

**BLOCK 4**  
**EVERYDAY STATE AND LOCAL**  
**STRUCTURE OF POWER**

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THE PEOPLE'S  
UNIVERSITY



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## UNIT 10 STATE AND SOCIETY IN INDIA\*

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### Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 State, Nation and Society
- 10.3 Nature of Politics in Independent India
  - 10.3.1 Strategy at the Political Level
  - 10.3.2 Strategy at the Economic Level
  - 10.3.3 Forces which Challenge Nation building Efforts
- 10.4 National Integration
- 10.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 10.6 Key Words
- 10.7 Further Readings
- 10.8 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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After study this unit, you will be able to:

- define and distinguish between state, nation and society;
- Describe nature of politics in independent India;
- Describe the strategies and challenges involved in the task of nation building; and
- Define national integration and describe the forces threatening national integration.

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### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous unit, we discussed the democratic political system.

In this unit, we discuss the three inter-related concepts, namely, **nation, state** and society. We then relate this general discussion to the emergence of the Indian nation state. We examine the strategies and challenges associated with the task of **nation-building** in India. Finally, the last section deals with the issue of national integration.

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### 10.2 STATE, NATION AND SOCIETY

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While discussing politics in modern times, we generally talk of the state, the nation and the society. In the context of Western European experience, the three terms are somewhat coterminous. This is not so in the case of many other places. It is, therefore, essential that we first define these terms.

- i) **State:** The state is a political association, which is characterised by
  - a) territorial jurisdiction,
  - b) a more or less non-voluntary membership,

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\*Adapted by Prof.Rabindra Kumar, from ESO 12,Block 3,Unit13.

- c) a set of rules which define the rights of its members by way of a constitution and
- d) claims to legitimacy of power over its members.

The member of a state is usually referred to as a citizen. More often than not, the state is coterminous with nationality.

- ii) **Nation:** The term refers to group of people who have developed solidarity on the basis of common identity of culture, religion, language and state etc. The national identity of any group, which defines itself as such, may be based on any number of criteria, such as the place of residence, ethnic origin, culture, religion, language.
- iii) **Society:** It is the broadest category of social organisation which includes a large number of social institutions, like kinship, family, economy and polity. In this sense, the term society refers to social relationships which are interlinked. In interacting with each other people form social relationships. Repeated and regularised patterns of social relationships become institutionalised and hence as a relational concept society includes the study of social institutions.

On the other hand, as a substantial concept the term society is a general term which may encompass the state or the nation. It can also be coterminous with either or both of them. For example, the Germanic Society may include the German speaking people of East Germany, West Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland etc. Take another example, Hindu society may include the citizens of Nepal, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

The state may similarly include a number of societies. For example, the Indian State includes diverse societies based on region, religion or language. The tribal societies, such as the Bhil, the Gond or the Naga, form an integral part of the Indian State.

Having discussed the concepts of state, nation and society, we now turn to the nature of politics in Indian society. For this purpose, in the next section, we will discuss the emergence of Indian nation state. You may ask what is a nation state. A nation state refers to a state organised for governing a nation, or perhaps two or more closely related nations. The territory of such a nation is determined by national boundaries and its law is determined, at least in part, by national customs and expectations. In this sense, India can also be discussed as a nation state and to discuss the nature of its national politics, we must first look at the way in which the Indian nation state emerged.

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### 10.3 NATURE OF POLITICS IN INDEPENDENT INDIA

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The major task for the independence movement was not merely to attain political independence from the British rule but also to develop a modern nation state. We can say that some definite steps in this direction were taken at the political level while others were at the economic level. We can discuss both types of strategies followed in India for nation-building.

### 10.3.1 Strategy at the Political Level

The political organisation, which was carrying out the activity of nation-building in India, was mainly the Indian National Congress Party. This political party consisted of diverse sections of population and activists, in some cases, with diametrically opposite political ideology. The members of the Congress Party belonged to different strata of society from the so-called untouchables on the one hand and to the Brahmin and Thakur on the other. There were those who swore by Marxism and some others who wanted '*Hindu Rashtra*' and yet others who wanted to promote Islamic nationalism. Such diversity was not accidental. The leaders of the party were drawn from the urban professional classes. They were convinced that nation-building was as important as political independence. Hence the major thrust of their political activity was to bring together as many diverse groups as possible. The same theme is also visible in the politics after the independence of India.

**The Constitution:** The Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, was the first attempt at nation-building. We have a written constitution, which is a comprehensive document. It provides the foundation or the design of the government. Let us see what this design is.

India has a federal government. A federal government in India implies that authority is divided between the centre and the states. The Constitution has established a parliamentary system of government at both the centre and the states. The word 'parliament' has different connotations, the important ones being that it is an assembly of representatives of the people and it is a body of persons gathered for discussion. In our context, parliament refers to the legislative organ of the government. The President is the constitutional head of the country and the council of ministers headed by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is the head of the executive which is responsible to the Lok Sabha. The parliament consists of the President and the two Houses, namely the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and the House of the People (Lok Sabha).

In the states, the council of ministers is headed by the 'Chief Minister' who is responsible to the Legislative Assembly. Every state has a legislature. Some states have one House while others have two. Where there is one House it is known as the Legislative Assembly or *Vidhan Sabha* and where there are two Houses, one is called the legislative Council (*Vidhan Parishad*) and the other is known as Legislative Assembly (*Vidhan Sabha*). India is a parliamentary democracy and this means that the government is derived from public opinion. It requires political parties, rule by the majority and a responsible government through discussion. Figure 13.1 shows the different constituents of Indian national politics.

By way of building up a united nation state the Constitution of India also lays down, among other things, some "Fundamental Duties" of Indian citizens. Some of them are (a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem, (b) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all people of India, (c) to protect natural environment, (d) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform, (e) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture and so on. Our Constitution not only provides fundamental rights to citizens but also gives directives to the state to provide the necessary economic, social and political benefits to the citizens. It goes to the credit of the leaders of

the early phase of independent India, who were sensitive to the potential disruption of the Indian polity. Our national leaders believed that the Constitution of India would help to integrate the people into a united nation.

**Socialist Pattern:** The adoption of socialist pattern of society in order to curb or reduce inequalities in society constituted another attempt of the Indian polity toward nation-building. This too helped to contain divisive tendencies. The inclusion of as many segments of the population as possible was achieved by granting special privileges to the scheduled castes, the tribals, the backward classes, the other backward castes and the religious minorities.

One of the remarkable features of the early phase was that despite the struggle for political power, political parties had no major dissension regarding the thrust of politics. The thrust was to keep together diverse elements of the population and to include the hitherto excluded categories into the mainstream of national politics.

You should keep in mind that the process of nation-building is not yet complete. This is one reason why we cannot and should not say anything much with finality about this process. Instead, we should now turn to the process of nation-building at the economic level.

**Check Your Progress 1**

- i) What are the two factors, which have helped the emergence of Indian nationalism?

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- ii) Outline the attempts at nation-building at the political level.

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- i) State whether the following statements are true or false.
  - a) The Members of the Indian National Congress Party at the time of attainment of independence were drawn from one caste mainly.
  - b) A federal government denotes that authority is divided between the centre and the states.
  - c) India is a parliamentary democracy.
  - d) The parliament consists of the President and the two houses namely the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha.

### 10.3.2 Strategy at the Economic Level

The second major step taken by the political leadership was the economic resurgence of the country. Any political regime gains legitimacy when it can satisfy the needs of the people. The satisfaction of the people in turn depends upon the availability of goods to be distributed. Hence the first task for the Indian state was to build the economy. This was more so in the light of the bad shape of Indian economy at that time. The colonial policies of the British were largely based on exploitation of the raw materials available in India at cheapest possible rates, to be used by industry in Britain. India was used as market place for their finished goods. The result of the policy was that industry did not develop in the country. The little industrialisation that took place during the British rule was due to its importance in international politics. This did not at all help the economic development of the country. Thus, it was inevitable that after the independence, definite steps were taken to revise the economy. Formulation of Five-Year Plans for regulating the economic activity was one such step. For this purpose the Government of India established the Planning Commission.

