

**Social Action Movements, Part 1:  
Its concept and types and some examples**

**Module Details**

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5.	Principal Investigator	Prof. Vandana Chakrabarti, Director, Lifelong Learning and Extension, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai
6.	Paper Coordinator	Dr. Rohini Sudhakar, Associate Professor, Dept. of Continuing and Adult Education & Extension Work, Social Action movements: Its concept and types and some examples SNDT WU, Mumbai
7.	Content writer	Dr. Keshav Walke, Faculty, Matru Sewa Sangh Institute of Social Work, Nagpur
8.	Content Reviewer	Dr. Vaijayanta Anand, Associate Professor, Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work

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**Objectives**

After going through the module the learner would be able to

1. Explain the concept of social action movement
2. Differentiate between various forms of social action movement in India

## 1. Introduction:

Social movements are any broad social alliances of people who are connected through their shared interests in blocking or affecting (moving) social change. Social movements do not have to be formally organized. Multiple alliances may work separately for common causes and still be considered as a social movement.

Social movements are conscious, concerted and sustained efforts by **ordinary people** to change some aspects of their society by **using extra-institutional means**. They are more conscious and organized than fads and fashions. They last longer than a single protest or riot. There is more to them than formal organizations, although such organizations usually play a part. They are composed mainly of ordinary people as opposed to army officers, politicians or economic elites. They need not be explicitly political, but many are.

Social movements are one of the principal social forms through which collectivities give voice to their grievance, concerns about rights, welfare, well-being of themselves and others by engaging in various types of collective action, such as protesting in the streets, riots. Sm have long functioned as an important vehicle for articulating and pressing a collectivity's interests and claims.

### Meaning and Definitions of Social Movements

Social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises to establish a new order of life. They have their inception in the condition of unrest, and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living. —Herbert Blumer

Mass movements mobilize people who are alienated from the going system, who do not believe in the legitimacy of the established order, and who therefore are ready to engage in efforts to destroy it. The greatest number of people available to mass movement will be found in those sections of society that have the fewest ties to the social order. —**William Kornhauser**

Social movements are those organized efforts, on the part of excluded groups, to promote or resist changes in the structure of society that involve recourse to non-institutional forms of political participation. —**Doug McAdam**

Rather than seeing social movements as expressions of extremism, violence, and deprivation, they are better defined as collective challenges, based on common purposes and special solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities. —Sidney Tarrow

A movement is not merely a perpetuated crowd, since a crowd does not possess organizational and motivational mechanisms capable of sustaining membership through periods of inaction and waiting. Furthermore, crowd mechanisms cannot be used to achieve communication and coordination of activity over a wide area, such as a nation or continent.

A social movement is a collectivity or a collective enterprise. The individual member experiences a sense of membership in an alliance of people who share his dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs and his vision of a better order. —Encyclopedia Britannica

Social movements may be defined as informal networks, based on shared beliefs and solidarity, which mobilize about conflictual issues, through the frequent use of various forms of protest - della Porta & Diani 1996:14–15).

In a number of pieces, Mario Diani (1992a; 2003a; 2004a; Diani and Bison 2004) has maintained that social movements are a distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors engaged in collective action:

- Are involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents;
- Are linked by dense informal networks;
- Share a distinct collective identity.

Social movement is a collective, organized, sustained and noninstitutional **challenge to authorities, powerholders, or cultural beliefs and practices.**

### **Characteristic of social Action movements**

M.S. A. Rao, one of the prominent Indian sociologists, has made a mention of the nature of social movements in the book "Social Movements in India". According to him, social movement includes five characteristics ( Collective action, Oriented towards social change, ideology behind the movement, organizational frame work, the technique and result) . There is considerable agreement among the sociologists towards the first two characteristic and where as they differ a lot regarding other three criteria.

#### **1. Collective Action**

Social movement undoubtedly involves collective action. However, this collective action, takes the form of a movement only when it is sustained for a long time. This collective action need not be formally organised. It could be an informal attempt also. But it should be able to create an interest and awakening in relatively large number of people.

#### **2. Oriented towards Social Change**

A Social movement is generally oriented towards bringing about social change. This change could either be partial or total. Though the movement is aimed at bringing about a change in the values, norms, ideologies of the existing system, efforts are also made by some other forces to resist the changes and to maintain the status quo.

#### **3. Ideology behind the Movement**

An important component of social movement that distinguishes it from the general category of collective mobilisation is the presence of an ideology. Example. A student strike involves collective mobilisation and is oriented towards change. But in the absence of an ideology a student strike becomes an isolated event and not a movement. On the contrary, if the strike is committed to an ideology, it may last for longer period and assume the form of a movement.

