



BLOCK 3
GANDHI'S LEGACIES

UNIT 8 NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENTS

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

India's independence struggle is proof that great revolutions can be brought about without bloodshed and violence i.e. non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi led years of non-violent struggle against the British rule in India which eventually helped India win independence in 1947. The philosophy of Gandhi was based on truth, sacrifice, non-violence selfless service and cooperation. In modern times, nonviolent methods of action have been a powerful tool for social protest. According to Gandhi one should be brave and not a coward. He should present his views, suggestions and thoughts without being violent. One should fight a war with the weapons of truth and non-violence. Gandhi said that "There is no God higher than truth."⁵² According to Gandhi's thoughts non-violence is ultimate solution for every kind of problem in the world. Gandhi's strategy is the combination of truth, sacrifice, non-violence, selfless service and cooperation.

For Gandhi non-violence or ahimsa was not just a negation of bloodshed but it stood for the absence of anger, selfishness, hatred and enmity. Non-violence for Gandhi was inextricably linked to his tenet of Satyagraha. For Gandhi Satyagraha did not need any other weapon except moral courage. India is a democratic country where people are directly involved in the decision making process. Yet, there is an uneven distribution of resources, victimization of weaker classes and human rights violations. Corruption and politics corrupt systems which should be free and fair. Movements against these and political resistance in India post-independence have been emphatically emphasized by Gandhi's vision of Satyagraha and non-violence. The social doctrine of non-violence that has emerged from Gandhi's ideas has now become the key to forge and sustain the new social and political order.

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Aims and Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand:

- Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence and ahimsa.
- Nature of non-violent movements.
- Influence of Gandhi's ideas of non-violence on contemporary movements.
- Major non-violent movements that have taken place in the post-independence era.

8.2 NATURE OF NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENTS

Successful non-violent movements/direct actions have come to be defined by two key aspects which are oxymoron in nature i.e. disruption and discipline. Disruption on a mass scale is without doubt the most effective and popular feature of non-violent resistance. Non-cooperation and large-scale civil disobedience, by using methods like mass boycotts, picketing etc. can draw attention to unjust laws. For example the bus boycotts and lunch counter sit-ins of the civil rights movement in the USA (blacks against segregation), were very effective in exposing the cruelties of segregation. Over time, we have learned that non-violence can draw participation from large numbers of people more effectively and efficiently than armed movements ever could. By either withdrawing participation and popular consent or criticizing and defying specific institutions and laws deemed unjust, successful non-violent campaigns can question the legitimacy and authority of the state.

For protests to be non-violent, however, disruption itself has to be disciplined. Protestors have to show restraint, often through a willingness to sacrifice and suffer. This includes everything from the discipline of walking and marching for weeks to stoically resisting the provocation and violence of police and vigilante groups. Instilling this kind of discipline and restraint were the main focus of the non-violent training sessions and the codes of conduct according to Gandhi.⁵³

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Explain Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence or ahimsa.

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8.3 NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENTS AFTER INDEPENDENCE

8.3.1 Bhoodan Movement-1940s

Acharya Vinoba Bhave a follower of Gandhi himself had begun to propagate the concept of 'bhoodan' in the late 40s and early 50s. Bhoodan hoped to solve to the problem of securing land for India's landless peasants but it would be wrong to suppose that Bhoodan concerns itself solely with the collection and distribution of land. This movement was meant to be the first step in the onward march of the Sarvodaya society purported to be an all round revolution in the socio economic sphere-a non violent constructive programme of transformation of India's social structure through a radical change in values.

The movement began in a more concentrated manner in 1963 where three main areas of activity were identified. (a) the establishment of Gramdan villages all over the country, (b) the development of khadi and village-industries in these villages so as to make them self sufficient and independent of outside resources, and (c) the recruitment and training of a 'Shanti Sena' or Peace Army, to prevent any outbreak of violence in the country or, if violence should occur, to bring it under control by non violent means. This was the only- thought necessary in a Sarvodaya society, where mutual cooperation and not individual competition would be the driving force of motivation and behaviour. The aim was to influence the minds of the rich landowners so that they would give up extra land without any coercion or violent means.

In the post-independent India, Bhoodan came as a glimmer of hope to the landless poor and, needy aspiring to live a decent life free from oppressive land policies and landlords. Thoroughly rooted in Gandhian spirit, it aimed at the ultimate good of the society. 'Sarvodaya' lost momentum due to lack of spirited persuasion and follow-up but the experience of Bhoodan Movement reaffirmed the hope that a Satyagraha (true non-violent movement) could be conceived and worked out in practical life.

8.3.2 New Farmers' Movements-1980s

The New Farmers' movement emerged at a time when agriculture in India was in complete disarray. It began when terms of trade were going against agriculture, income from agriculture was dwindling, input prices were going beyond the reach of farmers etc. It started in Maharashtra under Shetkari Sanghatana when it demanded remunerative prices for onions. It was later on followed by Karnataka under the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, Bharatiya Kisan Union in Uttar Pradesh. Although they started almost simultaneously, the differences among the farmers' organizations checkmated the movements into becoming a big force in Indian politics.

Despite differences the new farmers' movements brought about a paradigm shift in the discourse, analysis and perception about farmers in India. It made the policy makers address the deep rooted crisis in agriculture as well as condition of the agrarian classes in India.

Nonetheless they have not been effective in bringing radical transformation in the country side. This is because of the fact that the movements, from the very

beginning, were unable to overcome the internal conflicts as well as contradictions. Secondly, they did not carry any radical agenda from within, for example they never bothered to demand radical land reforms, nor were they concerned about the atrocities perpetrated on marginal classes including the Dalits living in the country side. Since the movements, from the very beginning, identified with rich or market-oriented farmers, the other categories' politics did not receive much focus. This is the reason why they have been losing their social bases. Further, their operational areas were confined to those localities wherein the classes of rich or market-oriented farmers lived. This further reduced their areas of operation.

Whatever may have been the weaknesses, one cannot overlook the fact that the New Farmers' Movement gave a new meaning to the study of farmers' movement in India. Despite the differences, one can say that they reflected Gandhi's ideals.

8.3.3 Chipko Movement-1973

The Chipko Movement, a non-violent, social and ecological movement originated in the Garhwal Himalayan mountain region of the present Uttarakhand state. In 1973 massive floods destroyed life and property in the region of Alaknanda valley. One day the women spotted the labour with axes. These labour had been sent by commercial contractors to cut the trees. The women protested and vowed to protect the trees. Small groups of women kept constant vigilance and hugged the trees in order to prevent the felling. Led by Sundarlal Bahuguna, Gauri Devi and Gunga Devi, along with their co-workers, the movement was a much successful one. Consequently, the government imposed a ban on the commercial green felling in the region.

8.3.4 Jungle Bachao Andolan-1970s

When the government in 1970s decided to replace the natural sal forest with highly valued teak, the tribals of Bihar came out in strong numbers to protest against this decision. Having started in Bihar, the movement spread to other states like Odisha and Jharkhand too.

8.3.5 Silent Valley Movement-1970s-1980s

A social movement aimed at the protection of Silent Valley, an evergreen tropical forest in the Palakkad district of Kerala, started in 1973 brought many activists and people together. The protest was focused on stopping the valley from being flooded by a hydroelectric project.

8.3.6 Narmada Bachao Andolan-1985

The 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' or 'Save the Narmada Movement' was essentially a movement against the irregular and irresponsible pattern of development. It was a crusade to ensure justice of the affected people due to dam construction. The main thrust of the Andolan was to oppose the Sardar Sarovar Project, the largest dam to be built on the Narmada. The struggle started in 1985, relied on hunger strikes, solidarity marches and mass media publicity to spread awareness of the issue, making it one of the pioneering non-violent struggles undertaken to ensure justice to the people. In 1989, it became a full-fledged environmental and livelihood movement, vehemently opposing the dam construction and demanding

a just resettlement policy. Medha Patkar, an inspiring leader of the movement, undertook several fasts and hunger strikes that eventually led to an independent review of the project by the World Bank, one of the sponsors of the project and eventually to its withdrawal in 1995. The activists of the movement faced stern police action and lathi charges throughout the course of the struggle.

8.3.7 Prohibition Movement: Anti-arrack / liquor movement in Andhra Pradesh-1993-94

Prohibition is defined as total abstinence from alcoholic drinks through legal means and temperance as abstinence from liquor on a voluntary basis. Prohibition had an important place in Gandhi's vision of India. He felt that alcoholism is an unmitigated evil and when it becomes a habit multiple pathological consequences follow. Gandhi suggested a three-pronged approach in dealing with the problem of drink: Take legal steps against illicit distillation and follow them up with effective enforcement through a special agency; provision for punishment of those who are found drunk in streets or other public places with a substantial fine, and imprisonment in case of repeaters; and finally, propagation by voluntary organizations, especially led by women, in slums and in areas inhabited by labour with a view to wean the addicts away from the habit.

Gandhi's views on prohibition found an echo in the Indian Constitution. One of its Directive Principles (Article 47) envisages that the State would pursue prohibition as a policy. While many other Directive Principles found their way into concrete policies of the Union and state governments, prohibition did not find favour with them. As of now Gujarat is the lone prohibition state in India.

Haryana and Andhra Pradesh, the two states that experimented with prohibition gave it up due not only to financial reasons but also because they were unable to control illicit distillation and bootlegging. Haryana made several attempts at prohibition, but it finally gave it up. Women's organizations that had spearheaded the campaign for the ban on liquor themselves supported the lifting of prohibition because they found that men, denied their drink through legitimate channels, took to illicit liquor. This resulted in a spate of spurious liquor tragedies. Andhra Pradesh introduced partial prohibition in 1994 through a ban on illicit liquor. It was preceded by protracted agitation and a major social movement for prohibition by women.

The prohibition movement was a revolt against familiar happenings of liquor addicts, spending women's wages, selling away household goods, and indulging in drunken brawls and domestic violence of various sorts. The anti-arrack / liquor movement started in Dubagunta, a remote village in Nellore through Rosamma, an elderly woman who was inspired by the lessons of the adult education programme. Protests by women of the village spread to neighbouring villages. Information about protests spread through word of mouth and through established social networks. Spontaneous actions by women in many communities in other districts also occurred, breaking the pre-existing social norms i.e., patriarchy and non-participation of women in the public domain.