The planning process is not merely an economic activity. It is also a political activity. The Planning Commission not only decides about which sector has to produce how much, it also allocates projects to various states. This is where political decisions have to be made. Let us take a concrete example. Suppose the government decides to establish a steel plant. It is not only in terms of the economic viability of location of a steel plant that a decision is made. The Commission takes into account the costs and benefits in economic terms and it also considers the decision in terms of possible offsetting regional imbalance in location of industries. Similarly, the balance has to be maintained between the various interest groups, which have emerged around different sectors of the economy. For this purpose, take the simple example of the use of electric power. How much electricity should be made available to industry as against agriculture is a political decision. In the economic sphere, as in the social and political spheres, national politics has followed the policy of reconciling different interests and thereby avoiding conflicts to surface.

The Indian nation state not only concentrated on making available goods for distribution, but it also decided to follow the path of distributive justice. Distributive justice refers to achieving a fair and equal distribution of goods and services among all people. The intentions for distributive justice are clear in India's adoption of a socialist pattern of society. A socialist pattern of society denotes that people have equal opportunities and equal rights. The state as an administrative device guarantees individuals their rights. It distributes goods and services equally and fairly for the welfare of the people. It also strives for elimination of rigid systems of control. For example, private property is permissible in India, but only in so far as it does not amount to a system of control of the owner over another who does not own it. We can also find instances of distributive justice in many social legislations, such as the Industrial Disputes Act, which protects the rights of the industrial workers, or, the Untouchability Offences Act, which protects the untouchable castes from discrimination or the Hindu Marriage Act, which grants rights to Hindu women. Thus our nation-building efforts involve not only goals of development but also equality and social justice. The latest in terms of strategy at the economic level is adoption of the New Economic Policy of liberalisation of economy. About this step you here

already read in Unit 12 and therefore we would now proceed to look at the factors, which have challenged our efforts for nation-building.

### 10.3.3 Forces Which Challenge Nation-building Efforts

A host of interrelated factors have disrupted efforts to achieve goals of equality and social justice as well as building a nation state. We can see at least three main forces.

- i) The diversity of groups which constitute Indian society
- ii) Regional and cultural identities
- iii) Casteism.

Let us take a brief look at each of these forces.

- i) **Diversity of Constituents:** India is a heterogeneous society. It is made of a number of diverse groups. The first potential threat to the Indian nation state lies in this plurality. The Indian society was and is divided in terms of religion, caste, language and ethnic origin.

The British were able to somewhat control the diverse groups by following the policy of pitting one group against the other. But the divisive tendencies were sharply manifested even during the nationalist movement when different groups apparently united to remove the British rule from India.

One of the more serious challenges that Indian national leaders in India face even now is how to integrate the interests of the divergent groups. Each of them has its own distinctive aspirations, history, and way of life. Attempts to minimise confrontation between conflicting groups do not always succeed. As we have already seen, the adoption of an egalitarian model of society is one important strategy to contain the divisive tendencies.

It is, of course, necessary that these divisions are not allowed to threaten the nation state.

- ii) **Regional and Cultural Identities:** The task of nation-building has also faced a threat from regionalism. We find that national politics in our country is still marked by emergence of regional nationalities. This is quite evident in the formation of states on linguistic basis. It is also evident in demands by some regional identities such as the Gorkha for Gorkhaland and by some tribals for a separate Jharkhand state before November 2000. But there have been instances that the government of India conceded to such demands for a separate state. The agitation started by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha for a separate state impelled to establish the Jharkhand Area Autonomous council in 1995 and finally a full-fledged state in November 2000 (India 2003).

You should not take this to mean that the regional identities should not be emphasised. Some may like to argue that regionalism does not augur (foretell) well, it harbingers political disintegration of the country. But as the nation has faced such problems earlier, the process of reconciliation has given its polity the ability to accommodate regionalism within its orbit. The **politics of reconciliation** harmonises the diverse interests of various groups in a national framework.



Despite the early gains of consolidation of the nation state, diverse cultural identities asserted themselves. One example of this is the opposition in the southern states to Hindi as the national language. Another example is the demand for reorganisation of states. Yet another example is the assertion by religious minorities of their right to regulate the lives of their members.

As a matter of fact, the national level politics has recognised the existence of regional and cultural identities and the central government has even provided legal sanctions. The Constitution of India recognised fifteen national languages till 1992. In 1992 through a Constitutional Amendment (71st Amendment) three more languages were added to the Eighth Schedule and making the list of national languages to 18. As on 2003 there are 18 national languages included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution (India 2003). It allows each state to carry out its administration in the regional language. It does not interfere in the religious, social and political activities of the minorities. To some people this may appear to provide special protection to the minorities. The number of people holding this view is not very small. But then there are others who consider protection of the rights of minorities as a major gain for the nation. This keeps the nation state together and forges a political unity.

- iii) **Casteism:** The issue of casteism in national politics has been discussed again and again by a number of people, public men, scholars and laymen alike. Caste is one of the more distinguishing institutions of Indian society. Its role in the political sphere is of recent origin. It is widely observed that caste has become the major basis for political articulation. This is so mainly because caste provides the mechanisms for bringing people together. This is also the requirement for a successful democratic state. By politicizing the institution of caste, political process in India has assumed a unique character. Political parties in India are formed on the basis of caste alliances and voting behaviour of the Indian electorate can be described in terms of caste identity.

As casteism is considered a social evil and caste ideology does not go well with the egalitarian model of a socialist society, role of caste in national politics is viewed as a necessary evil. It is seen a factor which poses a challenge to the task of nation-building. All the same in the absence of an alternative basis for people to come together, caste continues to play a decisive role in Indian national politics.

From what we have discussed so far, it is obvious that the task of building a nation state is not an easy exercise. A growing realisation is that national integration is the key to achieving a political identity. We shall in the next section discuss the concept of national integration.

### Check Your Progress 2

- i) What was the strategy at the economic level to build up a nation state?

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- ii) What are the three main forces, which pose a challenge to nation-building efforts?

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- iii) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark a T for true or F for false against each statement.

- a) The politics of reconciliation involves efforts to harmonise the diverse interests of various groups in a national framework.
- b) In India each state does not have the right to carry out its administration in its own regional language.
- c) Caste is one of the important basis for political articulation.

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## 10.4 NATIONAL INTEGRATION

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National integration is a process of developing the different parts of the national social system into an integrated whole. In an integrated society, social institutions and values associated with them have a high degree of social acceptance.

However, linguism, communalism, social inequalities and regional disparities are some of the factors, which threaten the ideal of national integration in India. Let us look at each of them one by one.

- i) **Linguism:** India is a multi-linguistic nation. Language has become, specially since Independence, a powerful source of political articulation. For instance, in the South, particularly in Tamil Nadu, language sentiments have been propagated among the people for getting power within state politics.

The language problem has two aspects, namely (i) medium of instruction at the level of school, college and public service examinations, and (ii) meeting the demands of non-Hindi and Hindi-speaking radicals.

Responding to the first aspect, the Government of India decided to implement a three-language formula. This consists of (a) teaching the regional language, or mother-tongue when the latter is different from the regional language, (b) Hindi or another Indian language in the Hindi speaking area and (c) English or another modern European language. Today for the Union Public Service Commission in India examinations can be written in Hindi or English or in any regional language of the country.

Regarding the second aspect of the language problem, namely, demands of Hindi and non-Hindi speaking radicals, the Government of India passed the Official Language (Amendment) Act, 1967. This Act decided that English will continue to be the official language of the Indian union for all

the non-Hindi speaking states until these states themselves would opt for Hindi (Kishore 1987: 41). Thus, Hindi is today only one of the official languages of the Indian Union. The provision made under the above mentioned Act and the three-language formula have helped to reduce the possibility of conflict on the basis of language.

- ii) **Communalism:** Broadly defined, communalism refers to the tendency of any socio-religious group to maximise its economic, political and social strength at the cost of other groups. This tendency runs counter to the notion of the secular nation state that India purports to be. Secularism in the Indian context is defined as the peaceful coexistence of all religions without state patronage to any of them. The state is to treat all of them equally. Yet, in a secular state like India, we very often hear, see and read about communal conflicts. While making conscious efforts towards the goals of democracy and socialism, the Indian nation state has not been free of communal clashes (Kishore 1987: 69).

### Activity 1

On the basis of the information you have gathered from newspapers, magazines, radio and TV about caste and politics note down the following facts.

- i) Caste composition of major political parties in your state
- ii) What role did the caste factor play in your state in the last Lok Sabha elections?

Describe the role of caste in terms of the issues raised in the election campaign.

- iii) **Social Inequalities:** In every society, there is a system of social stratification. Social stratification refers to inequality in society based on unequal distribution of goods, services, wealth, power, prestige, duties, rights, obligations and privileges. Take for example, the social inequalities, created by the caste system. Being a hereditary and endogamous system, the scope for social mobility is very little. Social privileges and financial and educational benefits are by and large accessible to only upper caste groups.