#### **4. Organisational Frame Work**

As Paul Wilkinson has pointed out that a social movement requires a minimum of organizational framework to achieve success or at least to maintain the tempo of the movement. To make the distinction clear between the leaders and followers, to make clear the purposes of the movement, to persuade people to take part in it or to support it, to adopt different techniques to achieve the goals — a social movement must have some amount of organisational framework.

#### **3. The Techniques and Results**

A social movement may adopt its own technique or method to achieve its goal. There is no certainty regarding it. It may follow peaceful or conflicting, violent or non-violent, compulsive or persuasive, democratic or undemocratic means or methods to reach its goal.

The same thing is true of the results. It may become successful or it may fail; it may become partial success or at least it may create a general 'awakening' in the public regarding an issue. The result of a movement has a close bearing on-the ideology and the organisational framework.

### **Features of Social Movements**

#### **Some of the features of social movements are as follows:**

- i. The sense of belonging and group consciousness is very important for a social movement. Such consciousness can be brought about through active participation of the group members.
- ii. Social movements lead to the creation of an entirely new social, economic, and political order.
- iii. Most of the social movements tend to develop a new set of ideas, which become obligatory for the members of the group to adopt and follow.
- iv. It is obvious that the social movements involve collective action rather than individual action.
- v. Social movements may be organized or unorganized.
- vi. Social movements may be peaceful in nature or they may also turn violent.
- vii. The aim of a social movement is to bring about or resist social change in the society.
- viii. The life of the social movement is not certain. This is because it may continue for a long period or it may die out soon.

### **Cause of Social Movements**

According to Vidya Bhushan Sachdeva (p. 285), social movements do not just happen. It is social unrest which gives rise to a social movement.

## **The social unrest may be caused by the following factors**

### **i. Cultural Drifts**

The society undergoes constant changes. The values and behavior are changing all the time in civilized societies. In the course of cultural drift, most people develop new ideas. To get these ideas operative in the society they organize a movement.

The development of a democratic society, the emancipation of women, the spread of mass education, the removal of untouchability, the equality of opportunity for both the sexes, and the growth of secularism are some examples of cultural drift.

### **ii. Social Disorganization**

A changing society is, to some extent, disorganized because changes in different parts of the society do not take place simultaneously. One part changes more rapidly than the other, thereby producing numerous lags. Industrialization has brought about urbanization which in turn has caused numerous social problems.

Social disorganization brings confusion and uncertainty, because the old traditions no longer form a dependable guide to behavior, and individuals become rootless. They feel isolated from society. A feeling develops that the community leaders are indifferent to their needs. Individuals feel insecure, confused, and frustrated. Confusion and frustration lead to social movements.

### **iii. Social Injustice**

When a group of people feel that injustice was done to them, they become frustrated and alienated. Such feeling of injustice provides fertile soil for social movements. The feeling of social injustice is not limited to the miserable poor. Any group, at any status level, may come to feel itself the victim of social injustice.

The wealthy class may feel a sense of injustice when faced with urban property ceiling law— or high taxes—intended to benefit the poor. Social injustice is a subjective value judgment. A social system is unjust when it is so perceived by its members. Thus, social movements occur whenever such kind of social situation arises. In a stable and well-integrated society, the chances for social movements are very rare.

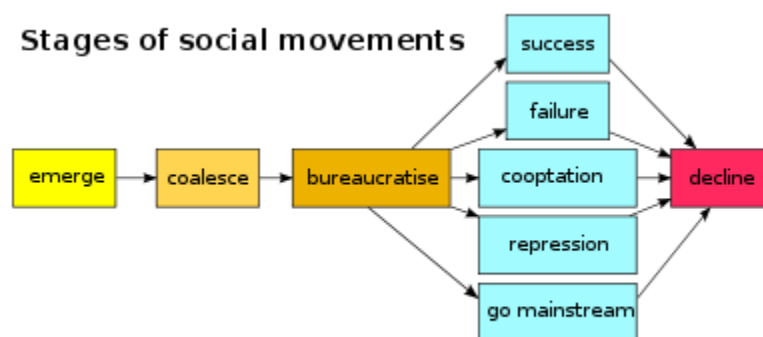
It is understood that people living in such a society are contented and satisfied. In a disorganized and continuously changing society, social movements occur more frequently, as most people are dissatisfied with the existing conditions. Lack of social justice also makes people dissatisfied and paves the way for social movements. Modern society is more afflicted with social movements than the earlier societies.

