trade union (amendment) Bill, in November 1943, which compelled the employers to acknowledge trade unions. Another notable contribution of Dr Ambedkar as labour Minister, he has taken the initiative to maintain the 'Industrial Peace', he emphasized the necessity of the 'Tripartite' labour conference in each province consisting of the representatives of the government, representatives of the employers, and representatives of the employees to discuss and resolved the labour issues and to develop the 'powerful machinery for ensuring Industrial Peace'. It was a great initiative to bring all three representatives together to resolve the issues.

He also focused on women's issues and granted them maternity benefits, equal wages, working hours, Life Insurance, and many more welfare schemes. Dr Ambedkar was one of the main instruments who formulated labour policy and focused on fundamental development in the field of irrigation and power sector, later on, it helps for the national development. Finally, he expresses his thoughts on labour, "Labour is not content with securing merely fair conditions of work, what labour wants is fair conditions of life".

**Check your Progress:**

Asses the Labour Movements in Pre-Independence India.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## **12.5 Labour Movement in the Post-Independence Period:**

---

The labour movement was flourished before the Indian Independence. Many great leaders have given proper shape to the movement like Narayan Meghaji Lokhande, N.M Joshi, M.N. Roy, B.G. Tilak, B.P. Wadia, Lala Lajpat Rai, Dr. Ambedkar, V.V. Giri etc. After World War First the movement became popular and got constitutional safeguard under the Trade Union Act 1926. In the year 1929 due to some ideological issues, the vertical split occurred in the union. The most important feature of a labour union was unity but it was broken after the Split in the labour class unity, later on, it became the most striking trend in the trade union movement.

The all India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was the first national federation of trade unions but this federation was undergoing two major splits over the ideological issues on Royal Commission between nationalist and communist ideologies which are already discussed in point number 12.4.3 in the same unit. However, in the year 1939, IFTU decided to merge with the parent body AITUC. During the colonial period, the communist was controlled AITUC's hold over the labour class. But three months before the Indian Independence the congress decided to communist hold on AITUC, therefore, they formed another trade union in the name of 'Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) in May 1947. The founder of the INTUC was Mr Khandubhai Desai.

After the Indian Independence, the various political parties came forward and formed their trade unions to attract the labour masses at a regional level.

The Praja Socialist Party (PSP) had established its trade union front which would attract the non-communist and non- congress trade unions. Thus, 'The Hindu Mazdur Panchayat' (HMP) was formed on 29th Dec.1948. Shri R. S. Ruikar was elected as the first president and Mr Ashok Mehta was elected as General Secretary of the union. These leaders were inspired by M.N. Roy, a notable labour leader in West Bengal. Along with Hindu Mazdur Panchayat (HMP), many other organizations merged in a new federation called 'Hindu Mazdur Sabha'(HMS) in 1949. Later on in the year 1952, the RSP had decided to form their federation in the name of The United Trade Union Congress. In the year 1955, the Bhartiya Jan Sangha a political party formed their trade union centre in the name of

'Bhartiya Mazdur Sangh' on 23rd July 1955. Shri Dattopant Thengadi was the founder of BMS. In the year 1965, the Praja Socialist Party was broken and formed a new party in the name of 'Samyukta Socialist Party' 1964 under the leadership of Shri George Fernandes. Later on, he became one of the important political figures as well as labour leader, under his leadership railway strike was successfully organized. However, till the early 1970s, the most most important trade centres were INTUC, AITUC, and HMS. The year 1962 was again a turning point in Indian politics. The communist movement was split under the influence of Chines aggression and a new political party in the name of 'Communist party of India' (Marxist) was formed in 1964 under the leadership of Jyoti Basu, Elamkulam Manakkal Sankaran Namboodiripad popularly known as E.M.S., Harkishan Singh Surjeet, and others. Communists had a stronghold on West Bengal and Kerala, the AITUC, and CITU were leading federations of larger trade unions till the 1970s. The split in the federation of Trade unions was started in 1929 and it has existed till Contemporary India.

