

# Popular struggles and Movements

## Long Answer Questions

**1.** Write in brief about the movement for democracy in Nepal.

- Ans.
- (i) Nepal movement took place in April 2006.
  - (ii) The movement was aimed at restoring democracy.
  - (iii) Nepalese King Birendra had accepted the constitutional monarchy.
  - (iv) He was killed in a mysterious massacre of the royal family in 2001.
  - (v) King Gyanendra, the new king of Nepal, was not prepared to accept democratic rule.
  - (vi) In February 2005, the King dismissed the then Prime Minister and dissolved the popularly elected parliament.
  - (vii) The movement of April 2006 was aimed at regaining popular control over the government from the King.
  - (viii) All the major political parties in the parliament formed a Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and called for a four-day strike in Kathmandu.
  - (ix) This strike turned into an indefinite strike in which Maoist insurgents and various other organisations joined hands.
  - (x) The number of protesters reached between three to five lakhs.
  - (xi) They stuck to their demands for restoration of parliament.
  - (xii) On 24th April, the King was forced to concede to their demands. The SPA chose Girija Prasad Koirala as the new Prime Minister of the interim government.
- This struggle came to be known as Nepal's second movement for democracy.

**2.** What do you know about Bolivia's water war?

- Ans.
- (i) Bolivia is a poor country in Latin America.
  - (ii) The World Bank pressurised the government to give up its control of municipal water supply.
  - (iii) The government sold these rights for the city of Cochabamba to a multinational company (MNC).
  - (iv) The company immediately increased the price of water by four times.
  - (v) Many people received monthly water bills of ` 1,000 in a country where average income is around ` 5,000 a month. This led to a spontaneous popular protest.
  - (vi) In January 2000, a new alliance of labour, human rights and community leaders organised a successful four-day general strike in the city.
  - (vii) The government agreed to negotiate and the strike was called off. Yet nothing happened.
  - (viii) The police resorted to brutal repression, when the agitation started again in February.
  - (ix) Another strike followed in April and the government imposed the martial law.
  - (x) But the power of people forced the officials of the MNC to flee the city and made the government concede to all the demands of the protesters.
  - (xi) The contract with the MNC was cancelled and water supply was restored to the municipality at old rates.
- This came to be known as the Bolivia's water war.

**3.** How did organisations in a democracy mobilise movements? Give examples.

Ans. Nepal:

(i) In Nepal, the struggle involved many organisations other than political parties. All the major labour unions and their federations joined this movement.

(ii) Many other organisations like the organisation of the indigenous people, teachers, lawyers and human rights groups extended support to the movement.

Bolivia:

(i) The protest against water privatisation in Bolivia was not led by any political party but by an organisation called FEDECOR.

(ii) This organisation comprised of local professionals, including engineers and environmentalists.

(iii) They were supported by a federation of farmers, the confederation of factory workers' unions, middle class students from the university of Cochabamba and the city's growing population of homeless street children.

So, from both these examples, we can conclude that in a democracy, several different kinds of organisations work behind any big struggle.

**4.** What is the effect of various groups on the government?

- Ans.
- (i) When different groups function actively, no single group can achieve dominance over society.
  - (ii) If one group brings pressure on the government to make policies in its favour, another will bring counter-pressure not to make policies in the way the first group desires.
  - (iii) The government gets to hear about what different sections of the population want.
  - (iv) This leads to a rough balance of power and accommodation of conflicting interests.

**5.** Differentiate between issue-specific movements and generic movements.

Give an example of an issue-specific movement and explain.

Ans. **Issue-specific Movements:**

- (i) They achieve a single objective within a limited time frame.
- (ii) There is clear leadership.
- (iii) They have some organisation.
- (iv) Their active life is usually short.

**Generic Movements:**

- (i) These movements are of long-term duration.
- (ii) They have independent leadership.
- (iii) There is no single organisation that controls or guides such movements.
- (iv) Example: Environmental movement or the Women's movement.

**Issue-specific Movement:** The Narmada Bachao Andolan In India, Narmada Bachao Andolan is a good example of this kind of movement.