## Theory of social movement

<i>Deprivation Theory</i>	William Kornhauser advocated the Mass Society Theory in 1959. People experiencing relative deprivation begin social movement. The social movement is a means of seeking change that bring participants greater benefits. Social movements especially arise when rising expectation are frustrated.
Mass Society Theory	This theory was well explained by Karl Marx. People who lack established social ties are mobilized into social movements. Periods of social breakdown are likely to spawn social movements. The social movement gives members sense of belonging and social participations.
<i>Structural Strain Theory</i>	Peoples come together because of their shared concern about the inability of the society to operate as they believe it should. The growth of a social movement reflects many factors, including a belief in its legitimacy and some precipitating event that provokes actions.
<i>Resource Mobilization Theory:</i>	People may join for all the reason noted above and also because of social ties with the existing members. The success or failure of a social movement depends largely on the resources available to it. And also the extent of opposition within the larger society is important.
<i>New Social Movement theory</i>	People who become part of social movements are motivated by quality of life issue, not necessarily economic concern. Mobilization is national or international in scope. New social movements arise in response to the expansion of the mass media and new information technology.

## Stages in Social Movements

Though one social movement differs from another, almost all social movements go through similar stages. They are as follows (Macionis, p. 623):



Adapted from Blumer (1969), Mauss (1975), and Tilly (1978)

### Stage 1: Emergence

The perception that all is not well triggers off social movements. Widespread dissatisfaction becomes the basis of other movements. Sometimes, a small vanguard (forerunner/ lead) group increases public awareness on some issues and makes it a prominent public issue.

### **Stage 2: Coalescence (Blending, Union)**

Once a social issue has emerged as a movement, it must define itself and develop a strategy for “going public”. The leaders must determine policies and tactics, and there should be a drive to recruit new members. At this stage, collective actions such as demonstrations or rallies must be organized to attract public and media attention. Alliances with other organizations should be formed in order to gain necessary resources.

### **Stage 3: Bureaucratization**

A social movement must take on bureaucratic traits in order to become a political force. As it becomes established, the movement starts depending on the talents and charisma of its leaders and relies more on a capable staff.

If movements do not become established in this manner, they may face the risk of dissolution. Sometimes, bureaucratization can also hinder a social movement, as leaders may become too involved in building up the organization and not concentrate on encouraging the members towards change.

### **Stage 4: Decline**

Over a period of time, social movements lose their importance and influence. Sometimes, if the goals of the movement are fulfilled, decline simply indicates success. Organizational factors such as poor leadership, loss of interest among members, or repressive authority may also lead to the demise of a movement.

Sometimes, a social movement declines because the established power structure diverts leaders from their goals through different means such as offers of money, prestige, and other rewards. Cooptation or “selling out” is common, and organizational leaders use their position to enrich themselves. Another cause for the decline of a social movement is repression.

Participants may be threatened by officials, who discourage new recruits, and even by imprisoned leaders in order to crush a social movement. Sometimes, a social movement can collapse because it may opt for “going mainstream”. Such movements may become an accepted part of system, and no longer challenge the authorities or the status quo.

### **Types of Social Movements**

The classification of social movements is not easy as a movement may have a mixed nature or may change completely at different stages during its career. However, the social movements are classified into millenarian, migratory, Utopian, expressive, reformist, rebellion, revolutionary, and resistance.

### **A detailed discussion on all these social movements is given as follows:**

#### ***Millenarian Movement***

Millenarian movements are based on a belief of a religious, social, or political group that a major transformation of society will occur after which all the elements or components of the society will be changed in a positive or sometimes negative direction.

Millenarian groups typically claim that the current society and its rulers are corrupt, unjust, or otherwise wrong. They, therefore, believe that they will be destroyed soon by a powerful

force. The harmful nature of the status quo is always considered intractable without the anticipated dramatic change. For instance, in medieval millenarianism the world was seen as controlled by demons, and this idea prevailed even up to the nineteenth century.

### ***Migratory Movement***

These movements take place when a large number of people leave one country and settle in some other place or country. The major reasons for mass migration may be discontent or dissatisfaction with the existing situations or circumstances or looking for new opportunities for a bright future.

Mere migration of people from one place to another cannot be called migratory movement. The Zionist Movement (the back-to-Israel movement is known as Zionism) and the movement of people from East Germany to West Germany are some examples of migratory social movements.

### ***Utopian Movement***

A Utopian Movement is a movement which is expected to create an ideal social system, or a perfect society, which can only be imagined but cannot exist in reality. Utopian movements conceive man as good, co-operative, and altruistic. The most successful Utopian Movement in the recent history is the Israeli kibbutz. Sarvodaya Movement is another example of a Utopian Movement.

### ***Expressive Movement***

Expressive movements arise when people are discontented and cannot easily change the unpleasant situations (i.e., they feel powerless and cannot flee from the social system) with the result that the individual comes to terms with that unpleasant reality and changes his own reactions in order to make his life bearable. One of the best examples of expressive movement is Hippie Movement.