But the scenario of the labour unions was changed after the 1970s and many regional political parties came into existence while leading to the labour issues. Hence, the working class was divided into national and regional parties.

The regional political domination process was started in Tamil Nadu state where the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) formed a state government in 1967.

**Check your Progress:**

Review the Labour Movements in Post-Independence India.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**12.5.1 Labour Movement in Mumbai:**

The first labour union was established in Mumbai under the leadership of N.M. Lokhande, under his able leadership the labour movement established its foundation but later on, he was the source of inspiration to the others. Therefore, after the death of N.M. Lokhande, Mumbai has produced a strong leadership to the labour movement. N.M. Joshi, Shripad Amrut Dange, Mirajkar, Comrade Shamrao Parulekar, Comrade Randive to Dr Data Samant was the strong leader of the workers who devoted their

lives to the movement. Apart from these some socialist notable leaders also proved their leadership in the field of the labour movement. Lokshahir Annabhau Sathe, Shahir Amar Shaikh, S.M. Joshi, Prabodhankar Thackeray, Acharya Atre, Ahilya Rangnekar, etc. was the instrument leaders who not only worked for the workers but they also started 'Sanyukt Maharashtra Movement' for an independent state for Marathi speaking people including Mumbai. After the formation of Maharashtra in the 1960s, the new leadership came forward to protect the rights of Marathi Manus in Mumbai in the name of Shri Balasaheb Thackeray.

In Maharashtra, Shri Balasaheb Thackeray formed a political party in the name of 'Shiv Sena' at Mumbai on 19th June 1967 to protect the rights of Maharashtrians. Under the strong leadership of Shri Balasaheb Thackeray, Shiv Sena became more popular. Most of the Maharashtrian workers and common masses from Mumbai and Maharashtra were attracted towards Shiv Sena. Hence, Mumbai was the stronghold of Shiv Sena. Most of the mill workers and common Marathi masses were the backbone of this political party. For the protection of the workers and their welfare, Shri Balasaheb Thackeray formed a labour union in the name of 'Bhartiya Kamgar Sena'. Shri Dattaji Salvi, a commander leader of the workers was the founder president of 'Bhartiya Kamgar Sena'. Later on, Ramakant More and Suryakant Mahadik became president of this organization and both of them gave strong leadership to the organization which also helps to their parent political party.

During the colonial period, Mumbai and Calcutta were the important centres of labour unions but after the Independence, the strong leadership for the trade unions came forward from both the major cities. In the post-independence period by the mid-1970s, there was a common feeling among the different social groups that in the country, at the national and regional level the various political parties were started to control the labour unions. Each of the political parties had established their labour union through which they organized workers and common masses to establish their political power in the respective states. Apart from these some important non-political trade unions had given strong leadership in the industrial and service sector. Datta Samant, A.K. Roy, Shankar Guha Niyogy, Ela Bhatt, Working Women's Forum, Chennai, Self Employed Women's Association, Gujarat, Society for Technology and Development, Himachal Pradesh, Ama Sanghatna, Orissa, Kerala Dinesh Beedi, Kerala, Kach Patra Kashtkari Panchayat, Maharashtra.

These are the independent unions that are taking labour issues and trying to protect the rights of workers in the various industries in the country.

Some notable strikes took place in the country in the 1980s especially in textile industries in Mumbai under the leadership of Dr Data Samant of 'Maharashtra Girni Kamgar Union' (MGKU) and in 1974 the railway workers affiliated to the main trade unions, except the INTUC organized nation-wide strike. The railway operations came to a halt during the strike. The govt. had tried to break the strike, therefore; workers could not continue the strike. Later on, in 1975-77 the Congress-led government imposed an emergency in the country and introduced measures that restrained the workers to strike.