Processes of change, such as democratisation, westernisation and modernisation, have helped to broaden the accessibility to privileges to a wide range of people. Today caste and politics are also very closely associated. Various commissions for backward castes have been formed for reserving seats for their members in educational and occupational spheres. This is a reflection of the politicisation of caste affiliations. While measures to uplift the hitherto exploited and suppressed section of the population are necessary, overemphasis on caste identities has a disintegrative effect on the process of nation-building.

- iii) **Regional Disparities:** The unequal development of different regions of India has negatively affected the character of national integration. The unequal development has become the major cause of many social movements after the independence. For instance, the erstwhile Jharkhand movement, which involved tribal groups from Bihar, M.P, Bengal and Orissa, stressed the backwardness of the region among other issues. While demanding a separate state, people involved in this movement argued that

the rich natural resources of the area have been drained out to benefit others. The dissatisfaction caused by the perceived and/or actual threat of material deprivation has led people to think that the socio-economic development of their region is not possible if they continue to be a part of the Indian Union. Finally the National Government conceded their demand for a separate state and the three new States of Jharkhand, Uttaranchal and Chhattisgarh were formed in November 2000. The demand in the case of Jharkhand was for a State comprising of tribal areas of Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. The new State was created encompassing only parts of Bihar State. The regional disparities in terms of socio-economic development have at times proved to be a threat to the concept of united nation state.

In brief, we can summarise this section by saying that various forces pose a challenge to national integration in India. The government and those concerned with the task of nation-building have utilised many strategies, like planned socio-economic development and expansion of education and mass communication and at times even reorganising the existing states to strengthen and promote the concept of national integration.

**Check Your Progress 3**

i) What is national integration?

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ii) What are the factors which threaten the ideal of national integration in India?

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iii) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark a T for true or F for false against each statement.

- a) The three language formula was adopted by way of responding to the problem of medium of instruction at school, college and public service examinations.
- b) Hindi is the only official language of the Indian Union today.
- c) India is a secular state.

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## 10.5 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we discussed the various aspects of national politics. First, we define concepts like state, nation and society. Then in the context of Indian national politics we briefly traced the emergence of Indian nation state and the strategies adopted at the national level to build up a nation state. We also looked at the forces, which have challenged the task of nation-building. In our last section we outlined the issues related to the task of national integration, which we said, is essentially a process of building up a nation state.

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## 10.6 KEY WORDS

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<b>Hegemony</b>	Imposition of power by a small group of people over a large number of people
<b>Nation</b>	A group of people identifying themselves as such on the basis of political and cultural commonality
<b>Nation-building</b>	The process of development of national identity
<b>Politics of Reconciliation</b>	The political processes that reconcile divergent political interests
<b>Political System</b>	Those arrangements of society, formal or informal, which are based on power and wherein authoritative decisions are made
<b>State</b>	A political association characterised by territorial jurisdiction, non-voluntary membership, definable rights and duties of members and monopoly over legitimate use of power

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## 10.7 FURTHER READINGS

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Kishore, Satyendra 1987. *National Integration in India*. Sterling Publishers: New Delhi

Kothari, Rajni 1986 *Politics in India*. (First printed in 1970) Orient Longman: New Delhi

Wallace, Paul and Ramashray, Roy (ed.) 2003. *India's 1999 Elections and Twentieth Century Politics*. Sage Publications: New Delhi

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## 10.8 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- i) Society refers to social relationships that are inter-linked. It is also a category of social organisation, which includes a large number of social institutions like kinship, family, economy, polity and communities and association.

- ii) A nation refers to groups of people who have developed solidarity based on common identity of culture, religion, language and state.
- iii) A state refers to a political association, which is characterised by territorial jurisdiction, non-voluntary membership, and a constitution. It also claims to have legitimacy of power over its members.

### Check Your Progress 2

- i) The two factors which facilitated the emergence of Indian nationalism are (a) the presence of a common enemy (b) the existence of the cultural identity of oneness that preceded the unification of India as one state.
- ii) The adoption of a constitution and a socialist pattern of society constituted the major attempts at nation-building at the political level.
- iii) a) F  
b) T  
c) T  
d) F

### Check Your Progress 3

- i) The five-year plans constitute an important strategy at the economic level for nation-building. The Planning Commission is given the responsibility of deciding which sectors has to produce how much and what projects have to be allocated to each state. The principle of distributive justice guides the distribution of goods and services.
- ii) The three main forces are diversity of constituents, regional and cultural identities and casteism.
- iii) a) T  
b) F  
c) T

### Check Your Progress 4

- i) National integration is a process of integrating the various and diverse elements of a national social system into a unified whole.
- ii) The factors, which threaten the ideal of national integration in India, are linguism, communalism, social inequalities and regional disparities.
- iii) a) T  
b) F  
c) T

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## **UNIT 11 LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT\***

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### **Structure**

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Characteristics of Local Self- government
- 11.3 Significance of local self-government
- 11.4 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992
- 11.5 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992
- 11.6 Field View of Local Governance in India
- 11.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 11.8 Key Words
- 11.9 Further Readings
- 11.10 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

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### **11.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning and characteristic of Local Self-Government;
- Assess the significance of Local Self-Government;
- Highlight the key provisions of 73rd and 74th Amendment; and
- Describe the field view of Local Self-Government.

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### **11.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The concept of local self-governance in any society is considered important as it is seen as the mechanism that is taking the democracy to the grass root levels. Local governance is seen operating at the lowest levels of the society. The term self-governance in the local government more clearly emphasizes on the concept of people's participation in discharge of the functions of their daily life. Under local self-government the central or the state government under a formal and legally prescribed mechanism allow certain functions to be carried out at local levels only, especially those functions which are more closely related to the citizens everyday life and where the National government may think of that delegating the same shall at one place give more satisfaction to the people and on the other hand more time for centre government to have more time for focussing on more important issues.

According to Lord Bryce, "These are the best schools of democracy and the best guarantee of its success." Local Government is also known as the third tier of government. In this people of small area or locality for example a village, town or city elect their own government and operate their daily functions through it. In India Local Government is a State subject figuring as item 5 in List II of the VII Schedule to the Constitution of India. Rajasthan was the first state to enact and adopt the local government in 1959 followed by Andhra Pradesh in the same

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year. But the process of this grass root decentralisation through local government gained momentum with 73rd and 74th Amendment Act, 1992. After this local government has become a constitutional feature of Indian government.

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## **11.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT**

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The essential characteristic of Local Government can be seen as following:-

- It operates within a local area.
- It enjoys the statutory status.
- They are autonomous bodies. They are free to exercise their powers and discharge their functions as envisaged in the statute.
- It is characterized by local participation that is local people are involved in decision making and administration.
- It provides for local accountability that ensures responsive behaviour by the representatives as they are in direct touch of the local residents.
- They are allowed to raise funds through taxes and levies, so Local finance is another feature.
- It provides for civic amenities to the people at their door steps.

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## **11.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT**

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- 1) It provides democracy at the grass roots as it gives a chance to the people to manage their own affairs.
- 2) It encourages participation of people in public affairs.
- 3) This mechanism is more competent to solve the local problems as a state government due to its big size may not be able to focus on certain issues which may be important to the local people but through this mechanism the local problems and requirements can be scanned in a more comprehensive and detailed manner and thus resulting in a suitable response to the problem/requirement.
- 4) It serves as a training school for the people to understand the sense and significance of community thinking for providing service to all. They understand the complexities involved in identification of requirements and allocation of resources there upon.
- 5) It is an economical way for redressing the requirements. Discharge of functions through central govt. will require elaborate bureaucratic machinery that shall have its decision making and implementation structure. This bureaucracy shall be a cost to the exchequer which always will be much higher than the civic amenities arranged at the local levels by the local peoples as in if the decision making is by the willing residents of the areas. The scanning cost of requirements is also reduced as those who are in immediate contact are always better informed of their own problems.
- 6) Reduces the burden of Central government in time and cost.



- 7) It serves as a channel of communication between people and government.
- 8) Very important in case of development administration as penetration and participation both are there.
- 9) It paves the way for overall national progress.

**Check Your Progress 1**

- 1) What do you mean by local self-government?

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- 2) Highlight four characteristics of local self-government.

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- 3) Why local self-government is important?