### ***Reformist Movement***

A reform movement can be described as a mass movement that seeks to change only one specific aspect of a society. The reform movement is an attempt to modify some parts of the society without completely changing the whole social system.

Most of the reform movements are possible in democratic countries as people have an opportunity to express their opinions and criticize the existing social institutions and can bring about some changes in them. The movement to abolish untouchability and dowry system, and the movement to preserve wildlife are all examples of the reform movements.

### ***Revolutionary Movement***

The Revolutionary Movement aims at overthrowing the existing social system and replacing it with a new one. Revolutionary movements are quite opposite to the reform movements. Revolutionists generally believe that reform is not possible under the existing social system.

Usually, revolutionary movements arise when people have no other alternative to reform the social system other than changing it as a whole. Revolution serves as an alternative to the individuals to come out of their existing misery. The communist revolution in Russia and China are the examples of revolutionary movements.



### **Resistance Movement**

A resistance movement can be described as a movement that arises not only for the purpose of instituting change, but also to block change or to eliminate a previously instituted change. Revolutionary movements arise as people are dissatisfied and feel that the pace of social change is very slow, whereas resistance movements occur when people consider that the change is rapid. The movement against Hindi of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam is a typical example of resistance movement.

### **Revivalist Movement**

A revivalist movement seeks to take the system back to its original pristine purity. Most of the movements try to involve people in the political process and bring about political awareness among the people. Some movements aim at bringing about a change in the lives of certain sections of society, such as the downtrodden as well as women.

### **New Social Movements**

The term new social movements (NSMs) is a theory of social movements that attempts to explain the plethora of new movements that have come up in various western societies roughly since the mid-1960s (i.e. in a post-industrial economy), which are claimed to depart significantly from the conventional social movement paradigm .

There are two central claims of the NSM theory. Firstly, the rise of the post-industrial economy is responsible for a new wave of social movement. Secondly, these movements are significantly different from previous social movements of the industrial economy. The primary difference is in their goals, as the new movements focus not on issues of materialistic qualities such as economic well-being, but on issues related to human rights (such as gay rights or pacifism).

### **Characteristics**

The most noticeable feature of new social movements is that they are primarily social and cultural and only secondarily, if at all, political.

Departing from the worker's movement, which was central to the political aim of gaining access to citizenship and representation for the working class, new social movements concentrate on bringing about social mobilization through cultural innovations, the development of new lifestyles, and the transformation of identities.

It is clearly elaborated by Habermas that new social movements are the "new politics" which is about quality of life, individual self-realization, and human rights; whereas the "old politics" focused on economic, political, and military security.

New social movements also emphasize the role of post-material values in contemporary and post-industrial society, as opposed to conflicts over material resources. According to Melucci, one of the leading new social movement theorists, these movements arise not from relations of production and distribution of resources, but within the sphere of reproduction and the life world.

Consequently, the concern has shifted from the production of economic resources as a means of survival or for reproduction to cultural production of social relations, symbols, and identities. In other words, the contemporary social movements reject the materialistic orientation of consumerism in capitalist societies by questioning the modern idea that links the pursuit of happiness and success closely to growth, progress, and increased productivity

and by instead promoting alternative values and understandings in relation to the social world.

As an example, the environmental movement that has appeared since the late 1960s throughout the world, with its strong points in the United States and Northern Europe, has significantly brought about a "dramatic reversal" in the ways we consider the relationship between economy, society and nature.

Further, new social movements are located in civil society or the cultural sphere as a major arena for collective action rather than instrumental action in the state, which Claus Offe characterizes as "bypass[ing] the state. " Moreover, since new social movements are not normally concerned with directly challenging the state, they are regarded as anti-authoritarian and as resisting incorporation at the institutional level. They tend to focus on a single issue, or a limited range of issues connected to a single broad theme, such as peace or the environment. New social movements concentrate on the grassroots level with the aim to represent the interests of marginal or excluded groups.. Therefore, new collective actions are locally based, centered on small social groups and loosely held together by personal or informational networks such as radios, newspapers, and posters. This "local- and issue-centered" characteristic implies that new movements do not necessarily require a strong ideology or agreement to meet their objectives.

Additionally, if old social movements, namely the worker's movement, presupposed a working class base and ideology, the new social movements are presumed to draw from a different social class base, i.e., "the new class. " This is a complex contemporary class structure that Claus Offe identifies as "threefold" in its composition: the new middle class, elements of the old middle class, and peripheral groups outside the labor market. The groups of people that are marginal in the labor market, such as students, housewives, and the unemployed participate in the collective actions as a consequence of their higher levels of free time, their position of being at the receiving end of bureaucratic control and their inability to be fully engaged in society specifically in terms of employment and consumption.

