

Popular struggles and Movements

Short Answer Questions

- 1.** How were the movements of Nepal and Bolivia water war different from each other?
Ans. (i) The movement in Nepal was to establish democracy, while the struggle in Bolivia involved claims on an elected democratic government.
(ii) The popular struggle in Bolivia was about one specific policy, while the struggle in Nepal was about the foundations of the country's politics.
(iii) Both these struggles were successful but their impact was at different levels.
- 2.** How are popular struggles undertaken in a democracy?
Ans. (i) Democracy evolves through popular struggle. It is possible that some significant decisions may take place through consensus and may not involve any conflict at all. Democracy usually involves conflicts between those groups who have exercised power and those who aspire for a share in power.
(ii) Democratic conflict is resolved through mass mobilisation. Sometimes, it is possible that the conflict is resolved by using the existing institutions like the parliament or judiciary. But when there is a deep dispute, very often these institutions themselves get involved in the dispute.
(iii) These conflicts and mobilisations are based on new political organisations.
But the spontaneous public participation becomes effective with the help of organised politics. These include political parties, pressure groups and movement groups.
- 3.** Differentiate between interest groups and movements.
Ans. **Interest Groups:**
(i) They do not have a loose organisation.
(ii) Their decision making is formal.
(iii) They do not depend so much on spontaneous mass participation and are formed by people with a common interest and occupation.

Movements:
(i) They have a loose organisation.
(ii) Their decision making is informal and flexible.
(iii) They depend much more on spontaneous mass participation.
- 4.** What does the term BAMCEF signify?
Ans. The term BAMCEF stands for Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation. It is an organisation largely made up of government employees that campaigns against caste discrimination.
(i) It addresses the problems of its members who suffer discrimination.
(ii) But its principal concern is with social justice and social equality for the entire society.
- 5.** What was the result of the popular struggle of Nepal?
Ans. (i) The King was forced to concede all the three demands of the protesters.
(ii) The Seven Party Alliance (SPA) chose Girija Prasad Koirala as the new Prime Minister of the interim government.
(iii) The restored parliament met and passed laws taking away most of the powers of the King.
This struggle came to be known as Nepal's second movement for democracy.
- 6.** What was the result of the Bolivia water war?
Ans. (i) The power of the people forced the officials of the MNC to flee the city and made the government concede to all the demands of the protesters.
(ii) The contract with MNC was cancelled.

(iii) Water supply was restored to the municipality at old rates.

7. Give three similarities between the movements in Nepal and Bolivia.

Ans. Similarities:

- (i) Both these are instances of political conflict that led to popular struggles.
- (ii) In both cases, the struggle involved mass mobilisation. Public demonstration of mass support clinched the dispute.
- (iii) Both instances involved the critical role of political organisations.

8. Which organisation contributed in the protest against water privatization in Bolivia?

Ans. (i) The protest against water privatisation in Bolivia was not led by any political party. It was led by FEDECOR.

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

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

9. How do pressure groups and movements influence politics?

Ans. Pressure groups and movements exert influence on politics in a variety of ways:

(i) They try to gain public support and sympathy for their goals and their activity by carrying out information campaigns, organising meetings, file petitions, etc. Most of these groups try to influence the media to give attention to these issues.

(ii) They often organise protests like strikes or disrupting programmes.

Workers' organisations, employees' associations and most of the movement groups often resort to these tactics in order to force the government to take note of their demand.

(iii) Some persons from pressure groups or movement groups may participate in official bodies and committees that offer advice to the government.

10. How do pressure groups form associations with political parties?

Ans. (i) In some instances, the pressure groups are either formed or led by the leaders of political parties or act as extended arms of political parties.

For example, most trade unions and students' organisations in India are either established by, or affiliated to one or the other major political party.

(ii) Sometimes, political parties grow out of movements. For example, when the Assam movement led by students against the 'foreigners' came to an end, it led to the formation of the Asom Gana Parishad.

(iii) In most cases, the relationship between parties and interest or movement groups is not so direct. They often take positions that are opposed to each other. Yet they are in dialogue and negotiations. Most of the new leadership of political parties come from interest or movement groups.

11. Who are Maoists? How did they influence the government in Nepal?

Ans. (i) Maoists are communists who believed in the ideology of Mao, the leader of the Chinese revolution.

(ii) They seek to overthrow the government through an armed revolution so as to establish the rule of the peasants and workers.

(iii) They supported the SPA during the movement for democracy in Nepal in 2004.

12. What were the three main demands of SPA and their outcome in Nepal?

Ans. The three demands of SPA were the following:

(i) They wanted to restore Parliament.

(ii) They demanded for a new Constituent Assembly.

(iii) And they demanded power to an all-party government.

Outcome of SPA'S demands was as follows:

(i) King Gyanendra was forced to accept all the demands.

- (ii) The SPA chose Girija Prasad Koirala as the new Prime Minister of the interim government.
- (iii) The restored Parliament met and passed laws taking away most of the powers of the king.

13. Why was there a protest against a multinational company in the city of Cochabamba?

- Ans. (i) The World Bank pressurised the government of Cochabamba to give up its control of municipal water supply.
- (ii) The government sold these rights to a multinational company.
- (iii) The company immediately increased the price of water by four times.
- (iv) Many people received monthly bill of ` 1,000 in a country where average income is around ` 5,000 per month. This led to spontaneous popular protest.

14. "In a democracy, several different kinds of organisations work behind any big struggle." How can people influence the government to listen to them?

- Ans. Yes, it is true. These Organisations play their role in two ways:
- (i) One way of influencing the decisions in a democracy is direct participation in competitive politics. This is done by creating parties, contesting elections and forming governments.
- (ii) There are many indirect ways in which people can get government to listen to their demands or their points of view. 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 organisations.

15. What are pressure groups?

- Ans. (i) Pressure groups are organisations that attempt to influence government policies.
- (ii) But unlike political parties, pressure groups do not aim to directly control or share political power.
- (iii) These organisations are formed when people with common occupations interests, aspirations or opinions come together in order to achieve a common objective.

16. What are movement groups? Give examples.

- Ans. When an organisation starts a movement to achieve a specific goal or issue, such organisation is called movement groups.
- (i) Narmada Bachao Andolan: The movement started due to specific issue of displacement of tribal people due to construction of Sardar Sarovar Dam on river Narmada. They wanted to stop this construction to get back to their home.
- (ii) Nepalese Movement: It was started by a Seven Party Alliance group to regain democracy in Nepal which had been taken over by the ruling King Gyanendra. Its specific objective was to regain democracy.

17. What kind of role is played by sectional interest groups?

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