**Check Your Progress:**

Write a note on Labour Movements in Mumbai.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**12.6 Summary:**

While studying the roadmap of the labour movement in India pre and post-independent India, the movement has given protection to the workers and tried to resolve the major issues of the workers in the various industries. But after the introduction of the LPG model in India in 1991 for the economic reforms. The capitalist class started neo-liberal reform agenda which included outlawing strikes and weakening the union's power. Therefore, Liberalization, privatization, and Globalization policy were observed as most detrimental to the labour movement in India.

**12.7. Questions:**

1. Why did the emergence occurs to establish labour union in India?
2. Explain, Why N.M. Lokhande is known as the father of the labour movement in India?
3. Analyses the contributions of AITUC in the Indian Labor Movement?
4. State the contribution of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar in the Labor Movement in India?
5. Describe the changing structure of the Labor Movement in post-independence India?

---

## 12.8 Glossary

---

Industrial Revolution, Labor Movement, Imperialistic, Capitalism, Labor Consciousness, Trade Union, Strike, Constitutional Safeguard, Textile Industries, Source of Inspiration, liberalization, privatization, Globalization, Detrimental.

---

## 12.9. Reference

---

Moon, Vasant (Edited), (1991), Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writing and Speeches, Volume-10, First Edition, Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai.

Papola, T.S. (1994), Employment, growth and social protection of labour in India in P. Sinha, C.S. Venkat Ratnam and G. Butterweed (Eds.), labour and Unions in a period of Transition, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Delhi.

Ramaswamy, E.A., (1987), Worker Consciousness and Trade Union Response, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

Revri, C. (1958), The Trade Union Movement in India, Orient Longman, Hyderabad

Morris M.D., (1965), The Emergence of Indian labour in India: A Study of Bombay Cotton Mills, 1854-1947, Oxford, University Press, Bombay.

Kadam, Manohar, Bharti Kamgar Chalvali Che Janak- Narayan Meghaji Lokhande, Akshar Prakashan, Bombay.

Bankar, A, (Edited SM), (2016), History of Modern Maharashtra, Published by Director, IDOL, University of Mumbai.

\*\*\*\*\*

## UNDERSTANDING OF TRIBE AND NATURE OF INDIAN TRIBAL STRUGGLE IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

### Unit Structure

- 13.0 Objective
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Tribes of India
- 13.3 Nature of tribal struggle during pre-independent period
- 13.4 Causes of Tribal struggle in Pre-Independent Period
  - 13.4.1 Major Tribal Struggle of Pre-Independent Period
  - 13.4.2 Nature of Tribal Struggle During Post-Independent Period
  - 13.4.3 Causes of Tribal Struggle During Post-Independent Period
- 13.4 Major Tribal Struggle of Post Independent Period
- 13.5 Summary
- 13.6 Questions
- 13.7 References

---

### 13.0 OBJECTIVE

---

- To Overview of the Indian tribes
- To know the causes of the tribal struggle
- To understand the nature of tribal struggle
- To take a glance of some of the important tribal struggle of India

---

### 13.1 INTRODUCTION

---

India is the country of diverse cultural traits and tribal society is one of the most important segments of that vast diversity. In India the tribal population comprises of 8.5% of the total population of India which is too less to be noticeable yet their rich cultural heritage give them special place in Indian population. At the historical prospective they are considered to be the early settlers of India who lived in geographically isolated areas like high hills, dense forest, for getting minimal interference from the outer world. Like free bird the tribal communities maintained the status quo of isolation but it was broken during colonial period. The history of British India is replete with their vigorous revolts and resistance against the British rule. After the independence in a little different manner they unabatedly continued their struggle for land, water, forest and culture. The present paper focus on the tribal struggle of pre and post independent period. The thrust topic of the paper is to discuss on the characteristics and factors responsible for tribal struggle. The paper also give precise note on tribal India.