Though the anti-arrack agitation in Andhra Pradesh was built on the initiative and participation of women, a multitude of organizations got involved in this movement and helped to mobilize women across the State. The participating organizations supported women to sustain the struggle for a ban on liquor and

arrack. The organizations ranged from national, regional, grassroots women's units and issue-based informal groups to political parties with different ideological orientations, priorities and political motivations. They came together to fight against liquor/arrack, the habit as well as State policy. It was considered necessary first to change the policy of the State in favour of a ban on arrack and liquor.

In the initial stages of agitation, many women were *lathi* charged and some were arrested by police. They were threatened by the arrack and liquor contractors, few women activists were beaten up by hooligans employed by the arrack contractors. Women overcame many such hurdles without resorting to violence thanks to the support from the print media and the opposition political parties and their front organizations.

Endowed with cadres and resources, the participating organizations played an important role in building the anti-arrack movement to a crescendo, thereby converting an emotion-ridden movement by disparate *ad hoc* groups at the grassroots into a broad-based movement. With this, the movement gained unprecedented momentum. It soon became a political movement, sending shock-waves to the political establishment. The latter reacted with police action in the initial stages, but were later forced to give in, change its earlier stand and come up with a time-bound programme in favour of prohibition.

The societal support came in various forms. An association was formed against liquor/arrack as 'Sara Vyathireka Karyacharana Samiti', organizing dharnas and protests demanding prohibition, picketing liquor shops and burning of liquor sachets and destroying liquor bottles. There were many spontaneous actions such as villagers or slum dwellers, imposing fines on drunken persons. As a result of the intensity of the agitation, some contractors and traders voluntarily closed their liquor business and liquor shops.

The print media played an important role as a catalyst in the prohibition movement. The largest circulated vernacular daily, 'Eenadu', gave maximum publicity and coverage in reporting events regarding the anti-arrack agitation. Other Telugu newspapers too joined the mission. One of the important reasons for the quick spread of the anti-arrack agitation was the wide coverage, communication and reports of the movement in the vernacular print media. Word spread quickly and more innovative forms of protests followed. In some villages, many men, hitherto arrack addicts, went one step ahead and took an oath not to drink arrack, or not to allow arrack sales in the villages concerned.

The anti-arrack movement (1993-1994) of Andhra was a roaring success for a number of reasons. It centred on a simple and transparent issue i.e., prohibition, which could be understood by all. Women from the lower strata participated in large numbers. The movement gained momentum and sustained because of support from the vernacular media and a large number of voluntary organizations and political groups. The movement gained strength as it was able to manage the available resources (people, material, ideas and organization) effectively. Once the movement gained popularity and received a bandwagon effect, it became explosive and unstoppable, diluting resistance from those in authority. Above all the movement stayed true to the character of a successful non-violent movement i.e. disciplined disruption.

8.3.8 Jan Lokpal Bill-Anti Corruption Movement by Anna Hazare-2011

When anti-corruption activist Anna Hazare began a hunger strike at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on April 5, 2011, the whole nation came together and stood by him. The movement led to the resignation of Agriculture minister Sharad Pawar from the group of ministers that had been charged with reviewing the draft Jan Lokpal bill. The Jan Lokpal Bill, also referred to as the Citizen's Ombudsman Bill, is an anti-corruption bill drawn up by civil society activists in India seeking the appointment of a Jan Lokpal, an independent body to investigate corruption cases. The initiative brought together a huge number of people, making it a one-of-its-kind event in decades. It was also one of those rare events that demonstrated what is possible if the world's largest democracy woke up to take the reins in its hands.⁵⁴

8.3.9 Nirbhaya Movement-2012

The 2012 Delhi Gang Rape sparked fierce reactions from people who were very clear on expressing that they have had enough. After the incident, thousands of people came out on streets to protest in several parts of the country. The movement also created a stir in social media where people changed their display picture to a black dot and tens of thousands of people signed a petition protesting the incident. Taking the movement into consideration, the government at the centre and various states announced several steps to ensure the safety of women.⁵⁵

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) How have Gandhi's ideas or techniques of non-violence influenced contemporary movements in India?

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8.4 SUMMARY

Currently most of the world's countries are successfully running democracies. Theoretically, this is the best system of government till now. It is the best because people are involved in it directly or indirectly at every level. Not only this, it is this very system, which provides maximum opportunities to the people for their progress and development. People can themselves decide in this system the mode of their welfare. However, even though being theoretically the best system of government, if one closely observes the democratic nations, one will find that there is unequal development. Subsequently one will find that these nations are more or less victimized by regionalism. They have problems relating to language. They are under clutches of terrorism and communalism. There is also the problem

of negation of human rights in these nations. There are various other problems and peace is not possible as long as these problems exist. All citizens must have equal opportunities and there should be communal harmony in the nations. But, in reality, it is not so.

Gandhi inspires an alternative vision of politics and resistance in a time when oppression is not only getting more overt and physical but also more insidious. His ideology of non-violence is a good point to start from. It may not succeed, but it opens a world of possibilities and encourages us to think outside the box. His life also illustrates how radical ideas are first dismissed, only to be tested and embraced later. Gandhi demonstrated to a world, weary with wars and continuing destruction that adherence to Truth and Non-violence is not meant for individuals alone but can be applied to global affairs too. Gandhi's vision for the country and his dreams for the community as a whole still hold good for India. He got the community to assimilate and reflect true values of humanity and to participate in tasks that would promote the greater good. These issues are still relevant to what free India is and represents. The main cause of worry today is intolerance and hatred leading to violence and it is here the values of Gandhi need to be adhered to with more passion. His ideas, ideals and principles will be relevant forever.

8.5 SUGGESTED READINGS

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8.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Your answer should highlight both active and passive aspect of non- violence.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Highlight the development from the bhoodan , Bhoodan Movement, New Farmers' Movement,Ch ipko Movement,Silent Valley Movement ,Narmada Bachao Andolan.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Your answer should include Prohibition Movement: Anti- liquor movement in Andhra Pradesh, Jan Lokpal Bill-Anti Corruption Movement and the Nirbhaya Movement.

UNIT 9 PACIFIST MOVEMENTS*

Structure

- 9.1 Introduction
 - Aims and objectives*
- 9.2 What is Pacifism?
- 9.3 Pacifism for Conflict Resolution
- 9.4 Gandhi and Pacifism
- 9.5 Eminent Pacifists
- 9.6 Relevance of Pacifism in Contemporary World
- 9.7 Summary
- 9.8 Suggested Readings
- 9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The term Pacifism is derived from the word Pacific that translates into Peacemaking in Latin. It is based on *Paci-* Peace and *-ficus* meaning making. The basic aim of Pacifism is to resolve disputes in a peaceful manner and in most amicable way. Pacifism vehemently opposes war or military action or the use of force. The basic belief is that the political, economic and social ends are not to be met using violence. It rejects the use of force by government or any other organization to achieve their ends. Since the very name suggests that it stands for peace, it is quite evident that pacifism is opposed to war and military action.

It is important to note that there is no set definition of pacifism. It is construed differently by different people though all the categories agree that it stands for peace. The focus is both inward and outward that is at the individual level or towards a societal level, pacifism has to be practiced if we are to live in peace. The basic philosophy, ideology and principles of pacifism find their roots in religious teachings. The proponents of pacifism believe that this ideal, if practiced by all, will lead to world peace and order. Their belief found further support when world leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King advocated and practiced them giving the world a new hope to get freedom from oppression. Pacifism stands as the most effective instrument of conflict resolution in the world.

Aims and Objectives

The basic aim of this Unit is to familiarize the reader with the concepts relating to pacifism. After reading the Unit, you will be able to understand

- What is pacifism and why it is necessary
- The inefficacy of military action and violence
- Gandhi's advocacy of pacifism and

- Eminent persons who advocated and followed pacifism for world peace and order.

9.2 WHAT IS PACIFISM?

Pacifism is described as a belief that any violence, including war, is unjustifiable under any circumstances, and that all disputes should be settled by peaceful means. It applies to all those who oppose war. Pacifism is also defined broadly to include those individuals who, strongly sensitized to the ongoing slaughter on the battlefields and opposed to military solutions, engaged in concerted peace advocacy, which included nonviolent actions (petitions, meetings), the search for a negotiated end to the conflict, and championing principles for a lasting peace. Such activists usually pursued their ideas and programs through pacifist or quasi-pacifist groups (David Patterson, p. 2).

To obtain peace, the essential virtues that are needed to be practiced include tolerance, harmony and love. As described earlier, pacifism rejects war as a means towards peace. As advocated by Count Leo Tolstoy in *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, the meaning, history and purpose of pacifism are widely given in his treatise. Pacifism helps in developing those virtues that are non-violent in nature and that which greatly contribute to peace and order without going to war. The principles of pacifism inspired by Leo Tolstoy had a great impact on Mahatma Gandhi's mind. To him, it was an effective tool for resisting war. He practiced it during his struggle for immigrant rights struggle in South Africa. Gandhi communicated with Tolstoy and these two great men carried the legacy of non-violence and in thought and deed. They laid the foundation for future human rights struggles as evident in South Africa during Nelson Mandela's time and also during the Civil Rights Movement in America led by Martin Luther King. A non-violent resistance to oppression and movement towards self-determination through rejection of violence caught the attention of the world.

The idea to reduce tensions and foster peace existed even before the known break-out of the World War-I. People from all walks of life attended Universal Peace Congresses knowing fully well the efficacy of peace and order. The gradual emergence of an international system and the frequent crises and wars led to unresolved tensions between nations. The year 1889 is said to be the beginning of the conglomeration of pacifists for promoting peace. Europe became the hub of most of such meetings. The resistance to war gained momentum; but this also led to the emergence of various groups propagating peace though not essentially pacifists. Therefore, the support to these groups also varied according to the nations concerned. Another problem was the element of nationalism wherein some members supported their countries becoming aggressors for various reasons. The absence of uniform code and specific purpose were mostly moulded according to the nationalist factors. For example, the activists from France, Italy and Germany and so on had their own reasons to support their nations' prejudicial policies. Therefore, peace activism took different notes as per the requirement of the prevalent times. The activities of the peace activists and the pacifists were more or less disregarded and the efforts to forge international camaraderie did not yield positive outcomes.