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**11.4 73RD CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ACT, 1992**

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The 73rd Amendment 1992, implements the article 40 of the DPSP which says that “State shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government”. It made panchayat system justifiable part of the constitution and has put constitutional obligation upon states to enact the Panchayati Raj Acts. It added a new Part IX to the constitution titled “The Panchayats” covering provisions from Article 243 to 243(O); and a new Eleventh Schedule covering 29 subjects within the functions of the panchayats.

**Salient Features of 73rd CAA**

- 1) The centrality of the village assembly (Gram Sabha), as a deliberative and deciding body, for the decentralized governance; 2) A uniform three-tier, structure across the country, with the village, block, and district as the

appropriate levels. States with population of less than two million have the option of not introducing the intermediate level; 3) Direct election to all seats for all members at all levels. In addition, the chairpersons of the village councils (Panchayats) may be made members of the councils (Panchayats) at the intermediate level, and chairpersons of block councils (panchayats) at the intermediate level may be members at the district level. Members of Parliament, members of legislative assemblies, and members of legislative councils may also be members of panchayats at the intermediate and the district levels; 4) In all the panchayats, seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes in proportion to their population. One third of the total seats are reserved for women. One third of the seats reserved for SCs and STs will also be reserved for women; 5) Offices of the chairpersons of the panchayats at all levels will be reserved in favour of SCs and STs in proportion to their population in the state. One third of the offices of chairpersons of panchayats at all levels will also be reserved for women; 6) The legislature of a state is liberty to provide the reservation of seats and offices of chairpersons in panchayats in favor of members of the backward classes; 7) The average panchayat has a uniform five year term. Elections are to be completed before the expiry of the term. In the event of dissolution, elections will be compulsorily held within six months. The reconstituted panchayat will serve for the remaining period of the five-year term; 8) It will not be possible to dissolve the existing panchayats by the amendment of any act before its term is ended; 9) A person who is disqualified under any law of the state will not be entitled to become a member of a panchayat; 10) An independent State Election Commission to be established for superintendence, direction, and control of the electoral process and preparation of electoral rolls; 11) Devolution of powers and responsibilities by the state in the preparation and implementation of development plans; 12) Setting up of a state Finance Commission once in five years to revise the financial position of these panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) and to make suitable recommendations to the state on the distribution of funds among panchayats.

**Check Your Progress 2**

- 1) What do you mean by Gram Sabha?

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- 2) Mention any five features of 73rd CAA?

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- 3) Write down the reservation provisions of Panchayati Raj.

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## 11.5 74TH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ACT, 1992

Constitution (Seventy Forth Amendment) Act, 1992 has introduced a new Part IXA in the Constitution, which deals with Municipalities in an article 243 P to 243 ZG. This amendment, also known as Nagarpalika Act, came into force on 1st June 1993. It has given constitutional status to the municipalities and brought them under the justifiable part of the constitution. States were put under constitutional obligation to adopt municipalities as per system enshrined in the constitution.

### Salient features of 74th CAA

- 1) Constitutional status has been accorded to Urban Local Government bodies. Threetier structures has been envisaged, whereby there would be municipal corporations, for larger areas, municipal councils for smaller areas, and nagar panchayats for villages in transition to becoming towns. Since, "Local Government" is a state subject, the state legislatures have been left within their powers to define the details of the powers and functions of different units of urban government institutions whose broad outline only has been drawn by the Parliament; 2) Direct election to these Municipal bodies by the people in the manner as the elections are held for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies has been provided. For the purpose of elections, the Municipal elections are to be conducted by the State Election Commission; 3) Reservation of one-third of seats for women including women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is ensured; 4) The State Finance Commission would ensure financial viability of the Municipalities. Municipal funds have been augmented through taxes, tolls, duties and fees, grants-in aid; 5) Urban municipal institutions of self-government have been endowed with power and authority to formulate and implement schemes for economic development and social justice on 18 subjects; 6) Developmental Committees, namely, (DPC) and Metropolitan Planning Committees have been constituted. Thus, planning in India has been decentralised up to the grassroots level; 7) For better proximity with citizens, wards committees have been constituted; 8) The 74th CAA and also the 73rd CAA (on Panchayats) have created local self-government institutions throughout rural and urban India with powers (29 for rural and 18 for urban) delineated, devolution, deliberative and executive wings of government created, authority and responsibilities defined, developmental committees (DPC, MPC) and Finance Commission constituted; and within each Municipality, Wards Committees and Zonal Committees have been constituted.

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Mention any five features of 74th CAA?

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2) What is the importance of 74th Amendment Act?

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## 11.7 FIELD VIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

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The various studies provide different accounts of power structures in local governance in India. According to a group of scholars, the inequality in the distribution of power is structured in terms of caste relations. In their view, the high castes dominate the power structure due to their possession of major power resources such as high ritual status, great control over land and other economic assets and relatively higher levels of education, (Mayer, 1958, Srinivas 1959, Laxminarayan, 1970, Berreman, 1972; Carter, 1974). Another group of scholars holds that because of the modernization of agriculture through the expansion of irrigation, cash crop cultivation, mechanization and adoption of high yielding crop variants, a class of rich peasants has emerged in the countryside, which has taken all the village-level institutions into their control (Frankel, 1971, Dasgupta, 1977, Byres 1981). Yet another group has argued that power is no longer subsumed by the structure of caste or class. Power has deviated from the caste and class model: instead, it depends upon a plurality and party bosses outside of the villages, position in an elaborate system of patronage, numerical support and personality attributes (Oommen 1970, Beteille 1971). Now let us discuss some field news or studies during this period.

Local level politics has been characterised by many elements such as: caste, power, dominance, caste conflicts, political participation, political mobilisation, etc. Various scholars have pondered upon the various dimensions of grass-roots politics. Srinivas (1959) has discussed about the dynamic relationship between caste and dominance at rural level. Further Beteille (1996) also presented the relationship of caste, ritual, traditions and domination in the village society in his study of Tanjore district in Tamil Nadu. The gradual institutionalisation of democratic politics changed caste equations. Power shifted from one set of caste groups, the so-called ritually purer upper castes to middle level dominant castes.

Yogendra Singh (1969) has also discussed about the changing power structure in the six villages of Eastern Uttar Pradesh where Panchayats were simultaneously established in 1949 on the basis of adult suffrage rather than nomination of functionaries by *tehsildar* as existed prior to it. Increased competition for power has been energised from the section of lower caste and class groups on an organised basis. At the caste level, this participation takes the form of faction alliances. This has not only sub-divided the village community but also increased social tension and insecurity in village life. This brief account of the political process in the six village communities may be summarised in three stages, 1) the initial assertion of the ex-franchised peasantry for its power in rural community,

2) the long drawn period of group conflict between the *power climber* and the *traditional powerelites*, 3) the withdrawal of the peasant leadership from the arena of power. Similarly Rajni Kothari (1970) has tried to capture the political struggle among various castes through the process of struggle between *entrenched* castes and *ascendant* castes. The entrenched castes generally monopolise the power, which soon evokes a bilateral response of an ascendant caste that challenges their power. In the second stage inter-caste competition gives rise to intra-caste competition. In the third stage, older identities are weakened and replaced by highly secular criteria for the political integration of individuals and groups on secular associational grounds.

F.G. Bailey (1969) suggests a model for all kinds of politics in Village India and for politics in all Para political situations. He has discussed three kinds of conflict situations in a village namely Bisipara in Orissa. They are (1) factions (2) caste-climbing (3) conflict between castes. He observes that the Oriya word for 'faction' is *dolo*, which means a flock or a hand or a political party. For faction, the English word 'party' is also in usage which has pejorative connotation. Conflict between factions is called '*doladoli*'. Confrontations take place among the factions in the panchayat in the form of passionate verbal attacks and defences of honour. For Bailey faction leaders are caste leaders who recruited lower caste members. Further he elaborated on caste-climbing and caste-conflict. In caste-climbing the same competition operates under the given normative and pragmatic rules but in caste-conflict, while there is normative agreement about the goals, there is no agreement about permissible tactics either at the normative or at the pragmatic level. For Bailey social conflict is a process of communication between competitors in which they agree not only about the meaning of symbolic action but also about permissible tactics.

The studies of these three groups of scholars are based on studies mostly undertaken in the early phase of the introduction of the Panchayati raj system, at which time there was no provision for the inclusion of member of scheduled castes, tribes and women in the panchayati raj bodies, given their inferior position in rural society, the members of these excluded groups were hardly able to participate in local decision-making processes.