---

## 13.2 TRIBES OF INDIA

---

The population of India is a composition of many communities. Unlike any progressive country of the world where diversified population is due to globalization, in India it is mainly due to its historical interaction (invasion, trade, religion, migration, colonization) with the outer world. In this context the tribes of India trace their settlement in ancient period. However, their history is very doubtful but according to linguistic science the tribes have entered in India from two routes one is from North Eastern part whereas other from the North West part of India. Geographically, they are found in a wide territorial area. Their geographical settlement can be categorised into four geographical zones viz.

- (a) North-Eastern zone
- (b) Western zone
- (c) Central or Middle zone
- (d) Southern zone

Though, their population is very less yet they possess abundance in their culture which reflects in their language and race. Linguistically, they belong to language families of Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, or Tibeto-Chinese. According to Guha, the tribes of India belong to various racial groups like Negrito, Proto Australoid, Mongoloid, Paleo Mongoloid, Nordic or Indo-Aryans. A part from that, they engaged in a range of occupations from hunting, gathering, fishing, labourers, to animal husbandry and agriculture. Many educated tribes have shifted to government services, and business sectors as well.

The tribes also bestowed with rich culture from their ancestors. Their unparalleled culture can be seen in their food habit, habitat, cloth, ornaments, religion, myth, festivals, rituals, ceremonies, songs, dance, knowledge system etc. On one hand the tribal population pervasively attracted their fellow communities by their joy, heroism and spontaneity on the other hand their backward social and economic status is a concerned subject for the Government. Therefore, after independence a thorough study was conducted on the question of their integration in the main stream. Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Prime Minister of India was seriously concerned on tribal issues had an opinion of protecting them from exploiters simultaneously argued to safeguard what are beautiful, enchanting in their society and culture.

After independence the Constituent Assembly under the influence of Nehru's five principles (Panchsheel principle) made measures to safeguard tribal people. In order to better access to the tribal people they are enlisted and officially called as Scheduled Tribe. The Constitution order 1950 declared 212 tribes settled in 14 states as Scheduled Tribe. Article 342 of the Constitution of India define that who would be Scheduled Tribe. The tribal population of India has constitutionally given political, cultural, educational, economic and employment related safeguards. The Scheduled 5 and 6 are especially designed for the protection of tribal people. A part from that, many development programs and schemes are running by the state and central governments. Ironically, all these Government protective policies and planning not always satisfy and meet every demand of tribal

people. Consequently, agitation, dissatisfaction and struggle against government occurred for reasons like political autonomy, economic justice, cultural identity, and separate state.

---

### **13.3 NATURE OF TRIBAL STRUGGLE IN PER- INDEPENDENCE PERIOD**

---

The beginning of British rule in India had brought quite an unexpected change in every walk of life. The new administrative system had drastically disturbed the traditional governing system. The strong wave had not spared the tribal population who had been living untouched from the outer world, even the rulers before the colonial period always kept the tribal area out of their kingdom or showed least interest in their affairs. Thus, the British rule adversely affected India but that adversity was more intensified in tribal areas due to- First tribal never came in direct contact with outsiders before the British rule. Second, their way of life was noticeably different from the rest of the Indian population as a result the outer world seemed to them as an alien world. Third, sudden changes in their socio-cultural and economic setup due to forceful, strong interference had caused appalling dissatisfaction, annoyance, and frustration. Consequently, no sooner did the British penetrate tribal areas than a series of revolt broke out. The interesting thing about the tribal struggle is that it occurred in all tribal dominant areas of India.

Looking at the tribal struggles of India during the pre-independence period can be set within common characteristics of following points:

**1. Strong act of suppression:**

The tribal struggle of India has witnessed great amount of suppression by the British rule. The degree of overpowering tribal resistance could be range from arresting, fighting, punishing upto unethical means of operation, merciless killing, looting etc.