Nonetheless, it would be a disregard to think that the pacifists did not make serious efforts. When the war was evident and nations were getting ready for

combats, they did speak up as advocates of peace. They even cabled to the heads of some of the nations to let peace prevail over war but their appeals had no visible effect or impact. In spite of the failure of their efforts, the pacifists gained popularity and were appreciated for their courage to advocate peace in a hostile war environment. The focus of the pacifists during the outbreak of the war featured on the future of the world and as to how peace could be consolidated in the post-war atmosphere. Pacifism gained momentum in Europe and the United States gradually; amidst the fear of wars, they continually preached peace and were eternally optimistic about a peaceful international world order.

There are different types of pacifists:

- Absolute pacifists are absolutely against violence who refuse to kill others whatever the situation may be, be it in self-defence too.
- Conditional pacifists usually oppose wars but support it when their own nation's security is at stake thus calling for military defence as necessary.
- Selective pacifists decide whether a military war is justified or necessary. They even refuse to fight for their country if their country gets into unjust war or invades others.

9.3 PACIFISM FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Paul Bohannon once said “Society is impossible without conflict. But society is worse than impossible without the control of conflict” (Paul Bohannon (ed.), *Law and Welfare: Studies in the Anthropology of Conflict* (New York, 1967), p. xxi). Conflict is part of our everyday life. Gandhi's view of conflict and the importance of expressing it is one of his most significant insights. According to his interpretation, the *Gita* regards each person as possessing truth and untruth together. “The field of battle is in our own body”, Gandhi said in summarising its teachings. One finds altogether a different understanding of the meaning of international conflicts / civil wars or wars in the literature on conflict. Disagreement over the exact notion of the conflict as a term in the domain of international relations dominates until today.

Overall, conflicts are interpersonal, intra-personal, one that involves countries, individuals, groups and so on. Each conflict varies in intensity, perception, intention to resolve and the initiative taken to resolve the conflict. Today we have numerous conflict resolution tools that help in identifying and analyzing the conflict. We also have enthusiastic individuals and organizations who are interested in resolving conflicts between parties. Therefore the existence of conflict does not necessarily mean that the conflict would blow into a full-fledged war.

The world before the First and Second world wars presented altogether a different picture. There were conflicts, players, clash of aspirations and ambitions to expand one's national territories. It definitely was a period of intermittent clashes between nations who believed in realism to the core. That pacifism emerged as a viable alternative during those times was a no mean achievement and the advocates had a commendable role to play to resolve conflicts. There were Quakers, religious pacifists and absolute pacifists who contributed largely towards peace initiatives.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) What do you understand by the concept of Pacifism? Highlight the importance of Conflict Resolution?

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9.4 GANDHI AND PACIFISM

Contrary to the just war tradition, pacifism rejects war as an acceptable means for obtaining peace. Pacifism connotes a commitment to nonviolence in one's personal life that might include the attempt to cultivate pacific virtues such as tolerance, patience, mercy, forgiveness and love. Gandhi was the first to divulge the merits of pacifism in the Indian context. His thoughts and views on non-violence emanated from his observation of Jain traditions, and his extreme reliance on the principles of truth. Like Gandhi, the proponents of non-violent action believe that nonviolence could be all the more successful if society focused its resources on preparing the citizens for nonviolent struggle and on synchronizing nonviolent action. Some glimpses into Gandhi's thoughts on pacifism as a tool of non-violence would make us understand his philosophy.

- Gandhi was an advocate of goodwill between nations and societies. He believed in the moral superiority that imposes a moral responsibility on states as well as individuals to settle disputes at the level of the parties concerned.
- Gandhi argued for elimination of war and to establish and promote world peace. Gandhi felt that it could be pursued better by the statesmen and nations to use or develop certain methods and institutions to work for establishing peace. Some of the methods include third party settlement; world government; disarmament and an international police force in place of a huge international organisation.
- Gandhi recommended Satyagraha, his method of non-violence, as a proxy for military strike. He claimed satyagraha as a law of universal application and can even bring the harshest of opponents to have a change of heart and mind.
- Gandhi expected a sovereign India to carry out a pacifying function in the world which would be a projection of the country's heritage and its nonviolent struggle against the British Empire. Gandhi's notions implicitly deny those ancient Hindu ideas emphasising stratagems, guile and the balance of power as the basis for India's external relations, especially those associated with Kautilya and Kamandaka. Nonetheless Gandhi left to Indian policy makers

some practical advice as well as a moralistic approach to world affairs. Adroitness and idealism are also evident in his views (Gandhi on Pacifism, IGNOU Publication).

- Gandhi believed in forgiving the opponents for their wrong-doings. This ability to forgive the opponent would cultivate a morally superior individual. Since the society is a sum of all its individuals, this quality of forgiveness could contagiously spread to promoting peace and harmony among people and nations.

Gandhi's qualified pacifism is derived from his belief of dynamic nonviolence and his attempt to find the ultimate truth. His reiteration that truth and non-violence are as old as hills gives us a glimpse into his uncompromising position on non-violent strategy and action. Likewise, his methods had to match the end for which one is seeking. The approach should be truthful means to achieve truthful end. His ethics of love and justice are interrelated. Gandhi's pacifism could be best understood by his words on abhorrence of war and his plea to the military proponents to seek peace rather than seeking war. Gandhi held that "as a member of a disarmed, subject nation which needed the spirit of resistance, he would vote for military training in a free India". He disliked the concept of people paying taxes for military actions of their policy makers. He called for the rejection of the same and advocated pacifism as a better alternative.

Gandhi did not favour a rule by the outsiders in a country. The thirst to oppress and rule of unsuspecting and innocent masses through military action was one of the worst kinds of rules, he felt. He made it clear to the proponents of peace movement far and wide that intellectual objectivity is undefended during war-time as one tends to get swayed by the circumstances. Gandhi told pacifists that a military contest should be rejected. Nevertheless, he was convinced that the Spanish Republicans fighting Franco, the Chinese struggling against Japan, and the Poles resisting Germany, are fair enough though he was dead against the methods of violent defence. Gandhi found that justice always rests with one party to a conflict; though military action is deplorable, he said that some amount of good can emerge from this kind of situation.

Gandhi's ideas about war cut across unqualified pacifism, conditional pacifism and patriotic realism. As an unqualified pacifist, Gandhi believed that nothing of value is produced from military conflict. This view can be found in his idea during the period 1909-1914, in his comments about Western democracies immediately after World War I and during the early years of World War II. It is seen also in his condemnation of nuclear war. As an absolute pacifist, he is more utopian than his general premises suggest (Gandhi on Pacifism).

Gandhi believed that the peace efforts following the First and Second World wars were just eyewash. Firstly, after the World War I, the Allies were as devious and malicious as Germany. Their clandestine treaties and military testimony were proof of this and did not match up to the dignified position as someone who could forgive the wrongdoers. This eventually led to the holding of grudges and finally led to the clash of ideologies yet again plunging the world into an unwarranted Second war that was all the more destructive. As the World War II broke out, he said on introspection that the peace makers at Versailles have consistently denied justice to Germany by their non-peaceful overtures. Further, Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points for its so-called peace initiatives was

indirectly an attempt to seek war and unleash violence. Expressing his anguish in 1939, when the war broke out between the parties concerned, he said, "After all, what is the gain if the so-called democracies win? War certainly will not end. Democracy will have adopted all the tactics of the Fascists and the Nazis, including conscription and all other forcible methods to compel and exact obedience. All that may be gained at the end of the victory is the possibility of a comparative protection of individual liberty."

The 'Royden Affair' gives an excellent illustration of Gandhi's unconditional pacifism during World War II. Mude Royden, a British pacifist, decided late in 1941 that her capacity for nonviolence was not sufficient for the circumstances in which she found herself. Following her interpretation of Christ's idea, she decided to support the war which she could not effectively diminish. When Gandhi learned of her decision, he criticised her new position and asked her to repent and to return to her former unqualified nonviolence. It does not seem that Gandhi understood that her personal incapacity to observe strict pacifism was a condition to which he himself confessed in the 1920's as one of his explanations for supporting the British cause in World War I (Gandhi on Pacifism).

It is important to note that there were certain changes to the stance of pacifism by Gandhi during the World War II. He permitted a defence theatre for operations against Japan under the terms of a treaty with the democracies. The defence of India-Burma frontier became a necessary action and he did not object to it. This is not to say that he advocated military action; where necessary, he felt that non-violence could play a greater role in settling conflicts. In this context, Gandhi was driven more by a feeling of patriotism. In reality, during the war times, the pacifists in various parts of the world were divided by their loyalty to their respective nations and had to shun the pacifist notions though they continued to write and advocate peace and pacific settlements. Perhaps this constitutes one of the varying shifts of the pacifists during the war times. Like Gandhi, they too were torn between defending their respective nations from the onslaught of the aggression and making shifts towards use of little military action as the circumstances warranted. He was critical of the war and the military action that ended in unprecedented violence. He was also extremely pained at the use of atomic bomb and condemned it as a ghastly act. He said that war criminals should be reformed so as to make them peace emissaries; the war criminals were 'not confined to the Axis Powers alone'. He said that Roosevelt and Churchill are equally responsible for war and not just blame the Fascist leaders Hitler and Mussolini. He lamented the humiliation meted out to the opponents during the war times.

That the peace overtures did not take place during the war times cannot be asserted. As Gandhi continued to proclaim his opposition to war, peace efforts, though in small numbers were being made during that time. An example is being cited from the description given by David Patterson: "As the war continued with no apparent end in sight, however, concerns about the purposes of the war and the nation's peace aims surfaced. In the fall of 1914, a new group, *Bund Neues Vaterland* (New Fatherland League), was founded in Berlin. Consisting of intellectuals, liberals, socialists, and pacifists, with sympathetic support from reform-minded diplomats, aristocrats, and businessmen, the league set forth an internationalist program. It hoped for a negotiated peace, but its members were mostly united in their opposition to ultra-nationalists' annexationist war aims.

Though comprising only a few hundred members, the group managed to publish and circulate a number of pamphlets that articulated its internationalist program (David Patterson, p. 8).”