To generate participatory grassroots democracy, the panchayati raj was restructured in 1993 through the enforcement of the 73rd constitutional Amendment, which made provisions for the inclusion of members of the Scheduled Castes, Tribes and women by reserving a specified percentage of elective seats for them. As of 2017 there are a total of 267,428 local government bodies. There are about 3 million elected representatives at all levels of the panchayat, one-half of which are women. The Constitution of India visualises panchayats as institutions of self-governance. However, giving due consideration to the federal structure of India's polity, most of the financial powers and authorities to be endowed on panchayats have been left at the discretion of concerned state legislatures. Consequently, the powers and functions vested in PRIs vary from state to state. No doubt local government has created a responsive, transparent, accountable and participatory system for the country but it faces serious challenges like lack of funds, functions and functionaries. Although 73rd and 74th amendment provided comprehensive list for area of function enumerated in schedule 11 and 12 in constitution of India.

The excluded groups in rural local bodies has contributed to their empowerment and affected the dominance of the privileged groups. However, early studies have indicated that the elected members belonging to these hitherto exclude groups are representative in name only, unable to effectively participate in governance owing to the dominance of privileged groups (Lieten and Srivastav, 1999; Mathew and Mayak 1996). Of course, there are success stories (Lieten 1996, Pai 2000).

Now the rural economy is on the decline. It has been accompanied by the extension of the developmental state machinery. It has meant that a new basis of authority coming from political offices, bank liaesoning or credit cooperative society offices has come to the fore (Price 2006). The extension of developmental machinery has also opened up space for ‘gate-keeping activities’ by a set of intermediaries-roles in which they mediate between other people (Harriss, 2013). As Price (2006, p315) highlights, ‘ a new type of leadership has emerged which found its legitimacy, not foremost inherited, landholding status, but in assisting villagers in solving problem in doing what informants called ‘good work.’ Variously called as ‘Pyraveekar’ (Ready & Haragopal,1985), ‘political entrepreneurs’(Jodhka, 2012), ‘moufussil netajis’ (Thakur, 2009) and ‘naye netas’ (Krishna 2003), these new protagonists embody new sources of dominance in rural areas. The increasing education levels across castes and classes have enabled lower classes to step into the role of these political entrepreneurs’ (Krishna 2003), although most of them still continue to belonging to upper and dominant caste groups. (Jeffrey 2001, Jodhka 2012)

The traditional sources of dominance have not ceased after the reproduction of new forms of dominance. The role of caste and other social institution is providing the initial economic (including capital and incomes), social (networks and relationships) and cultural capital (education, acquired identity for reliability and competence) for facilitating the urban transition of the rural dominants. It is also observed that caste merely transformed its role even while caste stratification of occupational opportunities significantly weakened (Harris white 2016). Caste has impacted class by influencing the formation of new classes and alliances across the caste hierarchy (Barsile 2013). It provided the ideological tools for ensuring the hegemony of elite classes by ensuring that the intellectual and moral leadership of elites get voluntarily accepted through shared ideals and values (ibid). It also helped caste consciousness for class consciousness (ibid P101). Thus, it supported identity politics that cements different segments of the capitalist and the subaltern classes, thereby, enabling caste to extend its influence outside of the village arena (Jeffrey 2001). Still caste as a form of identity and as a basis for staking claims to public resources has remained significant even after the decline in the agrarian economic sources of power.

**Check Your Progress 4**

- 1) What are the financial problems faced by local government?

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2) Give suggestions to improve personnel system of local government?

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3) How do you evaluate present status of local government in India?

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### 11.7 LET US SUM UP

To conclude, local self-government is one of the most innovative governance change processes our country has gone through. These provisions combine representative and direct democracy into a synergy and are expected to result in an extension and deepening of democracy in India. The noble idea of taking the government of a country into the hands of the grass root level is indeed praiseworthy. The importance of local self-government has all the more increased with the advent of Indian independence. They are expected not only to provide for the basic civic amenities for the safety and convenience of the citizens but also mobilize local support and public cooperation for the implementation of various programmes of welfare and also participation of local people in decision making and governance.

### 11.8 KEY WORDS

**Local Government :** It is an authority to determine and execute measures within a restricted area inside and smaller than a whole state.

**Grassroots Democracy :** Grassroots democracy is a tendency towards designing political processes that shifts as much decision-making authority as practical to the organization’s lowest geographic or social level of organization.

**Political Participation :** Political participation includes a broad range of activities through which people develop and express their opinions on the world and how it is governed, and try to take part in and shape the decisions that affect their lives.

**Gram Panchayats :** A gram panchayat or village panchayat is the only grassroots-level of panchayati raj formalised local self-governance system in India at the village or small-town level, and has a sarpanch as its elected head.

**Municipalities** : A municipality is usually a single administrative division having corporate status and powers of self-government or jurisdiction as granted by national and regional laws to which it is subordinate

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## 11.9 FURTHER READINGS

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Bailey, F.G.(1969), “Para-Political Systems”, in Marc. J. Swartz (ed.) *Local Level Politics: Social and Cultural Perspective*, London: University of London Press.

Beteille, Andre (1996), *Caste, Class and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in Tanjore Village*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

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## 11.10 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The concept of local self-governance in any society is considered important as it is seen as the mechanism that is taking the democracy to the grass root levels. Local governance is seen operating at the lowest levels of the society.
- 2) Four characteristics:
  - It operates within a local area.
  - It enjoys the statutory status.
  - They are autonomous bodies. They are free to exercise their powers and discharge their functions as envisaged in the statute.
  - It is characterized by local participation that is local people are involved in decision making and administration.
- 3) It provides democracy at the grass roots as it gives a chance to the people to manage their own affairs. It encourages participation of people in public affairs. This mechanism is more competent to solve the local problems as a state government due to its big size may not be able to focus on certain issues which may be important to the local people but through this mechanism the local problems and requirements can be scanned in a more comprehensive and detailed manner and thus resulting in a suitable response to the problem/requirement.

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Gram Sabha means a body consisting of all persons whose names are included in the electoral rolls for the Panchayat at the village level. The term is defined in the Constitution of India under Article 243(b).
- 2) Five salient features of 73rdCAA:
  - 1) The centrality of the village assembly (Gram Sabha), as a deliberative and deciding body, for the decentralized governance; 2) A uniform three-tier, structure across the country, with the village, block, and district as the appropriate levels; 3) Direct election to all seats for all members at all levels;



- 4) The average panchayat has a uniform five year term; 5) An independent State Election Commission to be established for superintendence, direction, and control of the electoral process and preparation of electoral rolls.
- 3) In all the panchayats, seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes in proportion to their population. One third of the total seats are reserved for women. One third of the seats reserved for SCs and STs will also be reserved for women. Further offices of the chairpersons of the panchayats at all levels will be reserved in favour of SCs and STs in proportion to their population in the state. One third of the offices of chairpersons of panchayats at all levels will also be reserved for women.

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Five salient features of 74thCAA:
  - 1) Constitutional status has been accorded to Urban Local Government bodies; 2) Direct election to these Municipal bodies by the people in the manner as the elections are held for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies has been provided. For the purpose of elections, the Municipal elections are to be conducted by the State Election Commission; 3) Reservation of one-third of seats for women including women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is ensured; 4) The State Finance Commission would ensure financial viability of the Municipalities. Municipal funds have been augmented through taxes, tolls, duties and fees, grants-in aid; 5) Urban municipal institutions of self-government have been endowed with power and authority to formulate and implement schemes for economic development and social justice on 18 subjects.
- 2) Urban Local Governance has been very much empowered by 74th CAA. It has performed far better than its rural counterpart in the field of decision making ability, generation of revenue and freedom in terms of expenditure. The valuable highlights of the 74th Amendment are that it makes ULG's changeless, tenure of the local bodies is guaranteed, that is at regular intervals decisions need to direct to these local bodies, there is an example of reservation among the members, there will need to be a Metropolitan, on District Planning Committee and Ward Committees. Fundamentally we have something from civil partnerships at the apex level directly down to the ward level; there are progressions of establishments which are presently made sacred organizations with arrangements for an election commission, a finance commission, for local bodies.