**2. Slow pace of struggle:**

This simply indicated that the tribal struggle never began at once. The tribes tried every possible way to convey their dissatisfaction to the concerned authorities through demonstration, light arguments, unwillingness, etc. They move to the direction of revolt as a last option when all their peaceful means of negotiation had failed. One can also see turning of the revolt in violent pace in which the tribe even murdered the oppressors and burnt their houses.

**3. Meeting, consultation and discussion:**

Behind every tribal struggle there is a consent of elder people. The struggle was always initiated after consultation with the community leader, elder people. Mass gathering, secret meeting, panchayat discussion, are some pre struggle acts that inevitably done before starting the struggle.

**4. Struggle under the influence of a leader or leaders:**

The tribal struggle of India featured by a leader or leaders. The tribal struggle was campaigned under some leadership. The leaders who were influential among the community. The leader who was not planned to be a leader like modern day but was situational, out of inner urge and motivated

by the self-conscience. Indeed many of the tribal struggle of India is known by the name of its leader. We can also see an idea of multiple leaders who took the responsibility to make the struggle successful.

**5. Struggle does not confined to the area of origin only:**

One of the most important features of tribal struggle of India is its coverage of wider area. This is a peculiar feature of any struggle so far reported during British rule since the nonconfinement of struggle area shows their unity and cooperation above all their sentiment of brotherhood. The tribal struggles are replete with the cases of spread of revolt like a fire in a jungle. Take the example of Devi Movement of Gujraat which engulfed all the tribal areas of south Gujraat.

**6. Strong community feeling:**

Unlike other struggle the tribal struggle shows immense community sentiments. They fought for retaining their ancestral rights over the land and forest. They also struggle for their ethical values. That's why they opposed the landlords, money lenders, feudal chiefs, because the tribes considered them as the enemy of their cultural practises. They thought that it is due to them all kinds of miseries are coming to their life.

---

### **13.4 CAUSES OF TRIBAL STRUGGLE DURING PRE-INDEPENDENT PERIOD**

---

There is no single reason responsible for the tribal struggle of pre independent period. The causes of tribal struggle can be divided into two categories one was external and second was internal. Before discussing on the reasons of tribal struggle one should keep in mind about the special cultural background of tribes who lived in isolation for many generations. They not only lived in such environment but they had willingly maintained the status qua of isolation. As a result, external interference caused suffocating environment to the tribes who used to living as a free birds. There is no doubt that the devotion for upholding their freedom was as important for the tribal struggle as the tortures caused by the British. The heroism in tribal blood can also be a factor of their revolt. These inherent impulses of tribe are treated as internal reasons of tribal struggle.

However, British economic policies can be look as a biggest factor for the happening of tribal struggle, because it came up long with many other causes. This should be keep in mind that annexation of tribal areas into the boundaries of British administration have initiated mainly due to two reasons first abundance of natural resources in tribal areas like forest and minerals resources. The tribal belt of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Jharkhand were targeted for their natural resources. Second-strategic location of tribal areas. The location of North East India was diplomatically vital for the extension of British colony to Far East. Similarly in Jharkhand the British intervention happened due to the need of watching over Maratha movement. Land alienation, migration and settlement of outsider, socio-economic and cultural exploitation, are other causes that lit the revolt.

### **13.4.1 MAJOR TRIBAL STRUGGLE OF PRE-INDEPENDENT PERIOD**

The tribal struggle is known as the pioneer of freedom struggle of India. In Indian history tribal struggle hold a special place since, it was the first resistance against the British rule. The struggle showed immense braveness, unity, self-respect and courage. Though the struggle never continued for longer period of time and quickly subdued by unfair means but conveyed strong message to the British ruler that the tribal were though living simple and ordinary life yet were tough by heart.

Here are a short description of the major tribal struggle which occurred in the twentieth century however, tribal revolts have been reported from the day one of the British rule. During the pre-independent period the purpose of tribal struggles were confined to secure the land and forest right, separate state and social and religious reforms.