Gandhi was opposed to the war and its destruction. He said that it did not benefit anyone; instead it wrought upon serious consequences to those who directly and indirectly participated in it leaving a trail of loss in terms of people, finances and resources. He also questioned as to why few men should decide who the aggressor and who the victim is. They all belonged to the same mould as they participated in the war. He was pained that instead of sorting out conflicts peacefully, nations resorted to war thereby leaving behind all the efforts being made by peace-loving people all over the world. Thus Gandhi’s pacifism oscillated between his principles of idealism and patriotism. But we need to remember that it is his astounding contribution towards non-violence that inspired many leaders to pursue peaceful methods for liberating themselves in future without shedding blood.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) Mahatma Gandhi is a staunch pacifist and advocated non-violence thoroughly. Discuss at length.

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9.5 PROMINENT PACIFISTS

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)

Among the pacifists of the 19th Century, Count Leo Tolstoy stands tall. Russian writer and philosopher, he fought in the Crimean war but became a Christian pacifist. He greatly influenced Mahatma Gandhi with his writings and also had communicated with him on several occasions. Gandhi considered him as his spiritual guide and mentor.

Albert Einstein (1879-1955):

Scientist of great eminence, Albert Einstein was a great pacifist too. He abhorred violence and war and advocated peace. He was full of praise for the principles of Gandhi’s non-violence and truth and considered as one of the greatest human beings that walked on this earth. Einstein openly declared that he was a militant pacifist asserting his position as a peace-lover. He said that people should refuse to go to war and only then the wars would end.

Emile Arnaud (1864-1921):

An advocate of non-violent conflict resolution, he propounded the use of the term ‘pacifism’ in the 19th century. He was known for his ideas on justice, humanity, harmony and tolerance towards each other.

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)

A staunch opponent of war, Russell campaigned against use of military action against others. He advocated nuclear disarmament and was also jailed for expressing his views on First World War and America's entry into the same. A devoted pacifist, he wrote extensively on peace and its usefulness.

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

A playwright of eminence, he defended and advocated pacifism as the most effective way to solve conflicts. He often quoted Sermon on the Mount for talking peace.

Martin Luther King Jr (1929-1968)

An eminent leader who led American Civil Rights Movement, King Jr was a staunch follower of the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi who refused to leave non-violent principles. His perseverance for peace and tolerance made him one of the most respected leaders of non-violent movements.

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)

Writer and pacifist, Huxley wrote the famous work Brave New World. He was opposed to war and was a staunch proponent of non-violence. He was even rejected for American citizenship as he refused to commit to take up arms to defend it if necessary. He was opposed to war and denounced it vehemently.

Sophie Scholl (1921-1943)

A young student, she was highly opposed to war and participated in the distribution of anti-war leaflets to generate awareness among the public. She opposed the Nazi ideology of Germany. She was consequently executed after being termed as participating in the high treason activities in 1943. She was outspoken till the last moment of her life against the Nazi leaders.

Helen Keller (1880-1968)

Political activist, author and lecturer, Helen Keller took an anti-militarist stance. She was a champion of the women's rights and also supported causes that opposed military intervention of nations.

Vera Brittain (1893-1970)

She was a peace activist and writer and during World War II, she began addressing the people through letter known as Letters to Peacelovers. She was a practical pacifist as she helped the war effort by working as a fire warden and travelling widely to raise funds for Peace Pledge Union's food relief campaign. She wrote articles against apartheid, colonialism and called for nuclear disarmament.

9.6 RELEVANCE OF PACIFISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

The word Pacifism is not a common word in usage today. More often we hear nuclear disarmament, anti-war campaigns, and conflict resolution and so on. Many theorists have come out with the ways and means of conflict resolution and how we can make this world a better place to live in. Does this mean pacifism lost its relevance? Are there no proponents for this invaluable concept? We can

convincingly answer in the negative. Pacifism as a word might not be in usage. But its relevance stands as the most viable alternative to war. This ideology is opposed to war. Its relevance has not faded; instead today the problems of the world have multiplied. We have wars over different issues; we have wars to attain and establish peace. In this conflict ridden world, pacifism stands as a relevant option in a different name in different parts of the world. Pacifism was well rooted in European countries. Later on, it found resonance through eminent leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and a galaxy of prominent leaders all over the world.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Write a short note on the contribution of the pacifists around the world.

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9.7 SUMMARY

In this Unit, we have studied the origins and rise of pacifism as a concept and how it came to prominence during the war years and after. We have come to understand the different types of pacifism and what its main objectives are. One of the most prominent leaders in the world, Mahatma Gandhi advocated pacifism and voiced his support for the same. His satyagraha or nonviolent force is also influenced by this concept. Some of the most learned men of the 19th and 20th centuries have voiced their support for pacifist ideology and by opposing wars and in the process even drawing the ire of their governments. Nevertheless, pacifist ideology and its anti-war stance continue to inspire the activists of peace and harmony. That this continues to come into the discourses of writers, artists, activists and policy makers speak volumes of its relevance even in the contemporary world.

9.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

Sharp, Gene. *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*, Porter Sargent Publishers, Boston, 2005.

Gandhi on Pacifism, (IGNOU Publication on the course Political Thought).

David S. Patterson., *Pacifism*, International Encyclopedia of the First World War (Online edition, last updated 8th October, 2014)

Gene Sharp., *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential*., Porter Sargent Publishers, Boston, 2005.

9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Your answer should highlight the idea of peaceful settlement of dispute through peaceful means of petition, talk, and dialogue .Non Violence and the peace as essential to dispute settlement.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) The contribution of Gandhi to the cause of peace building through love, truth and non violence needs special mention.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Your answer should include the contribution of Albert Einstein, Bertrand, Martin Luther King Jr ,Aldous Huxley ,Helen Keller .



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UNIT 10 WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS*

Structure

10.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

10.2 Gandhi's Perspective on Women

10.3 Nature of Women's Movements

10.4 Women's Movements in India

10.4.1 Chipko Movement

10.4.2 Narmada Bachao Andolan

10.4.3 Anti-dowry Movement

10.4.4 Prohibition Movement: Anti-arack / liquor movement in Andhra Pradesh

10.4.5 Movement against Khap Panchayat

10.4.6 Gulabi Gang

10.4.7 Movement against AFSPA in Manipur and Naked protest in Manipur

10.4.8 Nirbhaya Movement

10.5 Fundamental Rights v/s Muslim Personal Law

10.5.1 Shahbano case

10.5.2 Triple Talaq

10.6 Summary

10.7 Suggested Readings

10.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In India women have long been embodied as 'shakti' the power of creation. In ancient India women enjoyed equal rights in religious and cultural ceremonies. They were free to work outside the house and exercise their rights and be vocal about any issue. As time passed due to various socio-cultural events women's status in the Indian society took a backseat. The role of women has been constructed and reconstructed through reform movements, moral codes, normative values, education and ethics to meet social aspirations and compulsions of time.

Ground realities show that in post-independent India a dichotomy vis-à-vis the role and position of women in India is rampant. Indians pray to women goddesses and yet social evils against women such as dowry, domestic abuse, rape and harassment continue. This is despite the fact that a high percentage of women are now educated and hold jobs outside homes to support their families. Women in India excel in every field be it business, sports, academics etc., yet they are never viewed on par with their male counterparts. The birth of a male child is still celebrated whereas the girl child needs special measures from the government and society to be acknowledged and nurtured. This duality towards the role and position of women in Indian society has led to various women's movements over the years. A number of women's organizations have emerged over the years which are fighting for women's causes and their rights daily all over India. Some of such organizations are All India Women's Conference (AIWC), National

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Commission for Women (NCW), Saheli and Stree Sangarsh in Delhi, Asmita in Hyderabad and Vimochna in Bangalore, Delhi State National Commission etc.

Aims and Objectives

This Unit would enable you to understand

- Status of women in the Indian society in the pre-independence and the post-independence era.
- Gandhi's perspective on women.
- The nature of women's movements in India.
- Various popular women's movements in India post-independence.

10.2 GANDHI'S PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN

Gandhi's views place man-woman discourse much closer to our times. Gandhi was a multifaceted thinker and wrote much on socio-economic, political, religion and ethical issues and concerns. Gandhi's view on women-their place in society and their identity is greatly influenced by his theistic and moralistic approach. He observed, "of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible, none is as degrading, so shocking or shameful as his abuse of the better half of humanity."⁵⁶ He said, "To me women is not the weaker sex, she is nobler of the two, for even today she is the embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge."⁵⁷ He encourages women to follow the path of self-help and self-sufficiency to acquire a subjectivity of their own, independent of the creation of man. He believed women can make a rightful place in society by their own efforts based on principle of Satyagraha. He does not want any woman to consider herself as the object of lust for man, to adorn herself even for her man, for then she will succumb to the order created by man and will become an object instead of subject. Gandhi treats man and woman as one, their problems are in essence one and they live the same life. Thus Gandhi wanted women to be active agents and not passive and he emphasized the need of education for women for gaining their rightful place in society.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.
 ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) What was Gandhi's perspective on women?

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10.3 NATURE OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

There is a major difference between pre-independence and post-Independence women's move-ments in India. The pre-independence movements were mainly about social reforms that had been initiated by men like Leaders of the Brahma Samaj (Raja Ram Mohan Roy) and the Arya Samaj (Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar) were concerned with issues like sati, remarriage, divorce, female education, purdah system, polygamy, and dowry. Gandhi collectively mobilized women to participate in the independence struggle and fight for political freedom as well as their social and political rights. In the early 19th century questions regarding the status of women in the Indian society were mainly raised by elite upper caste Hindu men. Issues like women's education, widow remarriage and campaigns against sati were popularized. In the 1920s Indian women entered into a new phase of feminism leading to the creation of localized women's associations that worked on issues of women's education, livelihood strategies for working class women, as well as national level women's associations such as the All India Women's Conference. The latter was associated with the Indian national congress, and worked within the nationalist and anti-colonial movements, and under the Gandhi's leadership, mass mobilization of women became an integral part of nationalism.

The post-independence movement demanded gender equality, questioned gender-based division of labour and highlighted the oppressive nature of the existing patriarchal structure. There have been four major types of women's movements in India. (a) movements for social, economic and political rights of specific categories of people like tribals, peasants and industrial workers, (b) movements for improvement in conditions of work and independence to women, (c) movements against unequal remuneration at work as compared to men and (d) social movements on issues affecting men and children like abortions, adoption of children, sexual ex-ploitation, etc.⁵⁸

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Discuss the nature of women's movements in India.