### Check Your Progress 4

- 1) The one of the most common problem which is faced by the local bodies is the scarcity of finance and funds. Local government has no source of revenue except the grants from state and central, which has political base rather than requirement. Local government are allowed to collect taxes form locals, but due to inadequate man power, lack of digitization and awareness they fails to collect tax and generate revenue. When compared to their functions, their source of income is insignificant.
- 2) Local Governments are unable to attract best talent to work with them. The civil workers are untrained to serve the general population. Different sorts

of work force frameworks exist in various states. Even in single state, there is a concurrence of overlapping work force frameworks, responsible to various control focuses inside and outside the association. There is a dire need of trained professionals in local government especially for some works which need acumen and vision like urban planning etc. If there is a special cadre of local government employees and it is provided with better service conditions and training, local service delivery can be enhanced to great perfection.

- 3) Local self-government is one of the most innovative governance change processes our country has gone through. These provisions combine representative and direct democracy into a synergy and are expected to result in an extension and deepening of democracy in India. The noble idea of taking the government of a country into the hands of the grass root level is indeed praiseworthy. The importance of local self-government has all the more increased with the advent of Indian independence. They are expected not only to provide for the basic civic amenities for the safety and convenience of the citizens but also mobilize local support and public cooperation for the implementation of various programmes of welfare. However, like any system in the world, this system is also imperfect. Problems of maladministration and misappropriation of funds are recurring. But this shall not stand in the way of efficient governance; and if these ill practices are rooted out, there would be no comparisons around the world to our system of local self-government.

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## UNIT 12 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND RESISTANCE\*

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### Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Social Movements
  - 12.2.1 Definition of Social Movements
  - 12.2.2 Social movement Studies
- 12.3 Resistance
  - 12.3.1 Resistance as “Tactics”
  - 12.3.2 Resistance as “Counter Movement”
  - 12.3.3 Resistance as “Counter-hegemony”
  - 12.3.4 Resistance as “Infra-politics”
- 12.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.5 Key Words
- 12.6 Further Readings
- 12.7 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 12.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of Social Movements;
- Examine the significance of various Social Movement studies;
- Understand the meaning of Resistance;
- Contextualise and conceptualise the term “resistance”;
- Understand the interface between Social movements and Resistance.

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### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous unit of this block, we looked at local self-government. In this unit, we will discuss the link between social movements and resistance. We will then define what a social movements and significance of various social movements’ studies. Here we will focus on the resistance and interface between social movements and resistance.

The concepts of social movements and resistance hold a core essence centring around some notion of conflict, some perpetrated challenges and claims. Unlike resistance, which encompasses the sporadic interventions of individuals, social movements are sustained collective initiatives. Further, “resistance” refers to an activity, whereas the term “movement” conventionally refers to a social form or entity. A movement is not something that is given but something that is achieved; whereas, resistance understood as challenges to systems or structures of authority can be considered as the main assumption that constitutes social movements.

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Additional conditions that can turn resistance into social movements are: a) some sort of “collectivity” holding some coordination or organisation between individuals, and collective identity; b) some temporal continuity of the challenge being confronted; c) their primarily non-institutional nature (Melucci, 1989; Della Porta and Diani, 2006). Let us discuss Social Movements.

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## 12.2 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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In this section we will describe the main features of social movements. We will be giving definitions, examples, types and functions of social movements.

### 12.2.1 Definition of Social Movements

The International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (1972) defines a social movement as a variety of collective attempts to bring about change. The attempts may be to bring about change in certain social institutions and to create an entirely new social order. Or the attempts may represent a socially shared demand for change in some aspects of the social order. Turner and Kilhan define a social movement as a “collectivity which acts with some continuity to promote or resist change in the society or group of which it is a part” (cited by McLaughlen 1969: 27). Toch (1965) emphasises that a social movement is an effort by a large number of people to solve collectively a problem they feel they share in common.

These definitions bring out, above all things, two important qualifying features of a social movement. Firstly, that social movement involve collective action as against actions of a small group of individuals. Secondly, the collective attempt is designed to promote change or resist change in the society in which the attempt is made. So collective attempt may be to alter, inaugurate, supplant, restore or reinstate all or some aspects of the social order.

Let us look at these two features in a little more detailed manner in order to understand how social movements are different from other kinds of collective behaviour like a mob or a crowd. We will also see the difference between social movements and other movements like a cooperative movement or a trade union movement.

Social movements involve collective action by the people. Any form of collective action cannot be labelled as a social movement, even if it is directed towards changing the existing social values. For example, in some places when a car or a truck knocks down a pedestrian a mob collects immediately and starts beating up the driver. The mob is provoked because the driver’s actions have led to injury or loss of life. Hence this could be regarded as a form of collective action to ensure sanctity of life and to prevent rash driving. But can we call this a social movement? No, because this is just an impulsive outburst. Hence, another feature of a social movement is that it should be sustained and not sporadic. Similarly social movement differs from a crowd by being a long term collectivity, not a quick spontaneous grouping. However crowds may emerge as a result of social movements. A morcha taken up by members of a woman’s organisation, a part of the women’s social movement may attract a crowd.

At the same time one has to keep in mind that social movements are different from other movements in society. For instance, we have the cooperative movement or the trade union movement, which we are quite familiar with. Both these

movements have features, which are common to those discussed above. Namely, they attempt to change the existing social relations and try to promote change. They are also sustained movements as they have existed over a period of time. However, they have one feature, which excludes them from being social movements. These movements are institutionalised movements. By this we mean that trade unions, cooperatives or such other organisations function under a given set of rules. These include procedures for recruitment and subsequently, expulsion, exclusion and punishment. The membership of these organisations is not open to all. In fact membership may not be open to even those who are expected to be participants of the movement. Let us clarify this. A trade union is expected to fight for protecting and enhancing workers' rights. But all workers do not automatically become members of a trade union. They can become members only if they agree to the objectives of the trade union and they formally enrol as a member. Similarly a cooperative which is expected to help poor peasants will not automatically include all such people as its members. There are some formalities to be fulfilled such as registration of membership, purchase of shares etc. Therefore, these organisations have a formal set of rules for membership. Only those accepting and abiding by these rules can hope to be included as members can be dropped or suspended from membership.

A movement, which is institutionalised in the above manner, can function with a fixed structure and a hierarchy. In other words, the structure of such organisations cannot change. A trade union will have its hierarchy based on authority. There will be a president, secretary and committee members etc. Each of them has separate responsibilities and they hold varying degrees of authority. This type of a hierarchy is necessary for any institutionalised movement. In fact this is what helps it to sustain itself.

Social movements on the other hand, will not have any of the above features. The two features of social movements, namely, sustained action and spontaneity operate simultaneously. These together distinguish a social movement from other movements. Existence of either of these features does not result in a social movement. To explain, earlier examples of trade unions and cooperatives show that these movements have sustained over a period of time. But this is because they are institutionalised and not because they are spontaneous. On the other hand, sporadic outbursts such as beating up a rash driver are collective behaviour, which is spontaneous. It is not a social movement because it is not sustained.

We are laying stress on spontaneity because social movements do not follow a fixed pattern of hierarchy. They are thus able to innovate new features of organisation. Institutionalisation would in fact prevent any form of innovation because of its fixed structures.

If we now take into account the features which we have discussed so far, we can define social movements as, collective action by large groups of people which is directed towards changing some of the values, norms and social relations in a society but which are spontaneous and sustained.

We had mentioned earlier in this section pertaining to the two qualifying features of social movements. That a social movement constitutes a collective attempt not only to promote change but also to resist change. This feature has to be kept in mind because all social movements do not attempt to change the existing situations. For instance, we all know that right from the nineteenth century there

have been collective attempts to remove the social practice of sati. Raja Ram Mohan Roy actively campaigned against sati and was chiefly responsible for legal action being taken against sati in the nineteenth century. Even during his time, there were collective attempts to resist the introduction of the law abolishing sati. Even today there is a sizeable section of population who do not recognise or pay heed to the law against Sati.

The enthusiasm with which some people tried to celebrate and promote the performance of Sati in Deorala, Rajasthan, was a movement which could be regarded as change resisting. In addition, there could be movements, which promote casteism or, more specifically, attempt to reinforce the hegemony of the castes. Movements, which preach domination or superiority of certain castes or a particular religion over others, movements that spread communal or ethnic prejudice, are all change-resisting movements. They attempt to change the prevalent norms, values and social relations and replace them with obscurantist values.

### Examples

We have so far attempted a definition of social movements. This should help us understand what social movements are and how they differ from other movements. However the discussion so far may appear somewhat abstract. Till now we only know some features of social movements. But what in concrete terms are social movements? One example which comes to our minds immediately is the process of sanskritisation expounded by the eminent sociologist, M.N. Srinivas. In this process we find that members of a caste group try to elevate their position to that of a caste deemed higher than their own. They do so by internalising the values, rituals and social behaviour of the members of that caste. Prof. Srinivas has given the cases of the Lingayats in Karnataka.