#### Key Points:

- New social movements (NSMs) are described by a theory regarding social movements which posits that the advent of the post industrial economy resulted in a new wave of social movements distinct from those social movements arising during the industrial economy.
- In these new social movements, more importance is attached to social and cultural concerns, rather than economic or political considerations.
- Actors in NSMs are from a new middle class, instead of from the lower classes, as was typical of social movements of the industrial economy.
- NSMs consist of informal, loosely organized social networks of supporters rather than members and tend to be locally-based.
- NSMs act as a platform for collective action in civil society or in the cultural domain, rather than as an instrumental tool for the state. As such, new movements are often considered to be anti-authoritarian.
- NSMs are normally centered on a single issue, or a limited range of issues which are related to a broader theme, such as the environment.
- Critiques of NSM theory include the fact that non-materialistic movements existed in the industrial-era and materialistic movements persist in the post-industrial economy; while there are few traits that are specific to new social movements, differences between old

and new movements have already been explained by theories preceding NSM; and the NSM does not take into account right-wing movements.

## **New Social Movements in Indian context**

Gail Omvedt (1994) postulates that the new social movements are making appearance in India in the context of the overall crisis of political and economic systems and ideologies. The collapse of state socialist societies and the crisis of Marxism spells the failure of what has been hitherto the hegemonic ideology of liberation or the primary historical response to the exploitation of the capitalist system. The neoliberal ideologies that came in the wake of the failure of Marxism does not offer any solution, and the resultant vacuum is ought to be filled by nationalist, ethnic, communal and religious fundamentalist forces. There is a growing concern about environmental, social justice, and gender equity, and other neglected issues by the new social movements. However, this counter-hegemonic force is still weak.

Rajni Kothari (1984) in his reflections on the people's movements and grassroots politics in India delineates the trend of what he calls 'the non-party political process', presumably in the Gandhian and unconventional traditions, and locates it in the larger context of the declining role the state in social transformation in India and so-called democracy being undermined by corruption, criminalisation, and repression and depoliticisation of large masses of people with precarious livelihood conditions. It is in this context that the phenomenon of non-party political formations, distinct from governing and opposition parties, on the one hand, and from non-political voluntary agencies working on various development schemes, on the other, are emerging in a number of grassroots movements launched by non-traditional left. The examples are Chipko movement in U. P. Himalayan districts (now Uttarakhand), the miners' struggles in Chhattisgarh, the Ryot Coolie Sangham in Andhra Pradesh, the Satyagraha led by the peasants in Kankapura in Karnataka against the mining and export of granite, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. In these grassroots movements, 'the struggle is not limited to economic and political demands but is extended to cover ecological, cultural and educational issues. Nor is it limited to the external enemy as it includes a sustained and long drawn out campaign against more pervasive sources of economic and cultural ruin such as drunkenness, despoilation of the environment and insanitary habits, reminding one of the original conception of Swarajya as a struggle for liberation not just from alien rule but also from internal decay' (Kothari 1984: 220). D.L. Sheth (2005) theorises new social movements in India as 'micro-movements' and sees them as harbingers of 'new politics' setting a trail of alternative politics to the prevailing patterns. He interprets the micro-movements as a defensive response to neoliberal model of market democracy and the Indian state linking itself to the vertical hierarchy of global economic and political power. Political and social movements at the grassroots have emerged as significant countervailing processes and forces, making new provincial and national level alliances aimed at countering the state's policies of globalisation. The most recent new social movement in India today is the India Against Corruption (IAC) led by Anna Hazare. It was launched in the Spring of 2011 in the wake of the heady Arab Spring of the same year marked by a wave of democratic movements through much of West Asia. The non-party, extra-parliamentary IAC campaign mounted a significant crusade against political, bureaucratic, and economic corruption, made out a case for electoral and party system reforms, besides making a plea for incorporation of a strong dose of direct

democratic devices into the model of parliamentary federal democracy under the Indian Constitution since 1950.

This movement subsequently got split (in September 2012) into (a) the parent non-party movement under Anna Hazare, and (b) the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) led by Arvind Kejriwal. The elders led by Anna wished to keep the non-party political character of the movement, while the younger cohorts led by Kejriwal parted company to form a new political party as a vehicle of alternative politics turning its back to the prevailing features of corrupt, criminalised, and non-participatory 'high command'-dominated party politics. In the just concluded round of Assembly elections in five states in November-December 2013, the AAP made a spectacular debut in Delhi surging to become the second largest party with 28 seats in a House of 70, reducing the ruling Indian National Congress to just 8 seats and curbing the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party at 31. The party is setting a new trend of internal party democracy, transparency of fund-raising, and exemplary commitment to political morality even though no existing law requires it to do so. No other party has been doing so. It has brought in a fresh morning breeze of a new brand of an alternative politics as well as demanding a strong dose of direct democracy reminiscent of the Gandhian vision Gram Swaraj(M.P. Singh 2013).