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10.4 WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

According to India's Nobel Laureate for Developmental Economics Amartya Sen, organising women to experiment with forms of constructive dissent raises questions regarding their state and society and helping them arrive at answers as

a natural guarantor of development. Women are dealing with power relations in their daily lives through their coping strategies at socio-cultural and economic levels. Even though the common perception of formal politics fails to include women, politics in various forms and manifestations is present in the daily lives of women. This may be attributed to the patriarchal system and the socio-cultural economic and religious norms and practices. Women have been excluded from the political power structures which have resulted in inequitable sharing of resources. In the post-independence era too women have risen on various occasions time and again, united not just for gender related issues, but also spearheaded some significant socio-economic movements in the country.⁵⁹⁵⁹

10.4.1 Chipko Movement (1973)

One of the major issues women deal with on a daily basis is the depletion of resources necessary for day to day living. Women particularly in rural areas have to forage for firewood or walk miles for two pots of water every day. When soil loses its fertility due to deforestation and degradation it falls upon the woman to try and feed her hungry family. India is a developing nation and the race for industrialization has accentuated these problems. The eco-feminist movement is the ongoing struggle of Indian women against these problems in different regions of India. According to Vandana Shiva, "The large number of women participating, even defying their men, demonstrates their innate power or 'shakti'. In India, in spite of women's suppression, there is a universal agreement, even if grudgingly that women are nurturers of nature. The ancient civilisation and texts have often put women on a higher pedestal in the context of ecological/ environmental concerns."⁶⁰

The Chipko Movement, a non-violent, social and ecological movement that originated in the Garhwal Himalayan mountain region of the present Uttarakhand state. The Chipko Movement is also identified chiefly as a women's movement. In 1973 massive floods destroyed life and property in the region of Alaknanda valley. One day the women spotted the labour with axes. These labour had been sent by commercial contractors to cut the trees. The women protested and vowed to protect the trees. Small groups of women kept constant vigilance and hugged the trees in order to prevent the felling. The women trekked far and wide for about 75 days appealing to their counterparts in the region to join the demonstrations and vehemently protest against the commercial exploitation of the forests. Significant catalysts of the movement were women like Mira Behn, Sarala Behn, Bimala Behn, Hima Devi, Gauri Devi, Gunga Devi, Bachni Devi, Itwari Devi, Chamun Devi and many others. Led by Sundarlal Bahuguna, Gauri Devi and Gunga Devi, along with their co-workers, the movement was a much successful one. Consequently, the government imposed a ban on the commercial green felling in the region. While the Chipko movement was primarily a movement demanding ecological protection, the involvement of women in the forefront gave it an added impetus of women asking for a stronger representation in decision making. It further highlighted the role of women as the torchbearers of similar movements everywhere.

10.4.2 Narmada Bachao Andolan (1985)

The 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' or 'Save the Narmada Movement' was essentially a movement against the irregular and irresponsible pattern of development. It was a crusade to ensure justice of the affected people due to dam construction.

The main thrust of the Andolan was to oppose the Sardar Sarovar Project, the largest dam to be built on the Narmada. The struggle started in 1985, relied on hunger strikes, solidarity marches and mass media publicity to spread awareness of the issue, making it one of the pioneering non-violent struggles undertaken to ensure justice to the people. In 1989, it became a full-fledged environmental and livelihood movement, vehemently opposing the dam construction and demanding a just resettlement policy. The efforts of a single woman-Medha Patkar for 32 years eventually led to an independent review of the project by the World Bank, one of the sponsors of the project and eventually to its withdrawal in 1995. She was an inspiring leader of the movement and undertook several fasts and hunger strikes. She along with other activists of the movement faced stern police action and lathi charges throughout the course of the struggle.

10.4.3 Anti-dowry Movement (1980-)

The Dowry Prohibition Act came into being in 1961. Dowry a social evil has plagued Indian society and women since ancient times. This is one of the main reasons why a girl-child is viewed as a burden by people or families. In the 1980s dowry deaths began to be reported from all parts of India and the quiet protests against these erupted into a stronger movement. However, in 1977, the movement gained more momentum when women started demanding not only an end to dowry but also against crimes committed for dowry, especially murder and abetment to suicide.

Protests began in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat. In Delhi, the first organisation to raise the issue of dowry and crimes related to it was Mahila Dakshata Samiti. It was however, Stree Sangharsh, a feminist group that made dowry harassment a topic of discussion in households. On June 1, 1979, they organised a protest march against the death of Tarvinder Kaur, a woman who was burned by her mother-in-law and sister-in-law, for dowry. The initiative was in fact taken by Indraprastha College Women's Committee, who approached Stree Sangharsh to organise the march. Progressive Students Organization also supported the other two, showing the enthusiasm and effect that such social issues had on the youth. The agitation became a national success and was covered by the press extensively, with many more protests organised all over Delhi.

These movements showed the effects that women's groups and feminists had on the society in raising the issue of dowry harassment in the public arena. However, they also faced various obstacles in reaching out to people, most prominent among them was the societal attitudes towards marriage. The women who suffered at the hands of their husbands or in-laws, often continued to stay with them due to lack of any other alternative. Going back to their parents' home or living separately was not considered desirable as the women and their natal family had to suffer social stigma, and landlords didn't rent houses to single women for fear of them being sex workers or thought to be one by others. Moreover, women were (and still are) socially conditioned to be obedient, submissive to their husbands that even after physical, sexual and/or mental abuse, the women stayed with their husbands out of duty.

The movement continued religiously from all sections of society and by the efforts of Nari Raksha Samiti and Mahila Dakshata Samiti There were further developments in the legal system of the country. In December 1983 the Criminal Law (2nd Amendment) Act was passed, introducing Section 498A to the Indian

Penal Code (IPC). According to this section, cruelty, specifying both physical and mental harassment, was made a non-bailable offence, punishable by up to two years in jail and a fine. Indian Evidence Act was also amended and Section 113A was included in it that helped with proving abetment to suicide. Lastly, there was also an amendment of Section 174 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC), which made it compulsory to do a post-mortem of a woman who died within seven years of marriage. Even earlier the Central Government, in November 1980 had ordered mandatory investigation and post-mortem of a woman who died within five years of marriage under unnatural circumstances. In September 1980 the Haryana government made it compulsory that all unnatural deaths of married women were to be registered as murder (Section 302, IPC), while cases with abetment to suicide were to be registered under Section 306 of the IPC.⁶¹

10.4.4 Prohibition Movement: Anti-arrack/Liquor Movement in Andhra Pradesh (1993-94)

The prohibition movement was a revolt against familiar happenings of liquor addicts, spending women's wages, selling away household goods, and indulging in drunken brawls and domestic violence of various sorts. The anti-arrack / liquor movement started in Dubagunta, a remote village in Nellore through Rosamma, an elderly woman who was inspired by the lessons of the adult education programme. Protests by women of the village spread to neighbouring villages. Information about protests spread through word of mouth and through established social networks. Spontaneous actions by women in many communities in other districts also occurred, breaking the pre-existing social norms i.e., patriarchy and non-participation of women in the public domain.

Though the anti-arrack agitation in Andhra Pradesh was built on the initiative and participation of women, a multitude of organizations got involved in this movement and helped to mobilize women across the State. The participating organizations supported women to sustain the struggle for a ban on liquor and arrack. The organizations ranged from national, regional, grassroots women's units and issue-based informal groups to political parties with different ideological orientations, priorities and political motivations. They came together to fight against liquor/arrack, the habit as well as State policy. It was considered necessary first to change the policy of the State in favour of a ban on arrack and liquor.

Haryana and Andhra Pradesh, the two states that experimented with prohibition gave it up due not only to financial reasons but also because they were unable to control illicit distillation and bootlegging. Haryana made several attempts at prohibition, but it finally gave it up. Women's organizations that had spearheaded the campaign for the ban on liquor themselves supported the lifting of prohibition because they found that men, denied their drink through legitimate channels, took to illicit liquor. This resulted in a spate of spurious liquor tragedies. Andhra Pradesh introduced partial prohibition in 1994 through a ban on illicit liquor. It was preceded by protracted agitation and a major social movement for prohibition by women.

In the initial stages of agitation, many women were lathi charged and some were arrested by police. They were threatened by the arrack and liquor contractors, few women activists were beaten up by hooligans employed by the arrack contractors. Women overcame many such hurdles without resorting to violence

thanks to the support from the print media and the opposition political parties and their front organizations. Endowed with cadres and resources, the participating organizations played an important role in building the anti-arrack movement to a crescendo, thereby converting an emotion-ridden movement by disparate ad hoc groups at the grassroots into a broad-based movement. With this, the movement gained unprecedented momentum. It soon became a political movement, sending shock-waves to the political establishment. The latter reacted with police action in the initial stages, but were later forced to give in, change its earlier stand and come up with a time-bound programme in favour of prohibition.

The anti-arrack movement of Andhra was a roaring success for a number of reasons. It centered on a simple and transparent issue i.e., prohibition, which could be understood by all. Women from the lower strata participated in large numbers. The movement gained momentum and sustained because of support from the vernacular media and a large number of voluntary organizations and political groups. The movement gained strength as it was able to manage the available resources (people, material, ideas and organization) effectively. Once the movement gained popularity and received a bandwagon effect, it became explosive and unstoppable, diluting resistance from those in authority. Above all the movement stayed true to the character of a successful non-violent movement i.e. disciplined disruption.

10.4.5 Movement against Khap Panchayats (1995)

In 1995, a young boy in Jind district of Haryana married a girl from his village against the orders of the khap panchayat. As a punishment, the panchayat members ruled that the boy's 12-year-old sister should be raped. A bitter struggle ensued between the men and women of the village. The men were supportive of the ruling of the panchayat and the women vehemently protested against it. Jagmati Sangwan-a reformer along with over 1000 women organized the protest. Even women married to some of the men who supported the panchayat ruling protested against the panchayat's ruling.

This was one of the first mass movements organised by Sangwan. Over the years she went on to spearhead a strong women's movement in Haryana, mobilizing close to 50,000 women to join the Janwadi Mahila Samiti. She along with her supporters led passionate campaigns against female foeticide and honour killing in the state. Her biggest targets were the Khap panchayats, who she believes operate along the notion of women being the honour of the family.