#### **1. Bhumkal Movement:**

In Chhattisgarh state the tribes were dissatisfied with the attack by the outsiders on their cultural, custom and social setup from the beginning of the colonial rule. They continuously protested and time to time revolted against the landlords, moneylenders and British officers. Bhumkal movement is the continuation of tribal rebellions of Bastar. Altogether, tribes 46 administrative units (parganas) had jointly revolted in the year 1910. This rebellion was started for the protection of their land, culture and society.

#### **2. Birsa Munda Movement:**

The Birsa Munda Movement is exceptional among all the tribal movements in the history of India because this movement is known for the uprising against the British rule as well as for the social and religious reforms. Under the charismatic leader named Birsa Munda the tribal rebelled. He later on popularly known as Bhagwan Birsa due to his unprecedented contribution in the social and religious reforms in Munda community. In the year 1895 Munda community raised their voice against the land alienation and exploitation which continued till 1901. Due to excessive migration of the outsiders the traditional land system of Munda who were the first settlers of their areas and that's why owner of their land never practised tax payment had gradually lost their land ownership in the hands of Zamindars, marchents, money lenders etc.

#### **3. Tana Bhagat Movement:**

This movement was occurred in the Jharkhand state at the time when the country was burning in the fire of national movement. This movement was basically a religious reform initiated by the Oraon saint Jatra Bhagat and Turia Bhagat in the year 1921. This movement was motivated by revivalistic ideas of the religious leaders of the Oraon community who tried to reform some of the bad practices of their society like consumption of alcohol. The Tana Bhagat movement was greatly influenced by the Gandhian philosophy therefore in their preaching they give emphasis on practise of nonviolence, vegetarian food, khadi cloths, planting of Tulasi in their courtyard. Even today one can recognize them by their Ghandi cap

and white cotton attire. This movement is also related with the national movement of India.

#### 4. **Devi Movement:**

The movement was occurred in Gujraat in the year 1922. It was believed that Devi Salabai wants their people to refrain from consumption of liquor, flesh and to keep everything clean from house to body. This movement was basically plotted against the liquor trader, money lenders to whom the tribal felt the reasons for their exploitation. The movement got huge mass acceptance as a result in few months it spread over all the tribal areas of south Gujraat.

#### **Check your progress:**

1. Describe the salient features of the tribal Struggle of pre-independent India.

---

---

---

---

### **13.4.2 NATURE OF TRIBAL STRUGGLE DURING POST-INDEPENDENT PERIOD**

The ethnic diversity along with socio-economic inequalities was a great puzzle for the newly formed Government of India. In the case of tribals it was not only a question of socio-economic upliftment but the real problem laying on to get the answer of their integration with the mainstream people without minimum disturbance in their ethnic properties. Thus even if the development of the tribes was lay at the high concern in government policies yet, the question of their integration was divided into two principles one was a complete cut off from the rest of the Indian population like a heritage piece showcased in the museum. Another was to mix them with the Indian population. Both the integration policies were suffered. Finally a middle path was accepted to integrate them in which the tribes were allowed to mix with the population at the same time measures were taken to retain their cultural properties. Apart from integration policies, many development programmes like tribal sub plan, various developmental measures initiated in the Five years plan. The Part 10 of the constitution specifically confer special powers to the tribal administration. The part 10 of the constitution having provisions for the Scheduled 5 and Scheduled 6.

Thus, the problems and issues of tribes are taken up on priority basis. A well planned program was framed out to solve those issues yet instances of tribal struggle are seen in the post-colonial period. We can see slight differences in the nature, cause and conduct of a struggle between pre and post-colonial periods. Let's take a look at the nature of the tribal struggle of post-colonial period which mentioned as follows:

#### **1. Organized and well planned:**

The tribal struggles of the post-colonial period are systematically framed. The struggles are well structured and planned. They raised their problems under organizations and sometime under political parties. They are aware

of their rights and method of protests. These organization get the full support of their people. The great sense of unity and brotherhood can be seen at the time of protest and on the occasion of movements.