## Some important social action programmes

### I. SEWA movement

#### **Background**

- In 1972 Ela Bhatt founded the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) as a trade union of self employed women. In registering as a trade union, SEWA faced major resistance because the Labor Department felt that since members had no employer SEWA did not fit the model of a trade union.
- After arguing that a union is not only for struggles against employers, but more importantly it is for the unity of workers, SEWA was finally registered as a trade union in 1972 with 320 members.
- . It grew out of the Textile Labour Association , **TLA**, India's oldest and largest union of textile workers founded in 1920 by a women, **Anasuya Sarabhai**.
- The inspiration for the union came from Mahatma Gandhi, who led a successful strike of textile workers in 1917.
- SEWA adopts an Integrated & Need based Approach to Organizing the poor, self-employed women workers.
- Presently It is a member-based movement of about 7,00,000 poor, informal sector women workers of India.
- SEWA movement covers 7 states of India. It exclusively works in 14 districts of Gujarat, covering 50% of the State of Gujarat

- There are about 3500 local producers groups and 9 Economic Federation. Members represent more than 125 different kind of trades
- SEWA's main goals are to organise women workers for full employment. (Full employment means employment whereby workers obtain work security, income security, food security and social security )
- Practically, the strategy is carried out through the joint action of union and cooperatives.
- Gandhian thinking is the guiding force for SEWA's poor, self-employed members in organising for social change following the principles of satya (truth), ahinsa (non-violence), sarvadharm (integrating all faiths, all people) and khadi (propagation of local employment and self reliance).
- The SEWA movement is enhanced by its being a sangam or confluence of three movements : **the labour movement, the cooperative movement and the women's movement.**
- It is also a movement of self-employed workers : their own, home-grown movement with women as the leaders. Through their own movement women become strong and visible.

### The Sewa Approach

- Organize women workers into trade groups, often helping them create cooperatives. They further help build their members' capacity through training on technical skills, leadership, and product development. These organizing services help empower working women by allowing them to demand higher wages, better prices, and better work conditions, and also by increasing their productivity
- SEWA's approach in organising rural members has been to identify the issues or needs of the communities. Design demand driven programmes that strategically link with the existing Government programmes thereby satisfy the needs of the communities.
- SEWA's approach has been an integrated approach, where various inputs are needed not one after the other but simultaneously.
- SEWA thereby strategically links the producers and their demands to the market.
- SEWA provides its members with both financial and social support. Through SEWA's cooperative bank (governed, owned, a run mainly by the members themselves) SEWA provides its members with access to low interest loans, the ability to develop savings accounts, and the opportunity to buy into various insurance schemes.
- Through several cooperatives and in some cases coordination with the government, SEWA offers its members a variety of social services, such as health care, child care, literacy courses, better housing and access to water.
- SEWA advocates on behalf of its members to local, national, and international bodies demanding changes in laws to take into account self-employed women's critical role in the labor force.

### Outcomes of SEWA Movement

- In reaching its own goals – to empower self-employed women workers through full employment and self reliance – SEWA has succeeded.
- In terms of SEWA’s goal of its members’ self reliance, the data demonstrated that 60 percent of members reported significant increases in self-confidence after SEWA trainings, and members felt an increase of 10 – 25 percentage points in household decision making power.
- With a starting membership of 320 in 1973, SEWA’s numbers have increased tremendously. it has 1,256,944 registered members across India. While 50 percent of its membership is based in the starting state of Gujarat, the other 50 percent are dispersed across 11 states.
- John Blaxall in his report for the World Bank, points to four key factors in explaining SEWA’s success – its leadership, flexibility, values, and organizing strategy.
- Rekha Datta in her 2003 article on SEWA attributed SEWA’s success to the working women finding suitable strategies for themselves.
- Nitya Rao in her analysis lists 14 factors from its training to how it handles internal conflict. While they all point to strategies that were very influential in SEWA success.
- SEWA was able to emerge very successfully because it provided selective incentives to self employed women, fostered a common identity and shared purpose between the women, and ensured its continuity through democratic governance and diversified sources of funding

