

PUBLIC OPINION

Unit Structure :

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Concept
- 1.2 Opinion Makers -Non-Political Leaders and Media
- 1.3 Impact on Political Behavior
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this module is to introduce you to the concept of public opinion, its evolution, role and importance in politics and society. After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Describe what is public opinion and explain how the concept of public opinion has evolved over the years.
- Understand the role played by public opinion in political dynamism and society.
- Explain the factors or agents that influence or shape public opinion.
- Analyze various case studies from across the world and understand the importance of public opinion and its influence in politics and society in general.

1.1 CONCEPT

Every society comprises of people belonging to various linguistic, religious, cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds. For a society to be truly democratic, it will have to take into consideration the voices of every individual, or more broadly, every section of the society, so that the needs and concerns of all are met and welfare reaches everyone. Each individual or section of this heterogeneous society, will have its own views, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, etc. The collective expression of the views, preferences, thoughts and attitudes of a large group of people about an issue, action, person or policy, at a particular period of time, can be termed as public opinion. Public opinion can alternatively be called an aggregate of individual opinions on matters related to politics or government. It can also be viewed as a combination of everyone's views or a collection of various differing and opposing views. American sociologist C. H. Cooley, in 1918, emphasized public opinion as a process of interaction and mutual influence rather than a state of broad agreement (Davison, 2017). The American political scientist V.O. Key, defined public opinion in 1961 as "opinions held by private persons which governments find it prudent to heed." (Davison, 2017).

One can judge if a society is democratic or not based on the position public opinion holds in the society, or whether the people in power suppress or manipulate public opinion to exercise an authoritarian rule. It is safe to say, that the position public opinion holds in a society, determines the health of its democracy, because public opinion serves as a mechanism that expresses the collective will which citizens share on particular issues. Through public opinion, citizens can choose who is elected to power (voting) and they can also shape government decisions, public policy, and other socio-cultural aspects like fashion, literature, marketing, etc. One can think of public opinion to be equivalent to the national will at a given time. However, some scholars suggest that at any given period of time, there may exist many different public opinions on a given issue. However, only one set of views may come to reflect, influence or dominate the government policy of that time. This brings us to the understanding that public opinion involves a power play. Public opinion is a collection of individual opinions, where ideally every opinion deserves equal treatment and value. This view suggests the equality of individual opinions, meaning, the government must take into consideration both majority and minority views while framing a policy or taking a decision. However, in practical terms, people rarely ever hold a unified stand on any issue, and there is disagreement always. In such case, the opinion of the majority is what's counted and used in most decision-making situations, and the position taken by most people is considered the collective national will. There are also two types of 'public' based on people's or a group's interest in a particular issue: Attentive public and Issue public. Attentive public refers to those who are interested in politics and government, paying close attention to politics and having an opinion about every political debate. Issue public on the other hand, refers to those who are not as active as the attentive public in political matters, but are interested and aware of certain specific political issues or debates like abortion, defence spending, gay rights, etc.; about which they give opinions, because those issues are of personal interest or relevance to them, while other political issues are ignored. There may also be some public who have no interest in politics or issues, and their views may not be represented at all. Some scholars also suggest that public opinion emerges from debates amongst various groups as opposed to individuals, for example religious groups, caste-based groups, political parties, interest groups, etc. This is because such groups have the resources to attract the attention of many, to make their position known and to represent the ones who are their allies. Irrespective of how we understand and define public opinion, all scholars agree that for a phenomenon to qualify as public opinion, four conditions must be satisfied:

1. There must be an issue
2. There must be a significant number of individuals who express opinions on the issue
3. At least some of these opinions must reflect some kind of a consensus, and
4. This consensus must directly or indirectly exert influence.

Following are some characteristics of public opinion:

- a. Public opinion is the collection of views and preferences of a group of people about a certain issue, at a given time.
- b. Opinion that is acceptable to all or at least most people is usually called public opinion.
- c. Public opinion is diverse and can vary across various groups in society.
- d. Public opinion may reflect public will on different aspects of society like political, economic, socio-cultural, religious issues, etc.
- e. Public opinion can change over a period of time, based on events, political or social developments, new information, etc.
- f. Public opinion can also show much stability because of deeply ingrained attitudes and beliefs.
- g. It often can be polarized as individuals or groups may have extreme and opposing views on a particular issue.
- h. Public opinion can be influenced by various socio-cultural factors like media, religion, caste, gender, political ideology, personality traits, etc. At the same time, public opinion can also influence policy decisions, election outcomes, behaviour of political actors, etc.

EVOLUTION OF THE TERM

The concept of public opinion has evolved much over the years as and when there were social, political and technological changes in society. Ancient Assyrian and Babylonian civilizations speak of stories of kings or rulers who would disguise themselves as laypersons to know the opinions of their subjects about themselves and their governance. Ancient Rome and Greece had public assemblies like Roman Senate, Ecclesia, etc. where public opinion was valued and fostered. The classical democracy of Athens valued people and their opinions, while in contrast to this, Plato believed that general public may lack the intellectual capabilities or wisdom which a ruler or king has. Aristotle emphasized greatly on the importance of the support of public for a ruler or king, however when he spoke about public in his time, he only had adult male citizens in mind. In the early Middle Ages, religious leaders and rulers rallied to obtain public support.