**2. Long duration of Struggle:**

Many of the tribal struggle went on for many years. Since the struggle motivated to convince the higher authority not through means of violence, fierce fight or rather through civil war. Hence the tribal struggle goes on for years with peaceful and democratic ways.

**3. Violence and democratic way of protest:**

For the pursuit of fulfilling the demand, the tribes adopted both the means i.e. violence and peace. The struggle is not unexceptional with regard to conflict and riots but that incidents spontaneously occurs by the extremist participants. Sometimes few groups choose violence to make the struggle more persuasive. However, in most of the cases, a tribal struggle follows legitimate means like peaceful protest, pressure group etc.

**4. Formation of strong organization/party/group:**

This is one of the most noticeable nature of a tribal struggle. In nineteenth century, the tribal struggle conducted under some organizations that turned out in a political party. These political parties are successfully came out as regional parties and also secured place in the central and state legislative assembly. In Jharkhand the tribal party which has been sprang out from the Jharkhand movement has formed the present government with alliance of Congress part. We can also see such examples in North East India.

**5. Politic over tribal struggle:**

There is one more segment of the tribal struggle appears at the background of political organization which can be termed as politics over tribal issues. The tribal struggle is supported by the public. It also mobilize money, power and leaders which create a mass pressure on higher authority to persuade over a demand. At that background the political party support the demands of the tribes in order to get their favour during election. Many times they openly support and join in the protest. This kind of activities within tribal struggle strengthen unity and confidence among the tribe but at the same time it also deviates them from their prime objective.

**13.4.3 CAUSES OF TRIBAL STRUGGLE DURING POST-INDEPENDENT PERIOD**

In spite of constitutional safeguards, central and state government's welfare policies for the tribes, the developmental growth is slow. After 1947, some positive changes are visible in the area of education, employment, rise of middle class, awareness etc. however dissatisfaction arose among the tribes due to various reasons like issues of rights, identity, exploitation, social justice etc.

Demand for tribal state was the major cause of tribal struggle after independence. During the process of unification of India many tribal areas have allotted without concerning the tribal ethnicity. As a result, tribal dominated areas have come under the sway of non-tribal dominated areas. The Chhotanagpur region of undivided Bihar is a good example of an unthoughtful division of a state in which cultural sentiments was not considered. Most of tribal struggles of North East

India have initiated for the demand of the separate state. See the cases of Naga movements, Mizoram movement and Bodo movement.

Influx of population in tribal areas caused many problems related to minimization of tribal ownership on their ancestral land, outnumbering tribal population, high rate of acculturation which threatened their language and culture. The tribes always concerned for their identity, rights and culture hence time to time they raised voice for these issues. In some cases frustration of slow development, injustice and exploitation also became reasons for tribal struggle.

The process of development in the form of industrialization, exploitation of forest and mineral resources, construction of dams and power projects are similarly responsible for creating agitation among the tribes.

---

### **13.5 MAJOR TRIBAL STRUGGLE OF POST INDEPENDENT PERIOD**

---

After independence the tribal struggle has based on some of the early issues like exploitation, land and forest right, failure of development plan and it also added some new issues like separate state, conservation of socio cultural elements etc. here are some precise description of the major tribal struggle of independent India:

#### **1. Separatist Movements of North East India:**

The North East India is a house of colourful ethnic groups. After independence the ethnic groups came under conflicting situation for separate state within or outside India. The demands for separate land fuelled by the sense of identity, antagonistic relation with the non-tribal people, political power and restoration of their right on resources. These sentiments gave rise to the separatist movement in north east India. The formation of Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh states are the result of Separatist movement.