10.4.6 Gulabi Gang (2002)

In 2002, Suman Singh Chauhan of Badausa in Uttar Pradesh's Banda was faced with an incident wherein her friend was beaten up by her alcoholic husband. She gathered some of her friends and neighbours and rushed to her friend's house and thrashed her friend's husband publicly. This incident sparked off the origin of a group of women vigilantes in Badausa who took it upon themselves to correct social evils.

Calling themselves the Gulabi Gang (pink gang), the group did not just limit their activities to a fight against gender based social evils, but also battled against several other wrongdoings and crimes such as hoarding, bribery, caste discrimination etc. Wearing pink sarees and carrying bamboo sticks, they frequently resorted to violence in order to make their voices heard.

Badausa is listed among the 200 poorest districts in India and here illiteracy, caste and gender violence are widespread. Most of the women in the gang belonged to the Dalit community. Speaking to BBC, the current self-proclaimed leader of the gang, Sampat Pal Devi said, "Nobody comes to our help in these parts. The officials and the police are corrupt and anti-poor. So sometimes we have to take the law in our hands. At other times, we prefer to shame the wrongdoers."

10.4.7 Movement against AFSPA in Manipur and Naked Protest in Manipur (2000-)

The people of Manipur have since long struggled against the Armed Forces' Special Powers Act (AFSPA). The people believe that this counter-insurgency law has created more unrest in their state than bring peace. The anti-AFSPA movement in Manipur raises issues of justice, accountability, and fundamental rights to life and liberty, all essential to the future and present functioning of Indian democracy.

Irom Sharmila has been the visible face of the anti-AFSPA movement. She kept a sixteen-year long fast to protest against AFSPA and to help create worldwide public awareness. She broke her epic fast, on August 9, 2016 because she decided it was time to experiment with a new strategy i.e., contesting elections, winning power and instituting good governance. Support for Irom's cause started pouring in from various quarters like the National Association of People's Movements (NAPM), Naga People's Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR), women's groups, human rights and civil society groups in Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata etc.

During the course of Irom Sharmila's fast a shocking incident took place which united the women in Manipur like never before. On July 11, 2004 a 32-year-old woman named Thangjam Manorama was picked up by members of the Assam Rifles (a paramilitary force unit in India) stationed in Manipur on allegations of her being part of the banned People's Liberation Army. Next morning, she was found raped and murdered with bullets pumped into her vagina.

Five days after the murder, 30 women came out on the streets of Imphal in protest against the army atrocity against Manorama. Stark naked, they walked down to the Kangla fort in Imphal where the Assam Rifles was stationed, carrying a board that read 'Indian Army rape us'. The women all screamed that, "We are all Manorama's mothers." The shocking protest eventually resulted in the Assam Rifles vacating the Kangla fort. Though, the struggle of Manipuri women against AFSPA still continues due to mitigating political factors.

10.4.8 Nirbhaya Movement

In December 2012, New Delhi witnessed a horrific crime—a female medical student was violently gang-raped on a moving bus and then dumped onto the highway, injured and unconscious. While she didn't survive the attack, Nirbhaya, as she was named by the media, sparked a revolution in India. People fiercely reacted against the incident and clearly expressed that they have had enough. After the incident, thousands of people came out on streets to protest in several parts of the country. The movement also created a stir in social media where people changed their display picture to a black dot and tens of thousands of people signed a petition protesting the incident. Taking the movement into consideration,

the government at the centre and various states announced several steps to ensure the safety of women.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) Discuss the contribution of various women's movements to the question of women's empowerment.

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10.5 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS V/S MUSLIM PERSONAL LAW

The women's movement has not been able to "decommunalize" women's issues. Women's organizations and feminists did not know how to deal with the problems of women belonging to different religious groups. By the time the feminist movement began in the 1970s, minority identities had become rigid. This divisive environment affected Muslim women. Religious fundamentalists tried to place the onus of preserving religious-cultural identity on women. This identity syndrome, with women in the centre, diverted attention away from Muslim women's grim realities and the deviations from the actual Islamic position.

Having been a secular movement, the women's movement found itself facing a difficult challenge that it did not know how to handle. On the conceptual level, Indian feminists were in a dilemma: how to assimilate Muslim women's issues into broader feminist issues and, at the same time, safeguard their religious and cultural identity. This has been most obvious in the case of Muslim Personal Law. Placing Muslim women's issues within the confines of religion has further marginalized them, and created hesitancy among the secular feminists in addressing their problems for fear of hurting religious sentiments.

10.5.1 Shahbano Case (1985)

Shahbano case is a typical example of this. Denied maintenance by her husband Shahbano's case reached the Supreme Court in 1986 whereby the Supreme Court upheld Shahbano's petition under section 125 and Muslim Personal Law. The Muslims rose up against this and the bill Muslim Women's Maintenance of Right on Divorce Act of 1986 was tabled in the Parliament despite opposition from many quarters. The then ruling party Congress backed the bill and which was passed because the government wanted to compensate and appease the Muslims, particularly after the breaking of the locks at Ayodhya at the Babri Masjid site. All over India there were mass protests both for and against the passing of this legislation. While women's groups protested that the government was sacrificing the interests of women for the sake of electoral politics. Though it was seen that

many Muslim women came out in support of the bill, but the women's organizations realized that women could be polarized along religious lines. This panacea of sisterhood was no longer one that activists could unproblematically believe in.⁶²

10.5.2 Triple Talaq (2016)

Muslim men are allowed to end their marriage by saying the word 'talaq' three times to their wives. According to the All India Muslim Personal Board it is a sinful practice, but it is a matter of faith for Muslims. They opine that if men were unable to divorce their wives they would resort to other heinous methods of getting rid of her like murder etc. Modern technology has made it even easier for unscrupulous men to dump their wives by phone, email or text. There have also been instances where men have used Skype, WhatsApp or Facebook for the purpose without taking any responsibilities.

A very vocal campaign against this practice was started around 2005 by Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA). In December, 2012 a public hearing on this issue was held calling for a ban on 'triple talaq'. They wrote letters to the prime minister, the law minister, the minorities' affairs minister and the women and child development minister and collected 50,000 signatures, calling for a ban on triple talaq.

The issue erupted with full force in 2016 when Shayara Bano and Afreen Rehman challenged their triple talaq divorces in the Supreme Court. In the next few days more women and BMMA filed similar petitions in the apex court of the country. A multi-faith bench was set up under Chief Justice J.S. Khehar. The main point was that for the first time Muslim women had fought against their divorces on the ground that their fundamental right had been violated. According to the women the clergy told them that they had no fundamental rights because of the faith they followed. The Supreme Court bench pronounced, "These practices were illegal, unconstitutional, discriminatory and against the modern principles of gender justice." The unilateral, instantaneous triple talaq finds no mention in Sharia or the Quran and it's already banned in 22 Islamic countries, including Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the end, the court did not accept the argument that just because it had been a custom for 1,400 years, it should still be acceptable. Instant divorce is no longer just sinful, it's now also illegal. Muslim women had since long suffered because of patriarchal misogynistic rules of their community and wrong interpretations of their religion.⁶³

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Explain the issue of Fundamental Rights v/s Muslim Personal law debate in detail.

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10.6 SUMMARY

The Indian society is a multicultural society with caste, religion, ethnicity and gender as some of the important aspects influencing politics and the development

of the society. The gender issue has been an important issue in India since colonial times and it has been the basis of women's movements in India. These movements have since long mobilized and united women against violence and discrimination, and in demanding for improved living conditions and their rightful human rights etc. The women's movements have, throughout the colonial and post-colonial rule, not been one movement, but several movements. The movements have been criticized for representing 'women' as a cultural and politically uniform group, simply because women's challenges are not uniform, and depend more on caste, religion, poverty and other social factors like education, rather than their sex. Studies on nutrition from rural areas in Punjab have showed that the gender differences in nutrition among children were greater among land-owning than landless households. This is quite interesting as one might would have expected the opposite, landless being poorer than land-owning possibly leading to girls being more disadvantaged. This indicates that there are more factors than just gender that defines the living conditions, opportunities and challenges many women in India experience.⁶⁴

There are many debates going on around unresolved issues and questions, lending a sort of vibrancy to the women's movement. Crusade against attacks on women with acid by men for a variety of reasons, the urgent need for equal participation of women in Parliament are such issues. The positive achievements since independence are important factors outweighing this debate and controversy. There is the need to celebrate diverse strengths of the Indian women's movement especially its ability to meet challenges from different quarters, that is, challenges from communalism, caste movements etc. From its present position, the Indian feminist movement has a strong enough base on which to build for the future.

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10.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Highlight the moralistic approach of Gandhi towards Women explaining that virtues of sacrifice, suffering, humility, faith and knowledge constitute women's power.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Highlight the following points: movements for specific categories of people like tribals, peasants and industrial workers, movements for improvement in conditions of work and independence to women, movements against unequal remuneration and social movements on the issue of abortion, adoption of children, sexual exploitation, etc.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) The answer should include the summary of Anti-dowry Movement, Prohibition Movement, Movement against Khap Panchayat, Gulabi Gang, movement against AFSPA in Manipur and Naked protest in Manipur and the Nirbhaya Movement.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

- 1) Shahbano Case (1985), and Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA). To be included in the answer.

UNIT 11 ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS*

Structure

- 11.1 Introduction
 - Aims and Objectives*
- 11.2 Environmental Movements
- 11.3 Chipko Movement
- 11.4 Narmada Bachao Andolan
- 11.5 Silent Valley Movement
- 11.6 Water Conservation Movement
- 11.7 Green Peace Movement
- 11.8 Summary
- 11.9 Suggested Readings
- 12.0 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi's life and work have had a pervasive effect on post-independence India. His words and deeds have inspired not only Indians, but people all over the world. Gandhi was a naturalist and he often propagated respecting nature and the environment which nurtured people. His simple living and high thinking, apart from the precepts he set forth in his ashrams, speaks volumes of his adherence to the principle of living with nature. As Guha points out, 'Gandhi's reservations about the wholesale industrialization of India are usually ascribed to moral grounds—namely the selfishness and competitiveness of modern society, but they also had markedly ecological undertones'.⁶⁵ Raghuramaraju (Ed). *Debating Gandhi: A Reader*. Oxford University Press. New Delhi. 2006.