## Narmada Bachao Andolan

### Background

- **Narmada Bachao Andolan-** Social movement (tribal people, *adivasis*, farmers, environmentalists and human rights activists) against the Sardar Sarovar Dam being built across the Narmada river, Gujarat, India.
- **Displacement of 2,50,000 people** from their land in three states (Gujrat, Madhy Pradesh and Maharashtra) and **Loss** of agricultural land and forest(approx. 37,000 hectares) .
- Focus of the movement - saving the trees and the fauna, rehabilitation of the poor people living around the area.
- Movement started in **1986** when the World Bank lent India **\$450 million** for the Sardar Sarovar project.
- Movement started by a social worker named **Medha Patkar**
- As leader and co-founder of **Narmada Bachao Andolan** (Save Narmada Movement), she has been spearheading the movement against the building of the **Sardar Sarovar Dam** on the Narmada river in **Gujarat**, giving particular attention to the rehabilitation of the poor who are being displaced by the project.

### The NBA’s Approach

- The success of the NBA campaign resulted from its innovative strategies of resistance that operated simultaneously at the grassroots, national, and international level.
- While the NBA originally employed “Gandhian methods” such as peaceful marches and protests, after a high-profile hunger fast in 1991 failed, the NBA announced a “noncooperation movement” in the Narmada valley. This movement campaigned

against the payment of taxes and sought to deny entry to the villages to all government officials, except teachers and doctors.

- Strategies include legal challenges, demonstration, civil -disobedience and other non - violent tactics.
- Large-scale protests at home were complemented by international interventions abroad. Lori Udall, then with the Environmental Defense Fund, led the international campaign against the Sardar Sarovar dam and implemented a “multi-pronged strategy of public pressure, organizing, media outreach, and lobbying.
- A Narmada International Action Committee—consisting of NGOs from India, the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, and Japan—lobbied against the Narmada Project in several investing countries which helped focus international and national attention on the Narmada issue.

### Outcomes of NBA

- APART from bringing the dam-displacement issue to national and international attention, the NBA has succeeded in bringing women out of homes to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their menfolk at the forefront of resistance.
- The NBA has succeeded in uniting people across the language divide of the three affected States.
- The World Bank announced in June 1991 that it would commission a team of independent experts, known as the Morse Commission, to reexamine the Sardar Sarovar Project. The Commission’s independent review had two aims: to assess steps taken to resettle those affected by the Sardar Sarovar dam, and to assess the efficacy of measures aimed at diminishing the project’s environmental impact.
- The NBA’s influence in the social and economic areas in re-defining development in the face of rampant and destructive corporate-driven industrialisation has been proportionately large.

### National Alliance for People’s Movements

#### Background

- National Alliance of People's Movements is an alliance of progressive people’s organizations and movements in India. It struggle across India against injustice and several other discrimination. It led protest on various issues like anti-globalization, anti-nuclear movement and electoral reforms.
- ***NAPM is on the forefront of people’s resistance against development projects in the country for the last 20 years now.***
- It struggle along with Dalit, Adivasi, women, fisher communities, minorities and other marginalized groups to bring about social, political and economic justice based on Equality (SAMTATA), Simple Living (SADAGI) and Self-Reliance (SAVAVLAMBAN).
- NAPM believe in non-violent means of struggle, people’s democracy and respecting the individual identities of diverse people’s movements. ‘Struggle along with Reconstruction’ through alternative politics is our vision.
- Many independent movements have felt the need to come together as a collective while retaining their individual identities to struggle against the imperialist global forces. Thus was the genesis of the National Alliance of People’s Movements in 1992, by various movements in India including Narmada Bachao Andolan, National Fish Workers Forum,

Samajwadi Jan Parishad, Ganga Mukti Andolan, Shoshit Jan Andolan, Sarva Seva Sangh and many others.

### **The NAPM approach**

- Based on common strategies, programmes and common minimum ideological understanding while respecting the diverse ideologies that influence the people's movements including Gandhian, Ambedkarite, Lohiaite, Feminist and Marxist.
- NAPM aspires to develop a discourse of harmonious relationships among various communities based on true democracy and pluralism, and against the threat of fundamentalism and communalism.
- NAPM's ideology is an ongoing and evolving process, constantly changing and adapting to situations around us. It challenges the various organisations such as the World Trade Organisation, World Bank and IMF.
- It stands out as a unique force of people's politics that challenges present corrupt and criminal electoral politics in India.
- NAPM believe that social transformation needs a multi-pronged strategy. NAPM thus uses four tools to bring about social change: Values and Thought, Struggle, Reconstruction and Electoral Politics.