In this series the Bodo movement is still waiting for the result. At the time of British rule the Bodo ancestral geographical area was taken within the Assamese boundary which the Bodo tribe never considered as their part. Therefore they have been struggling to get the separate Bodo state since the time of British Rule. The Bodo tribe are raising their demand of separate state unitedly under strong organizations. The first organization was formed in the year 1933 by the name All Assam Plains Tribal League. Later on other organizations were formed for creating pressure on the Government of India like Bodo Sahitya Sabha (1952), Plains Tribal Council of Assam and All Bodo Student's Union in the year 1967. All these organization show the determination of the Bodo tribe for their demand of separate state. The All Bodo Student's Union are very active group which formed a political party named Bodo people action committee in order to fight for their separate state on political platform. However the dream of separate state is not fulfilled and the movement still going on. The movement got a breakthrough by the creation of Bodo land Autonomous Council in 1993.

## 2. Jharkhand Movement:

Among the tribal struggle the Jharkhand movement is lengthiest of all. There are various factors that ignited the movement like the education in tribal areas, unequal profit sharing of the mineral resources, exploitation, acquisition of tribal land for mining, industries and development and above all the antagonist relation between the tribes of Jharkhand and non tribes of Bihar. Demand for separate Jharkhand was initiated in the year 1856. At that time the area of the separate state was larger than the present Jharkhand state because it combined the tribal areas of Orisaa, Chhattishgarh, West Bengal and Bihar. The Jharkhand movement gave political orientation among the tribal education society. It is not a matter of surprise that today many of the tribal political parties of Jharkhand movement time are actively participating in legislative assemblies. The Jharkhand movement came to an end in the year 2000 by conferring separate state after bifurcation of the old Bihar state.

## 3. Dongaria Khond Movement:

The tribes have symbiotic and sacred relation with the nature. The Dongaria Khond movement conducted for the purpose of saving their age old relation with the nature. The Khond tribe of Odisa are settled in the foot hill of the Niyamgiri Mountain range and one of its hill is regarded as the abode of their God name Niyam Raja. This mountain is also being targeted for bauxite deposit by the mining companies. On 7<sup>th</sup> June 2003 by the deal between Government of Odisa and Vedanta a proposal was passed according to which permission was granted to the Vedanta for mining of Bauxite.

The developmental move was not accepted by the Dongaria Khond because as per their believe system cutting of trees and any kind of destruction is a taboo and strictly prohibited. Consequently, the Dongariya Khond has strongly opposed this move and started a movement. For seven year the Khond tribe along with the international and national organization did the movement until the Vedanta reversed the proposal.

### Check your progress:

1. Why do the tribal struggles occurred even though the independent India worded a lot for their welfare?

---

---

---

## 13.6 SUMMARY:

The tribes are always be vocal for their rights, culture, customs and freedom. The three things are coming out from the incidents of tribal struggle: 1. in both the periods some of the purposes of struggle are very similar and some exceptional aims are motivated owing to changing in time so we don't see any radical change in their mentality. 2. Tribal struggle confirms the presence of unity, brotherhood and ethnicity in tribal communities. 3. Even with their limited means the tribal gave tough challenge. In the history of India the tribal struggle hold special place because of their heroic performance during the struggle.

---

### 13.7 Questions:

---

1. Why the tribal struggle is called the first freedom movement of India?
2. Why the part of North East India do got into separatist movements after independence?
3. What are the main causes of tribal struggle of India during colonial period?
4. Describe about the tribal struggle of India which has initiated due to religious and social reforms.

---

### 13.8 References

---

1. Ghanshyam Shah, Social Movements in India, Sage, New Delhi, 2004
2. A. R. Desai, (editor), Agrarian Struggles in India after Independence, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998
3. K. S. Sinha, (editor), Antiquity to Modernity in Tribal India: Tribal Movements in India, Vol. 4, Inter-India Publication, 1998
4. Ranajit Guha, Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983
5. A. R. Desai, (ed.), Peasant Struggles in India, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1979.

\*\*\*\*\*