This is further echoed in the words of Pravin Sheth who remarks that Gandhi warned against three uninterrupted movements that create environmental degradation problems, such as uninterrupted industrialization, urbanization and profit motives of the capitalist system at the cost of developing countries. He further says that 'Gandhi expected a balanced approach all along the line so as to threaten neither man nor nature. Gandhi was ignored when he insisted on such equilibrium between technology, economy and society. But experiences have forced us to turn to him with appreciation'.⁶⁶ Gandhi's preference for a traditional way of life endowed with natural air, water and sunshine and dislike for urban life is well known. By speaking for voluntary reduction of wants and use of minimum resources, Gandhi set a fine example to emulate for many a generation to come. Undoubtedly, we can say that Gandhi's ideas and views influenced the later environmental thinking, practice and also created the momentum for further non-violent environmental movements.

In his lifetime Gandhi himself was not actively involved in any environmental movement, but it was his ideals of Satyagraha, ahimsa and self-sacrifice which formed the planks of environmental movements that followed later on. Gandhi

foretold that unbridled development and human greed would lead to environmental degradation and this would increase human hardship.

Aims and Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand:

- Influence of Gandhi's philosophies and methods on environmental movements.
- Causes for the emergence of environmental movements and their significance.
- Major and popular environmental movements that have taken place over the years.
- Techniques and methods adopted to make the environmental movements a success.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) How have Gandhi's philosophies, ideologies and methods influenced the environmental movements in the contemporary times?

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11.2 ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

Environmental movements are generally understood as those movements that are taken up against the development projects as the latter depend on vast amounts of natural resources and their injudicious use and exploitation. This brings in with it the concept of 'resource exploitation' through 'conquest over nature', which is highly mistaken as available in abundance. It overlooks the fact that nature provides only to a certain extent and that resource depletion poses major threat to human survival. Therefore the movements are often organized to protest against the exploitation of the nature thus bringing in the concept of ecological and environmental sustainability.

According to the noted environmentalist, Dr. Vandana Shiva, 'movements are major social and political processes, however, and they transcend individual actors. They are significant precisely because they involve a multiplicity of people and events which contribute to a reinforcement of social change'.⁶⁷ The movements related to environmental and natural resource protection witnessed large participation from the concerned local and other communities. These have been movements of social change that have set classic examples for all times to come.

It is also appropriate to quote her words relating to the ecological movements. "Ecology movements are political movements for a non-violent world order in

which nature is conserved for conserving the options for survival. These movements are small, but they are growing. They are local, but their success lies in non-local impact. They demand only the right to survival yet with that minimal demand is associated the right to live in a peaceful and just world. With the success of these grassroots movements is linked the global issue of survival. Unless the world is restructured ecologically at the level of world-views and life-styles, peace and justice will continue to be violated and ultimately the very survival of humanity will be threatened.”⁶⁸

Unlike the West, India’s concern for environment and nature date back to centuries where the concern for natural resources and elements formed a part of the lifestyle of the people. Environmental movements in India have been more or less conducted at the grassroots levels and more so not by the educated elite but by simple village folk and tribals depending on the region. These have been initially characterized by protests against the big companies indiscriminately using the forest resources for commercial purposes. Later the movements focused on water issues, flora and fauna, biodiversity, and massive deforestation till the recent river pollution, the prime examples being the Ganga and Yamuna clean-up action plans.

One of the earliest known cases of forest conservation dates back to 1730, where around 300 members of the Bishnoi community in the Rajasthan State, led by a woman called Amrita Devi tried to protect the Khejri trees from felling by clinging to them and sacrificed her life in the process. The natural resource exploitation is said to have started prominently during the British rule, when the enormous forest resources were used for commercial purposes and for the railway network link. The local tribes and communities are especially involved in saving the natural resources not only for sustaining their livelihood needs but also for the nation at large. Chipko Movement is one such pioneering movement in the post-independent India and set an example that has been emulated by others.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.
 ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) What were the causes for the emergence of various environmental movements?

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11.3 CHIPKO MOVEMENT-1973

The Chipko Movement, a non-violent, social and ecological movement originated in the Garhwal Himalayan mountain region of the present Uttarakhand state. The region is known for its fragile ecology, often prone to earthquakes, erosive

rivers and steep valleys that are least conducive to agricultural growth. Its vast forest cover and reserves enables the local communities to pick the fodder, fuel and fibers that contribute to their daily sustenance. With no opportunities for viable income, the men folk search for income outside the region while the women are left in the villages often leaving them as the real custodians of the available resources.

The region was also prone to massive deforestation as the commercial exploitation of forests took place on a gigantic scale in order to meet the needs of ever growing population and urban settlers. It is important to note that the first forest laws were enacted during the British rule. With more demand for wood for commercial and rail link purposes, in Tehri, Garhwal State, between 1840 and 1885, the forests were leased out to contractors for exploitation.⁶⁹ 'The forest laws were enacted to safeguard the vested interests of contractors. Power moved from the hands of the local people into those of government forest officials.'⁷⁰ The encroachment by the influential contractors was highly resented by the local population, an encroachment on the resources over which they had traditional rights.

With massive felling of trees and deforestation in the hills, and with the trees becoming few and far, the village women, who rely mainly on the forest resources for the sustenance, found it difficult to spend enormous time and energy in collecting the necessary fodder and fuel. They would, sometimes go to distance of at least five kilometers to collect the necessary supplies. With the denuding forests, there was also a danger of devastating floods and landslides submerging the houses, crops, and affecting the movement of people and throwing out of gear the irrigation facilities.

In 1973 massive floods destroyed life and property in the region of Alaknanda valley. This was attributed to the denuding of the forests for commercial purposes and felling of trees in the region. Large scale auction and plans for felling of trees in the region was planned by the commercial contractors but had to backtrack their activities because of the active role of the women and the villagers who kept constant vigil on the former's activities. On one such occasion, sensing the absence of men from the village, the commercial contractors sent their labour to axe the trees before the villagers mobilized and started protecting the trees. Later, as the women spotted the labour with axes, who had come to cut the trees, they protested and vowed to protect the trees. Small groups of women kept constant vigilance and hugged the trees in order to prevent the felling. Led by Sundarlal Bahuguna, Gauri Devi and Gunga Devi, along with their co-workers, the movement was a much successful one. Consequently, the government imposed a ban on the commercial green felling in the region.

This incident gave the movement a further momentum to mobilize all the villages in the region to protest against the commercial felling of trees, as it led to the fragile ecology dwindling further. The women trekked far and wide for about 75 days appealing to their counterparts in the region to join the demonstrations and vehemently protest against the commercial exploitation of the forests. The method of hugging the trees to prevent their felling was actually used for the first time by Dhoom Singh Negi in Salet forest near the village of Pipleth in Henwal.⁷¹

The Chipko movement was not confined to Reni but spread to Tehri, Kumaon and other areas of the State like Adwani, Amarsar, Chanchnidhar, Dungari, Paintoli

and Badiyagarh. The most beneficial outcome of the movement was the Government's order imposing a ban on the felling of trees in the region apart from the joint forest management mechanisms that followed later. Chipko thus stands out as the most significant movement in the arena of environmental protection. It further highlights the role of women as the torchbearers of similar movements everywhere.

11.4 NARMADA BACHAO ANDOLAN-1985

Narmada is the largest west-flowing river in the Indian peninsula. It arises on the plateau of Amarkantak in the Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh. It covers the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and parts of Rajasthan. On its basin, the villages constitute 81 per cent and comprises mainly of tribal population consisting of Bhils, Gonds, Baigas and others whose primary occupation is agriculture. The Narmada basin is rich in its natural resources.

According to the planners of India, Narmada valley was a backward region that lacked irrigation facilities. The mineral and natural resources were unexploited, hydro-electric power was under-utilised and infrastructural facilities were dismal. The area showed characteristic features of underdevelopment like low electricity consumption, little industrial activity, slow urban growth, below average agricultural yields, lack of modern medical, educational and banking facilities were very much evident.

Though the idea of the project was conceived in 1946, the states through which the river takes its course got entangled in deciding the resource use, the area to be irrigated and sharing of water. The project commenced after the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDT) gave its consent for the planning and work on the largest single river valley project in India. The project also promised to provide employment, to check floods, supply water for domestic and industrial use and promote tourism.

In reality, the project not only lacked meticulous planning but also careful implementation as it involved a large-scale exploitation of natural resources on the river basin, threatening to submerge the vast areas of forest and agricultural land. The region being geologically seismic zone, the earthquakes posed severe threat to the region, threatening an acute damage to the dam. Over 150,000 acres of forest land came under the submergence threat and the total area of forest under the threat of flood constituted around 350,000 hectares, amounting to around 11 per cent of the river basin's forests. The submergence also posed immense pressure on the adjoining areas and its land resources due to large scale migration of people. These people felt threatened by the fear of getting submerged.

The NWDT laid down certain directives to take care of the displaced people and the compensation that needs to be paid, in place of the land they had lost. It called for an adequate resettlement grant, and the provision of basic amenities like housing sites, primary schools for children, health dispensaries and transport facilities. The directives did not contain the provision for land acquisition for the displaced and directed the latter to acquire land with the resettlement sum provided by the government. It had also posed new challenges like unemployment and inadequate measures of alternative incomes in the new villages. The rehabilitation efforts varied from state to state with Gujarat providing better compensation and

resettlement facilities as compared to Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. With no hope for a secure economic future, the displaced launched the 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' in order to assert their rights and ensure justice. The Andolan (struggle/movement) is one of the longest struggles against a development project in the post-independent era, asserting the rights of the displaced and demanding an adequate compensation package for such communities.

The 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' or 'Save the Narmada Movement' is essentially a movement against the pattern of development as mentioned above. It is a crusade to ensure justice of the affected people due to dam construction. The main thrust of the Andolan is to oppose the Sardar Sarovar Project, the largest dam to be built on the Narmada. The struggle started in 1985, relied on hunger strikes, solidarity marches and mass media publicity to spread awareness of the issue, making it one of the pioneering non-violent struggles undertaken to ensure justice to the people. In 1989, it became a full-fledged environmental and livelihood movement, vehemently opposing the dam construction and demanding a just resettlement policy. Medha Patkar, an inspiring leader of the movement, undertook several fasts and hunger strikes that eventually led to an independent review of the project by the World Bank, one of the sponsors of the project and eventually to its withdrawal in 1995. The activists of the movement faced stern police action and lathi charges throughout the course of the struggle. The activists who took part in the struggle hailed from Badwani, Omkareshwar, Alirajpur, Jhabua etc.

