

NOTES –POPULAR STRUGGLES AND MOVEMENTS

Class: X Subject: Political Science: Popular Struggles and Movements

I. MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY IN NEPAL-- Second movement for democracy.

1. Aim: The movement aimed at restoring democracy and regaining popular control over govt. from the king.

2. Major organizations involved

- a) SPA-Seven party alliance of big parties.
- b) Nepalese Communist Party—Maoist.
- c) All major labour unions and their federations
- d) Organizations like organization of indigenous people, teachers, lawyers & human right groups extended their support.

3. Background

1. Nepal a third wave country, had won democracy in 1990.
2. King was formally the head of the state but the real power was exercised by the elected representatives.
3. The king Birendra was the one who accepted this transition from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy, he and his family was massacred in 2001.
4. King Gayendra the new king of Nepal was not prepared to accept democratic rule,
5. In February 2005 he dismissed the Prime minister and dissolved the popularly elected Parliament.

4. Beginning and the course of the movement

1. All the political parties in the parliament formed an alliance--Seven party alliance—SPA
2. They called for four day strike in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal.
3. The protests turned into indefinite strike in which Maoist and various organizations joined hands.
4. People defied curfews and took to streets.
5. More than lakhs of people gathered almost every day to demand restoration of democracy,
6. On 21 April they served an ultimatum to the king and the leaders rejected the halfhearted concessions given by the king and struck to their demands.
7. Their main demands were—
 - a) Restoration of parliament,
 - b) Power to an all party govt.
 - c) New constituent assembly.

5. Results:

1. On 24th April , the king was forced to concede to all the demands
2. Girija Prasad Koirala was chosen as the new PM of the interim government
3. The SPA & Maoist came to an understanding as to how new Constituent Assembly was to be elected.
4. Parliament passed laws taking most of the powers of the king.
5. It was known as second movement of democracy in Nepal.

POPULAR STRUGGLES AND MOVEMENTS

Possible questions

- Discuss the outcomes of Nepal's movement.
- Explain the reasons for mass struggle in Nepal.
- Highlight the major participants of Nepal's movement.

II. BOLIVIA'S WATER WAR--A Struggle against Privatization of Water

1. The reasons for the struggle/the problem

- i. Bolivia is a small and poor country in Latin America.
- ii. The World Bank pressurized the govt. to give up its control of municipal water supply.
- iii. The govt. sold off these rights to an MNC.
- iv. The company immediately increased the prices four times.

2. The methods of struggle

- i. In January 2006 a new alliance of labour, human rights and community leaders organized a successful strike for four days in the city.
- ii. The government agreed to negotiate but nothing happened.
- iii. Police resorted to brutal repression when the agitation was started again in February.
- iv. Another strike was there in April and govt. imposed martial law.
- v. But the power people forced the officials of MNC to flee the city and made govt. to concede to all demands of the protesters.
- vi. The contract with MNC was cancelled and water supply was resorted to municipality at old rates.
- vii. This was known as Bolivia's water war.

3. Major organizations involved

There was no political party but it was led by,

- a) An organization-FEDECOR-it comprised of local professions, engineers & environmentalists.
- b) Federation of farmers.
- c) Confederation of factory workers union
- d) Middle class students and city' growing population of homeless children.

Possible questions

- Explain the methods in the Bolivia's water wars.

IIIa. DEMOCRACY AND POPULAR STRUGGLES OF NEPAL & BOLIVIA

1. Similarities

In both cases political conflict led to the popular struggles.
Both the cases involved mass mobilization.
Both instances involved critical role of political organizations.

2. Differences

Nepal Bolivia

- Struggle to establish democracy
- It was about foundations of democratic structure of politics
- The impact was at country level
- The struggle involved claim on anelected government
- It was about one specific policy
- The impact was only limited to a city.

Possible questions

- Trace the differences and similarities between the struggle in Nepal and Bolivia.

IIIb. MAJOR ELEMENTS FOUND IN DEMOCRACY

1. It evolves through popular struggles.

i. Democracy usually involves conflicts between those groups who have exercised power and those who aspire for share in the power.

ii. It happens when country is going through transition to democracy, expansion of democracy or deepening of democracy.

2. Democratic conflicts are resolved through mass mobilization.

i. Sometimes it is possible that the conflicts are resolved by the existing institutions like parliament or judiciary.

ii. Very the resolution has to come from outside, from people

3. The conflicts and mobilizations are based on new political organizations

i. These include—political parties, pressure groups and movement groups.

IV. Role played by the organization in any big struggle

1. Direct:

- Direct participation in competitive politics.
- Done by creating parties, contesting elections and forming governments.
- Citizens participate through voting.

2. Indirect:

- Forming an organization and undertaking activities to promote their interest or their viewpoints.
- These are called Interest or Pressure groups.

Possible questions

- 'Role played by big organizations cannot be underestimated in any mass struggle.'. Justify.

V. PRESSURE GROUPS:

1. General Information

1. Pressure groups are organizations that attempt to influence government policies.

2. They do not directly control or share political power.

3. These organizations are formed when people with common occupation, interest, aspirations and opinions come together in order to achieve common objectives.