We can find similar instances elsewhere. In a similar move the Rajbanshis in Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri districts of West Bengal sought to elevate their position to that of the Kshatriya caste. This community belongs to the Bodo-Kachari group of North East India. Its members inhabit, apart from the above mentioned districts, parts of the neighbouring states of Assam and Bangladesh. Till the Census of 1901, the Rajbanshis were bracketed with the Koch, a tribe belonging to the same group. It was then believed that both came from the same ethnic origin. However in 1909 the Rajbanshis, under the leadership of Thakur Panchanan Barman declared that their identity was different from that of the Koch. They stated that they were in fact Kshatriyas from North India who had taken refuge in this part of the country. The Kshatriya Sabha was formed and it urged all Rajbanshis to revert to their original status. The Rajbanshis started following the rituals of Kshatriyas such as wearing the sacred thread, change in marriage practices, abstention from eating beef or pork, etc. They also started adopting the title "Thakur" along with their names. The Rajbanshis have been recognised as a separate group since the Census of 1911.

This movement is a social movement because it displayed the features of a social movement discussed earlier. Though the Rajbanshis formed an organisation (Kshatriya Sabha) and operated through it to elevate their status, it was not a formal organisation like a trade union or a peasant organisation. The Sabha did not have a formal set of rules and regulations relating to membership.

It is not necessary for a social movement to strive only for elevation of status; there can be movements with political or cultural dimensions. The Naxalite movement, which started in 1968 in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, could also be regarded as a social movement. In this movement peasants and agricultural workers engaged in a violent struggle against those whom they defined as their exploiters. The movement spread to other parts of the country and it was declared illegal by the government. This in fact prevented it from developing a formal, institutional structure. The different groups engaged in various regions could operate only clandestinely i.e., secretly. However after 1978 the government removed the ban on Naxalites provided they discarded violence and used peaceful means to press for their demands. As a result several Naxalite groups declared themselves as political parties and developed formal institutional structures. The movement then ceased to be a social movement.

In the cultural field too we have social movements. We can observe such movements in literature and in drama. In films, the New Cinema or Parallel Cinema movement started in the late 1960s is one such instance. Young filmmakers started making films, which were realistic and dealt with the everyday life of the common man. This was in contrast to the romantic films in the commercial sector. This movement did not originate from a formal organisation such as a federation or an association. It was started by film-makers who shared the common belief that realistic films based on good literature should be shown to the people.

We can cite the SNDP Movement (Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Movement) as an example of a social movement which has social, political, educational and religious dimensions to it. The movement arose as a backward classes movement in the nineteenth century in Kerala. It focused on the conflict between untouchable castes (Izhavas, toddy tappers of South Travancore, Kerala) and the clean Hindu upper castes (Nayars, Nambudiris). The Izhavas were subject to several ritual as well as civil disabilities. They had to maintain a prescribed limit of distance from the upper caste, could not use the roads, tanks, wells or temples used by the higher castes. They were denied admission to the traditional caste Hindu schools and were kept away from administrative jobs. Under the leadership of Sri Narayana Guru Swamy, the Izhavas formulated a programme of social uplift. The issues they undertook were right of admission to public schools, recruitment to government employment, entry into temple and political representation. They fought for social mobility, for shift in the traditional distribution of power, and transformed themselves into a large ethnic block, which became politically viable. (Rao 1974: 22).

### Activity 1

Take a map of India with all the states marked on it. Identify at least one social movement that has been associated with each state. Remember that a social movement can cover more than one state. Compare your answers if possible with those given by other students at your Study Centre.

We can now see that social movements have varied dimensions. As such they can cover all parts of our lives. There can be social movements, which promote change, and there can be those which resist change. This distinction has to be kept in mind because all social movements do not attempt to change the existing situation (ESO 12). Now let us move on to another aspect of social movements, namely, studies on social movements.

## 12.2.2 Social Movement Studies

Social movements' studies have addressed different sets of main questions (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). The first set of questions refers to the relationship between structural change and transformations in patterns of social conflict; another set of questions has to do with the role of cultural representations in social conflicts; a third set of questions addresses the process through which values, interest, and ideas get turned into collective action and finally how was certain social, political and/ or cultural context affects social movements' chances of success, and the forms they take.

While these questions certainly do not reflect entirely the richness of current debates on collective action and social movements, they have surely played a significant role in shaping discussions over the last decade. The relationship between structural change and transformations has occupied a central role in the neo-Marxist World System Theory as developed by Wallerstein (2004). Theorising the history of global capitalism, it sees an important role for social movements in the resistance of global capitalism, offering a structuralist account of collective action. This approach has been particularly used in research on social movements against developmentalism, neoliberalism and dispossessions in the Global South since the 1980 (Motta and Gunvald Nilsen, 2011). For Neil Smelser (1962) there can be no social movement without previous sub system strain, since such strains are the important set of determinants in the genesis of collective behaviour. For Smelser too, only those social movements are worthy of detailed attention which are successful in the sense that they became part of the conventional social order, performing functions in the new society which other associations performed in the old.

The another set of questions deals with the role of cultural representations and the process for which values, interests, and ideas get turned into collective action. The analysis takes a historically specific social formation differently referred to as post-industrial society. Such a historical base provides the structural determining factor for the emergence of "new movements", which are perceived to differ from the more traditional movements. New social movements are characterized by strategies, goals, and membership distinct from traditional social movements. New social movements are seen as expressions of civil society's desire for structural change and arise from the growing importance and ubiquity of information in our increasingly knowledge-based society. New social movements are a loosely connected group of collective actions that have displaced the traditional social movement of proletarian revolution (Buechler, 1993).

Important contributors to new social movement theory include Claus Offe, Alberto Melucci, Alain Touraine, and Jurgen Habermas. Claus Offe focuses on comparison of traditional and new paradigms of collective action. Alain Touraine examines the emergence of new social movements in the post-industrial societies. Alberto Melucci analyses how the movement of information affects contemporary conflicts and collective action. Habermas argues that new social movements develop from a tension between systems integration and social integration. However, critics of new social movement theory find fault with new social movement theory's concern with and focus on liberal politics and near disregard for conservative politics and social movements. This theory has also been criticized for that the mission and goals of new social movements have been eclipsed by transnational agencies and agendas.



Further, the other set of questions concern how a certain context social, political and/or cultural context affect social movements' chances of success, and the forms the take. This has been investigated using two paradigms: Resource Mobilization and Political Process Theory. The resource mobilization theory of social movements focuses on the role of power and power struggles in mobilising people for collective action. It examines structural factors, including a group's available resources and the position of group members in socio-political networks, to analyse the character and success of social movements. According to resource mobilization theory, participation in social movements is a rational behaviour, based on an individual conclusion about the costs and benefits of participation, rather than one born of a psychological predisposition to marginality and discontent (Klandermans, 1984). Its political variant is the Political Process Theory. It reasserts the primacy of the political by emphasizing not only the existence of generalised resources and most important, the existence of generalised resources and emergence organisations, but also, and most important, the existence of favourable "structures of political opportunity." Political opportunity structures refers to the receptivity or vulnerability of the political system to organised protest by given challenging groups. When political opportunity structures expand, there are waves of intense movement mobilisation and effectiveness. (McAdams et al. 2001). Resource Mobilization and Political Process Theory have been criticized for over simplifying the role of grievances, and downplaying the role of values and cultural elements.

Social movement and resistance, gesture toward two distinct conceptions of political action. While these conceptions interpenetrate to a large degree- clearly many social movements see themselves as resisting some hegemonic order- the two are not coextensive. Resistance implies the existence of a totalizing system against which struggle is waged, if only to secure a space of relative autonomy within its bounds (McKay 1996, Duncombe 2002). The struggles of social movements by contrast, need not be defined in anti-systemic terms. Rather, their targets run the gamut from specific local grievances to entire ideological regimes (patriarchy, ethnocentrism, etc.).

**Check Your Progress 1**

- 1) What do you mean by social movement?

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- 2) Define resource mobilization theory (RMT).

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- 3) Highlight the characteristics of new social movement.

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- 4) What is new social movement?