The matter was finally taken up in the Supreme Court where NBA filed a writ petition. The court did not stop the construction of the dam but allowed it to continue with specific conditions. Though the verdict was not in favour of the NBA after a lengthy legal tussle, the NBA continued its incessant non-violent struggle; following an unwarranted police action against the activists, the Jabalpur High Court recognised the displaced people's right to protest, hunger strike and peacefully conduct their struggle. It passed orders to the state government to adequately compensate those Satyagrahis who were subjected to illegal arrest and police action. The issue of rehabilitation was discussed again recognising their right to life and livelihood. Many of the activists courted arrests, waged non-violent struggles and demanded land-based rehabilitation for the landless apart from the demand to take action against the corrupt officials involved in disbursing the funds to the re-settlers. There were also massive struggles as the Indira Sagar and Omkareshwar affected people continued their indefinite hunger strike for many days and were joined by others who started three-day relay fast in solidarity. It was evidently clear that the people have asserted their resolve to carry on the struggle, with peaceful agitations to achieve their full rights and just demands.

But the subsequent hearing of the court and its verdict severely reprimanded the officials concerned to carry out the rehabilitation of the displaced without which the dam construction may be halted. While allowing the continuation of the dam construction, the court passed strict orders for the rehabilitation work that required an immediate attention simultaneously. NBA has been effective in its multiple strategies at the executive, legislative and judicial level, campaigning against the destruction and displacement caused by large dams and for the

11.5 SILENT VALLEY MOVEMENT-1986

The Silent Valley National Park is one of the last undisturbed rain forests and tropical moist evergreen forests in India. The park is located in the Nilgiri Hills, Palakkad District in Kerala, South India. The British named the area 'Silent Valley' because of a perceived absence of noisy Cicadas. At first, the Silent Valley got world attention not because of its rich natural diversity, but the successive struggle of the native people against the proposed hydroelectric project in the valley by the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB). In 1928 the location on the Kunthipuzha River at Sairandhri was identified as an ideal site for electricity generation.

The Silent Valley Movement got national attention during the 1980s when the state-led development projects were dominating the scene. The dams were viewed as the 'icons' of development. Plans for a hydroelectric project that threatened the park's high diversity of wildlife stimulated an Environmentalist Social Movement in the 1970s called 'Save Silent Valley'. In 1976 the Kerala State Electricity Board announced a plan to begin dam construction and the issue was brought to the notice of the public.

The movement, in unequivocal terms, underlined the importance of protecting the environment for the generations to come. Protecting the lion tailed Macaque became the symbol of non-violent struggle to save the evergreen forests from total destruction. Many environmental groups like the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and Silent Valley Action Forum participated in the campaign. The prominent leaders were Vandana Shiva, Medha Patkar, Sundarlal Bahuguna, Baba Amte and Sunita Narain. The campaigns launched through the media, both print and electronic, generated public opinion in favour of the protection of the ecosystem of the silent valley.

The movement was first initiated by the local people and was subsequently taken over by the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP). Various scientific studies conducted by KSSP unequivocally emphasized the need for the protection of ecosystem in its pristine form for serving the interests of mankind. It was the biologist leaders of KSSP who identified the importance of protecting the valley because of its rich biodiversity.

The KSSP generated public opinion against the project. It had science groups all over the state and through newsletters and journals it had spread the message among the students and youth as also the general public. It had sent a memorandum to the Kerala government about the issues and problems involved. It had organized street plays, exhibitions, public debates, and also conducted a 'marathon march' which covered around 400 villages. The student community also rose against the proposed project and it was the first time in the history of the state where the students agitated for the protection of the environment.

As a result of the massive campaign launched by KSSP, the Central Government appointed Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, a leading plant geneticist and agricultural Scientist to enquire about the issue. In 1983, the Central Government instructed the State government to abandon the Project and on November 15, the Silent Valley forests were declared as a National Park. On September 1, 1986 Silent Valley National Park was designated as the core area of the Nilgiri Biosphere

Reserve. Since then a long-term conservation effort has been undertaken to preserve the Silent Valley ecosystem.

The Silent valley movement was in several ways crucial to other environmental movements in India. The seminal contribution of the Silent Valley movement is that it educated people regarding the importance of environmental protection. It is further realized that effective environmental protection can be achieved only through the active participation of local people in collaboration with the Science Community with the committed involvement of the civil society.

11.6 WATER CONSERVATION MOVEMENT-2000

The water conservation movement is an attempt for protecting our traditional methods of water conservation. The traditional knowledge systems were overshadowed by the big developmental projects of the state. The movements also bring forth an alternative to the existing dominant models of development. The over-exploitation of the ground water for industrial purposes causes drastic decrease in the availability of water. With globalization in progress, big water market lobbies and their attempts to commodify water have changed the symbiotic relationship between the 'nature and man'. Indeed, the poor sections in the society are the victims of this neo-colonial exploitation.

The changed role of the state from that of a provider to facilitator has very much reflected in the water policy of the state. The state has become the supporter of the MNCs. In this changed scenario, the interests of the people has been neglected and ultimately resulted in various struggles for the protection of the basic natural rights of the individuals and communities. There are movements in the civil domain for the conservation of water. There are two versions of activism namely, a well-defined cooperation between the state and the civil society for water conservation and initiative of the civil society to protect resources without any help from the state. For example, the Madhya Pradesh government has made numerous attempts to create a cooperative relation between the state and the civil society to tackle the water crisis. In the Jal Abhishek Campaign (A People's Movement For Water Conservation), the community became the active participant of water conservation.

The movements which are not seeking support from the state are also making constructive attempts to resolve the water crisis. This is so because the people involved in the movements are not convinced about the role of the state in the society because in the present neo-liberal stage of capitalism, the state has been facilitating global finance capital and has acted as an agent of the MNCs, protecting their interests. Rajendra Singh's 'Rashtriya Jal Chetana Yatra' (National Water Awareness Campaign) can be posited in this context. However, there are attempts to preserve the ground water without any support from the government, and based purely on voluntary activism. For example, Osmanabad, a district in Southern Maharashtra had faced severe drought in three consecutive years. The groundwater has almost depleted and the irrigation projects have failed to cope up with the grim situation. The authorities decided to solve the problem with the people's involvement, without any assistance from the state. In March 2004, the Osmanabad district administration, along with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), launched the "Pani Yatra", in order to create awareness among the local population about the importance of protecting the ground water. The 'yatra' passed

through 40 villages in the district and conveyed the message of the importance of preserving the ground water. The ‘Pani Yatra’ was supported by around 40 NGOs.

The ‘Rashtriya Chetana Yatra’ was an attempt to share the water-related concerns between different communities. It was also a campaign against the attempts to privatize water and commercialize it for the world market. A drive to privatize and commodify water is not only unethical but also destroys community rights and erodes community responsibility in water conservation and sustainable use. The ‘Rashtriya Jal Chetna Yatra’ was committed to rejuvenating the culture and practices of water conservation of the local people. It brings to the fore millions of local traditions (johads) and initiatives like rainwater harvesting to revive rivers, recharge aquifers and rejuvenate nature.

The two movements that we have discussed here share many commonalities. Both have emphasized the importance of ground water sources, for the sustainability of humanity and life forms on the planet earth positing the ‘development’ in a people-friendly and nature-friendly perspective. The movements were anti-imperialist campaigns and strongly supported the democratic means to change the society in a Gandhian way.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Write about two major types of water conservation movements.

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11.7 GREENPEACE MOVEMENT-1971

Greenpeace was an international environmental organization founded in 1969, during a non-violent direct action campaign against US nuclear weapons testing in Alaska. Greenpeace probably has been the most successful of the many environmental organizations that use non-violent action. Certainly it was one of the first, and by combining a philosophical base, clear strategic design, scientific research, political and legal research and lobbying, courageous direct action, and brilliant use of media attention, it has made tremendous gains both for the organization itself and for the environment it has sought to protect. The central philosophy of that original ‘Greenpeace’ organization was non-violent direct action on behalf of the planet earth. It was an inspiring concept, and it created a movement.

Greenpeace remains one of the premier environmental organizations, combining the traditional, political activities and coalitions with nonviolent direct action. It is largely because of its innovative uses of nonviolent action, it has had a large influence on both the agenda of the global environmental movement and various

national and international policies. Its activists spearhead six major campaigns to (1) stop global warming, (2) save ancient forests, (3) eliminate toxic chemical production and pollution, (4) halt the genetic engineering of food, (5) achieve a nuclear-free future, and (6) protect the world's oceans.

11.8 SUMMARY

We live in a world in which science, technology and development are increasingly playing an important role in changing human destiny. However, over-exploitation of natural resources for the purpose of development has led to severe environmental hazards. In fact, the idea of development is itself controversial in the present situation as in the name of development, we are unethically exploiting natural resources. It is true that a science that does not respect nature's needs and a development which does not respect people's needs threatens human survival. The green thoughts of Gandhi give us a new vision to harmonize nature with the needs of people.

Gandhi was not an environmentalist in the modern sense. Although he did not create a green philosophy or write nature poems, he is often described as an 'apostle of applied human ecology'. It is a fact that environmental concerns were minimal in Gandhi's time; but eminent environmental writers like Ramachandra Guha consider him an early environmentalist. His views on nature can be abundantly found in his various writings. His ideas relating to Satyagraha based on truth and non-violence, simple life style, and development reveal how sustainable development is possible without doing any harm to nature and our fellow beings. His idea that 'nature has enough to satisfy every one's needs, but not to satisfy anybody's greed' became an inspiration to modern environmentalism.

Post-independence fast paced development in India led to ecological problems. Need to exploit water resources, forests and land began to harm people dependent on these resources and their very existence. The environmental movements in India began to fight against destabilization of people and loss of natural resources, but it is very clear that they have been deeply influenced by Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha and ahimsa. The 1970s saw the environmental issues coming to the international fora with the Stockholm Conference being one of the pioneering conventions on this issue. India committed itself to the protection of the natural environment according to the International norms and rules.

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11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Your answer should include Gandhi's understanding of possessive self, materialism and modernity as industrialization as key to environmental decay.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Explaining the development model leading to resource exploitation should be the key to answer this question.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) Briefly explain the contribution of various environmental movements in India.