4. These pressure groups are of two types.- sectional and public interest groups.

2. Sectional Interest Group:—

1. Seek to promote the interest of a particular section/group of society.

2. Trade unions, business associations & professional lawyers doctors, teachers etc.

3. They are sectional because they represent a particular section of a society.

4. Example - workers, employees, businessmen followers of religion caste etc.

5. The principal concern is the betterment & well being of its members & not of the society in general.

6. They work towards the selective good.

Possible Questions

- Mention three functions of pressure groups.

- How do sectional interest groups contribute in deepening of Democracy?

3. Public interest group:- they represent some common or general interest that needs to be defended.

i. They are also called promotional group as they promote collective and not selective good.

ii. The members of the organization may not benefit from the cause that the organization represents.

iii. They aim to help groups other than their own members.

iv. In some cases the members of a public interest group may undertake activity they benefits them as well as others too.-Eg.-:in Nepal Human rights was such organization, & in Bolivia FEDECOR.

v. In India also we have BAMCEF-Backward and Minorities Community Employees Federation) is such an organization that campaigns against caste discrimination, it addresses the problem of its members who suffer discrimination and its principle concern is with social justice and social

equality for the entire society.

Possible Questions

- Why are public interest groups also called as promotional groups?

VI. MOVEMENT GROUPS:

- i. People's movement word is used to describe many forms of collective action.
- ii. It attempts to influence politics rather than directly take part in the electoral competition.
- iii. These movements have loose organization.
- iv. Their decision making is more informal and flexible.
- v. They depend more on spontaneous mass participation than an interest group.
- vi. Eg.-Narmada Bachao Andolan, Movement of Right to Information, Anti-Liquor Movement, Environmental movement.

VII. DIFFERENT TYPES OF MOVEMENT GROUPS

a. Specific movements:-

- they are issue specific movements to achieve single objective
- They work in limited frame of time and thus have usually short active life. —
- Examples-The Nepalese movement for democracy arose with specific objective of reversing the king's order that led to suspension of democracy.
- In India, Narmada Bachao Andolan is also an example of this.

(This movement started with a specific issue of people displaced by the creation of sardar dam on the river Narmada. Its objective was to stop the dam from being constructed. Gradually it became a wider movement that questioned all such big dams.

b. General/Generic movement:-

- These to achieve a broad goal in the long run.
- These are long term & involve more than one issue.
- There is no single organization that controls or guides such movements.
- Example—The Environmental movement and Women's movements are such examples

c. Loose or umbrella type of groups-

- Sometimes the broad organizations have a loose umbrella.
- Various movement groups struggling on specific issues are constituent of this loose organization which coordinates the activities of a large number of people's in our country.
- Example-NAPM-National Alliance for People's Movement is an organization of organizations

Possible Questions

- Differentiate between issue specific and generic movements.

VIII. INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONS AND PRESSURE GROUPS ON POLITICS

1. Use of media to gain sympathy and public support.

They try to public support and sympathy for their goals and activity by carrying out information campaign through organizing meetings, file petitions etc.

2. Organize protests

They organize activities like strike or disrupting government programmes.

Workers organizations, employee's associations etc. resort to these methods to force govt. to take notice of their demand.

3. Business groups

- Business community forms lobby and sponsor expensive advertisements.
- Some persons from pressure groups may participate in official bodies or committees that offer advice to the government.

- These groups exert influence on the political parties without being a party.
- They have political ideology & political position on major issues.

IX. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES & PRESSURE GROUPS

DIRECT:

1. Extended arms of political parties

- The pressure groups are either formed or led by the leaders of the political parties or act as the extended arms of political parties.
- Example - trade unions and students organizations in India are either established by or affiliated to one or the other major political parties like ABVP and NSUI.
- Most of the leaders of such pressure groups are usually the activist or leaders of party.

2. Political parties grow out of movements.

- Example - Assam movement led by students against the foreigners came to an end and it led the formation of ASSOM GANA PARISHAD
- Roots of DMK AND AIDMK in Tamil Nadu can also be traced to the social reform movements during the 1930 and 1940's

INDIRECT:

- They often take positions that are opposed to each other, yet they are in negotiation with each other.
- They do raise issues which are taken up by the political parties.
- Most of the new leadership of political parties comes from interest or movement groups.

Possible Questions

- Interpret the relationship between political parties and pressure groups.

X. CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF PRESSURE GROUPS

NEGATIVE

- A democracy must look after the interest of all, not just one section.
- These groups wield power with responsibility.
- Political parties have to face the people in elections, but these groups are not accountable to the people.
- Pressure groups and movements may not get their funds from people.
- Some times with small public support but lots of money they can hijack public opinion in their favour.

Positive

- Deepening of democracy- by putting pressure on unhealthy activities in democracy.
- Countering undue influence of rich and powerful- Government at times come under the Pressure of rich & powerful group but these public interest groups and movements perform a useful role of reminding government of needs and concerns of ordinary citizens.
- Sectional interest groups play a valuable role.
- All groups function actively, no single group can achieve dominance over society.
- If one group brings pressure on the govt. the other will counter pressure.
- The government hears about what people want.
- This brings a rough balance of power and accommodation of conflicting interest.

Possible Questions

- Critically examine the role of pressure groups in a Democracy