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## 12.3 RESISTANCE

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There is a little consensus on the definition of resistance. Based on a systematic literature review, Hollander and Einwohner(2004) argue that while there is agreement that resistance includes a sense of action and a sense of opposition, lines of disagreements resolve around the concepts of recognition (whether an oppositional action must be readily apparent to others and recognised as resistance) and intentionality (whether an actor must be consciousness that she/ he is resisting).

According to Danny Trom and Daniel Cefai (2013), the notion of resistance implies the dimensions of habit, imagination and judgement. It lies short of any organised action, collective and public, of any obvious social unrest. Being infrapolitical, resistance expresses a will to elude a power, a predominant norm, or a social control. It deploys in the background of everyday life. It does not form a consistent repertoire of action, but rather shows itself by means of such practices as trickery, concealment, smartness, double meaning, humour, feigned ignorance, work to rule, absenteeism. It comes with all the dynamics of contention.

In this section we will delve into the conceptualizations of resistance crafted by Michel de Certeau (1984); E.P. Thompson (1971); A. Gramsci (1988); and James Scott.

### 12.3.1 Resistance as “Tactics”

Michel de Certeau (1984) was the first to define a kind of oppositional action called “tactics”. It includes all the invisible practices of cunning, by which the “dominated” fill out the dominant order, playing with the constraints it enforces. Rather than confronting the power face to face, these tactics will nestle in the interstices of the disciplinary apparatuses and open free spaces of autonomy. He makes a distinction between strategies of power and tactics of resistance. “(Tactics of resistance) cannot count on a proper (spatial or institutional) localisation, nor

thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates into the other places” (de Creteau 1984: xix).

### 12.3.2 Resistance as “Counter Movement”

A second source of the notion of resistance is to be found in works on the moral economy of the dominant classes, peasants or workers, in the tradition of E.P. Thompson (1971). Here again, the focus shifts from institutional organization and organized struggle to subcultures, more or less autonomous, which English workers share and use as frames and resources to resist exploitation in an expanding capitalist economy. Then resistance means a silent revolt, fed from popular traditions of solidarity, against the abuses of authority, felt as illegitimate, on the part of the ruling class.

### 12.3.3 Resistance as “Counter-hegemony”

A third inspiration for the notion of resistance is the well-known work of the Antonio Gramsci in “The Prison Notebooks”. Gramsci postulates two ideas that are of enormous value for articulating the idea of resistance that focuses on the practice of social movements.

The first is his notion of hegemony. Hegemony to Gramsci is an active process involving the production, reproduction, and mobilization of popular consent, which can be constructed by any “dominant group” that takes hold of and uses it. Resistance in this case means a capacity of the workers to free themselves from the dominant ideology, and produce counter discourses and narratives that overthrow the established values.

The second idea articulated by Gramsci relates to the definition of “passive revolution”. He defines passive revolution in two ways: (i) as a revolution without mass participation; and (ii) as a “molecular” social transformation that occurs beneath the surface of society where the progressive class cannot advance openly. The latter definition, for which he cites Gandhi’s non-violent movement against British rule as an example, helps to introduce into Political Theory the everyday forms of resistance to economic and political hegemony.

Subaltern and powerless actors are able to avoid, to bypass, or to divert power to their advantage by means of a whole set of diffuse attitudes and practices, either individual or common, concealed from the eyes of the dominant groups.

### 12.3.4 Resistance as “Infra-politics”

The missing link between outright defiance and submerged popular resistance strategies investigated by Scott (1985; 1990), who conceptualizes resistance as indirect challenges. James Scott’s case studies on the peasants of Malaysia good illustration of the notion of resistance and the single most influential source of theoretical insight into the everyday resistance of subaltern groups. In his *Weapons of the Weak* (1985), a nuanced study of struggles between Malay peasants and powerful landowners, Scott’s research let him to conclude that the traditionally scholarly “emphasis on peasant rebellion was misplaced”. In place of such spectacular confrontation, Scott focused attention on the less dramatic struggles that arise between the peasants and landowners, which he termed “everyday

forms” of resistance. By this term he meant the prosaic but constant struggle between subordinates and their overseers.

He therefore scrutinized”the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth” (Scott 1985: 29). In a subsequent work, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990), he scrutinises what he calls “infra-politics”. That is, the low profile, strategic, disguised resistance of subjects in context in which open or institutionalised political action is not viable because of the oppressive domination. Infra-politics can be depicted as the ground that lies between what he calls hidden transcripts and public transcripts. Public transcripts are the self portrait of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen (Scott, 1990:18), a partial and partisan narrative aimed at the naturalisation of power relations. Hidden transcripts are the offstage responses to public transcripts, springing out of the experience of indignities. It is a collective oppositional narrative, concealed from the public sphere, where facades of deference and obedience are displayed. In shifting the focus to infra-politics and to everyday form of resistance, Scott is not denying the importance of peasant rebellions of insurgent movements, rather, he is directing our attention towards the hidden, less dramatic but equally real forms of resistance that nourish such spectacular eruptions against power for decades before they come to the surface. As he puts it such latent currents “are the stubborn bedrock upon which other forms of resistance may grow, and they are likely to persist after such other forms have failed or produced, in turn, a new pattern of inequity” (1985:273).

**Check Your Progress 2**

- 1) What is resistance?  
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- 2) Highlight four characteristics of resistance.  
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- 3) “Resistance as Infra-politics”, discuss.  
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- 4) What do you understand by “Resistance as Counter hegemony”.  
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## 12.4 LET US SUM UP

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The different types of articulations and conceptualisation of resistance can offer an analytical lens for understanding different types of movements. All social movements should be concerned with resistance, and the dividing line between resistance and alternatives should be reconsidered. Social movement literature suggests that what enables the movement to compete effectively against the regime is not how well it fights with brute force. Rather, it is the political, economic, social, and ideological foundations built during the steady state that enables the movement to deflect regime repression and turn into a rallying point. Resistance movements succeed when they can strategically employ both lethal and nonlethal methods instead of relying on a single strategy. The category of resistance specifically highlights the presence and play of power in a way that many canonical approaches to social movements more focused on the mobilisation of resources, political opportunities, and collective identities do not. Besides this, resistance also covers a much wider array of phenomena than social movements, encompassing actions, protests, and events that may be relatively episodic, uncoordinated, and ephemeral. Resistance thus provides a relatively open and flexible analysis terrain for exploring a diverse range of oppositional forms and practices.

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## 12.5 KEY WORDS

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- Social Movement** : According to Blumer (1969:99) social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises seeking to establish a new order of life. They have their inception in a condition of unrest, and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new system of living.
- Resistance** : Resistance implies the existence of a totalizing system against which struggle is waged, if only to secure a space of relative autonomy within its bounds.
- Tactics** : It includes all the invisible practices of cunning, by which the ‘dominated’ fill out the dominant order, playing with the constraints it enforces.
- Infra-politics** : The ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth.
- Hegemony** : It is an active process involving the production, reproduction, and mobilization of popular consent, which can be constructed by any “dominant group” that takes hold of and uses it.
- Resource Mobilisation** : It examines structural factors, including a group’s available resources and the position of group

members in socio-political networks, to analyse the character and success of social movements.

**Political process theory :** It focuses on how the expansion of political opportunities affects a movements' probability of achieving mobilisation, the form it takes and the relationship between institutionalized politics and social movements.

**New social movement :** They are seen as expressions of civil society's desire for structural change and arise from the growing importance and ubiquity of information in our increasingly knowledge-based society.

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## 12.6 FURTHER READINGS

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## 12.7 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check your Progress 1

- 1) According to Tarrow (1998:2), the relative durability of movements. According to him contentious politics occurs when ordinary people, often in league with more influential citizens, join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities and opponents when backed by dense social networks and galvanized by culturally resonant, action oriented symbols, contentious politics leads to sustained interaction with opponents. The result is the social movement.
- 2) It examines structural factors, including a group's available resources and the position of group members in socio-political networks, to analyse the character and success of social movements.
- 3) The characteristics of new social movements are strategies, goals, and membership distinct from traditional social movements.
- 4) According to Buechler (1993), new social movements are a loosely connected group of collective actions that have displaced the traditional social movement of proletarian revolution.

### Check your Progress 2

- 1) Resistance implies the existence of a totalizing system against which struggle is waged, if only to secure a space of relative autonomy within its bounds.
- 2) The four characteristics of resistance are tactics, counter movement, counter hegemony and infra-politics.

- 3) The ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth.
- 4) It is an active process involving the production, reproduction, and mobilization of popular consent, which can be constructed by any “dominant group” that takes holds of and uses it.

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