- (i) The movement started with the specific issue of the people displaced by the creation of Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada river.
- (ii) Its objective was to stop the dam from being constructed.
- (iii) Gradually, it became a wider movement that questioned all such big dams and the model of development that required such dams.
- (iv) Movements of this kind tend to have a clear leadership and some organisation. But their active life is usually short.

**6.** Which organisations made the struggle successful in Nepal?

- Ans. (i) The call for indefinite strike was given by the SPA or Seven Party Alliance in Nepal.  
(ii) This alliance included some big parties that had some members in the Parliament.  
(iii) The protest was also joined by the Nepalese Communist Party (Maoist) which did not believe in parliamentary democracy.  
(iv) This party was involved in an armed struggle against the Nepali government and had established its control over large parts of Nepal.  
(v) The struggle involved many organisations other than political parties.  
All the major labour unions and their federations joined this movement.  
(vi) Many other organisations of the indigenous people, teachers, lawyers and human rights groups extended support to the movement.

**7.** How are sectional interest groups functioning? Give example.

- Ans. (i) These interest groups seek to promote the interests of a particular section or group of society.  
(ii) They are sectional because they represent a section of society: workers, employees, business persons, industrialists, followers of a religion, caste group, etc.  
(iii) Their principal concern is the betterment and well being of their members, not society in general.  
(iv) Sometimes, these organisations are not about representing the interest of one group or section of society. They represent some common or general interest that needs to be defended.  
(v) The members of the organisation may not benefit from the cause that the organisation represents. The Bolivian organisation FEDECOR is an example.  
(vi) Trade unions, business associations and professionals like doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc., are some examples of sectional interest groups.

**8.** What are promotional or public interest groups?

- Ans. (i) Promotional or public interest groups promote collective rather than selective groups.  
(ii) They aim to help groups other than their own members. For example, a group fighting against bonded labour fights not for itself but for those who are suffering under such bondage.  
(iii) In some instances, the members of a public interest group may undertake activity that benefits them as well as others too.  
(iv) Like BAMCEF (Backward and Minority Community Employees' Federation) is an organisation largely made up of government employees that campaigns against caste discrimination.  
(v) It addresses the problems of its members who suffer discrimination but its principal concern is with social justice and social equality for the entire society.

**9.** What kind of movements are generic movements?

- Ans. (i) These are long-term movements and involve more than one issue.  
(ii) The environmental movement and the women's movement are examples of such movements.  
(iii) There is no single organisation that controls or guides such movements.  
(iv) Environmental movement is a label for a large number of organizations and issue-specific movements.  
(v) All of these have separate organisations, independent leadership and often different views on policy-related matters.  
(vi) Yet all of these share a broad objective and have a similar approach. That is why they are called generic movements.

**10.** "In a democracy several different kinds of organisations work behind any big struggle." How can you influence the government to listen to you?

Ans. (i) One way of influencing the decisions in a democracy is direct participation in competitive politics like Team Anna's representative Mr. Kejriwal is asking for the opinion of people to plan a political party itself and fight corruption by being in the govt.

(ii) There are many indirect ways in which people can get government to listen to their demands or their point of view.

(iii) They could do so by forming an organisation and undertaking activities to promote their interest or their viewpoint. These are called interest groups or pressure groups.

Sometimes, people decide to act together without forming an organisation.

**11.** In what ways do pressure groups and movements exert influence on politics?

Ans. (i) A democracy must look after the interest of all, not just one section.

(ii) Political parties have to face the people in elections, but these groups are not accountable to the people.

(iii) Pressure groups and movements sometimes are unable to get any funds or support from the common people.

(iv) Sometimes, these pressure groups with small public support but lots of money can hijack public discussion in favour of their narrow agenda.

**12.** "Pressure groups and movements have deepened democracy." How far is it true?

Ans. (i) Pressure groups and movements can easily put pressure on the government to pay attention to them.

(ii) Government can often bend under high pressure from a small group of rich and powerful people.

(iii) Public interest groups and movements perform a useful role in reminding the government of the needs and concerns of ordinary people.

(iv) Sectional interest groups also bring pressure on the government to make policies in their favour and some other anti-groups can pressurise the government not to make policies in favour of the former group.