### **Outcome of NAPM:**

- 1996: Nation wide tour leading to a convention at Wardha where over 300 people representing 100 organisations and 17 states gathered to develop strategies to give an organisational form to NAPM and to initiate state-wise processes.
- Struggle against, Enron Corporation, which is a corrupt US-based power generation multi-national corporation (MNC) and Coca-Cola launched.
- 1998: Anti-nuclear movement and a four month Global Peace March from Pokhran, Rajasthan (nuclear testing site), to Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh.
- 2003: Initiation of Desh Bachao Desh Banao (Save the Nation Build the Nation) Campaign, a three month long tour covering 15 states of India and culminating at Ayodhya to evolve a national movement.
- 2004: Formation of People's Political Front (PPF): Some of the constituents of NAPM had a strong belief that in order to bring about social change it was imperative to get directly involved in electoral politics along with people's movements. This idea has a long drawn process within the NAPM strategy. Ultimately it was decided that NAPM should retain its autonomous identity and there should be a separate, but related front to directly intervene in electoral politics. As a result, PPF was launched in 2004.
- 2005: Campaign against slum demolition in Mumbai and formation of an alliance of organisations working on slum issues (Zopadi Bachao Sayukt Kriti Samiti).

### **Conclusions:**

Protest in the Narmada valley is not new. In September 2012, protesters in the Omkareshwar area braved the dirty submergence waters for 17 days, after which the Chief Minister agreed to reduce the water level. For over twenty years, the movement has adopted a strategy of non-cooperation, mass mobilisation and non-violent forms of protest including rallies, picketing, sit-ins, fasts and the more extreme case of "save or drown actions". Activist villagers have refused to vacate their ancestral homes. As a result they have



resisted and faced police atrocities and repressive tactics including mass arrests, harassment, sexual assault, bulldozing of their homes as well as the clear-felling of their forests. The Narmada and other anti-displacement movements across India have for decades highlighted the dark side of infrastructure projects which have often led to an unequal spread of pains and gains. This is particularly true through processes of forced displacement that have been inimical to the livelihoods of poor and marginalised people in rural areas.

#### 5.4.6 Summary

Points to Ponder:

No.	Points to Ponder
1	<b>Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)</b> is a social movement consisting of adivasis, farmers, environmentalists and human rights activists against the number of large dams being built across the <b>Narmada River</b> /
2	It estimated that the reservoir would submerge 40000 hectares of land 250 villages, which disrupt downstream fisheries and on the whole case extensive ecology damage. There were no any proper arrangements from the government for the people of the community. They also not made any rehabilitation or resettle the habitats for the region.
3	THE Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) has completed 30 years of people's resistance to the dam projects in the Narmada valley.
4	<b>Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)</b> is a social movement consisting of <i>adivasis</i> , farmers, environmentalists and human rights activists against the number of large dams being built across the Narmada River, which flows through the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, all over India.
5	Baba Amte was one of India's most respected social and moral leaders, while Medha Patkar, a graduate in social work, is one of the initiators of The Save the Narmada Movement (Narmada Bachao Andolan, NBA)
6	SEWA is a trade union registered in 1972. It is an organisation of poor, self-employed women workers. These are women who earn a living through their own labour or small businesses.
7	EWA's main goals are to organise women workers for full employment. Full employment means employment whereby workers obtain work security, income security, food security and social security (at least health care, child care and shelter). SEWA organises women to ensure that every family obtains full employment. By self-reliance we mean that women should be autonomous and self-reliant, individually and collectively, both economically and in terms of their decision-making ability.
8	SEWA organise workers to achieve their goals of full employment and self reliance through the strategy of struggle and development. The struggle is against the many constraints and limitations imposed on them by society and the economy, while development activities strengthen women's bargaining power and offer them new alternatives. Practically, the strategy is carried out through the joint action of union and cooperatives.

9	SEWA is both an organisation and a movement. The SEWA movement is enhanced by its being a sangam or confluence of three movements : the labour movement, the cooperative movement and the women's movement. But it is also a movement of self-employed workers : their own, home-grown movement with women as the leaders.
10	<b>National Alliance of People's Movements</b> is an alliance of progressive people's organizations and movements in India. It struggle across India against injustice and several other discrimination. It led protest on various issues like anti-globalization, anti nuclear movement and electoral reforms.
11	The NAPM has been a growing process. It does not strive to be a federation of constituent members. It is a coming together, a process of like-minded groups and movements who while retaining their autonomous identities, are working together to bring the struggle for a people-oriented development model to the centre-stage of politics and public life. It is understood that such an alliance, emerging with a definite ideological commonality and common strategy, can give rise to a strong social, political force and a national people's movement.
12	NAPM's work has to gather the kind of momentum and scale that the present situation demands and become a national movement indeed. There is a need for many more people to come together and explore ways of creating an effective political platform for building a movement for fundamental change. This process requires a deeper dialogue and discussion on many more issues and questions than those we have addressed so far.