Post Renaissance, general public were much more educated and showed interest in public matters. During the enlightenment era, there was an emergence of the concept of public opinion in the questioning of church authority and there was an increased participation in politics. The invention of the printing press and the Protestant Reformation also played a crucial role in widespread dissemination of information and people holding views of their own and expressing it. Coffee-shops and gentlemen clubs became social arenas for people to discuss current affairs, which contributed much to the development of public opinion. Newspapers, debates, speeches, sermons, etc. were all important ways in which public opinion was influenced. Censorship was a way in which unwelcome public opinion was

controlled and restricted. Just before the beginning of the French Revolution, Jacques Necker, the finance minister of Louis XVI's, expressed in his writings the importance of public opinion and that it should be considered in all political matters because public credit was affected, as and how investors bought shares and government securities based on their opinion about the monarchy's strength. However, he only thought it was important to be concerned with the views of literate, educated, urban public who were aware of current affairs and who could afford to buy securities.

Thinkers like Hegel described public opinion as "containing all kinds of falsity and truth, but it takes a great man to find the truth in it" (Longley, 2021). Social theorist Habermas contributed to developing the concept of public opinion through his concept of 'public sphere' where public opinions can be formed. Today public opinion is disseminated through mass-media and social media, and people are able to share their opinions through various digital platforms. There is also a rise in studying public opinion, by measuring and analyzing it using survey techniques and polling.

Check Your Progress: Exercise 1

Note: Use the space given below for your answer.

1) What is public opinion? Describe its characteristics of public opinion?

1.2 OPINION MAKERS – NON-POLITICAL LEADERS AND MEDIA

The Declaration of Independence which laid the foundation for American democracy, states that, "Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed". Although polling may not be able to truly reflect the opinions of the public always, it is nevertheless a vital feature of participatory democracy because it is only through public opinion that governments garner support for themselves to stay in power, and it is through the same public opinion that governments are overthrown too. People's will form the base of any democratic and representative government and this is done by collecting and measuring public opinion through polling and survey techniques, which enables people to be heard and their consent is noted. If the government neglects and disregards people's interests, then election is the last resort which gives people back their power and lets them exercise and express their will through public opinion. Studies conducted by various scholars assert that public opinion

does affect and influence governmental policy decisions (Bartels, 1991; Burstein, 2003). Public opinion is also mobilized by campaigns, protests, movements, etc. Following are some examples that show how public opinion has an important place in politics, in the sense that it gives people power to voice their views and demand it to be reflected in government policy:

- a) One example is how Barack Obama became President of the USA through the votes of a people who had the economy, healthcare and employment as its top priorities; and the policy agenda adopted by Obama addressed these very issues through the Affordable Care Act and the stimulus package for the economy. Therefore, a link can be drawn between public opinion and public policy.
- b) The Right to Information Act, 2005 in India, is the result of public demand for access to information from public offices, and more accountability and transparency in government functioning. This Act has helped in revealing corruption and holds government authorities more accountable than before.
- c) The brutal rape and murder of a young girl in Delhi which is famously called the Nirbhaya case led to widespread protests in the country, leading to the passing of Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 which has made laws on sexual assault and harassment stricter. This is the result of sustained public outcry.
- d) The Anti-Corruption movement of 2011 led by Anna Hazare was a major public movement against corruption in the government. This resulted in the passing of Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act.
- e) Certain new agricultural laws passed by the government have received a lot of flak from the agricultural community and the resulting farmer's protests against it has garnered a lot of public support which put pressure on the government to negotiate with the farmers and consider their needs.

Using the above examples, we can see how voting, protests, movements, campaigns, etc. are ways in which people exercise their will, express their opinion and thereby participate in the politics of a democratic society. The effects of these on government policy and politics in general, reveals the vital role that public opinion plays in society, in that it informs the government of its choices and opinions, and the government then tries to persuade the public that their proposals are the best way to provide for the needs and demands of the populace. We can therefore say, that public opinion is the tool using which political participation is possible in society.

FACTORS OR AGENTS INFLUENCING AND SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION

No matter what opinions people hold as individuals or as a collective, these opinions are formed based on certain social, political, cultural, or

environmental influences, pre-existing knowledge, values and attitudes. Such attitudes, on which basis people form their opinions may also be subject to change during circumstances where new information, new facts or perspectives are introduced, which challenges their pre-existing knowledge. Values are an aspect which plays a very crucial role in forming of public opinion, and the values that people hold is something that is not likely to change because individuals pick it up early on in life, and it grows stronger as they grow older. These are the basis on which people form their ideals on religion, morality, ethics, political perspective, etc. This picking up may be called socialization, which involves agents like family, peer groups, school, religious circle, etc. which molds and shapes us, forming values which are relatively resistant to external influences to change. However, some scholars suggest that they can also be influenced, and in some cases, may be significantly changed through continuous exposure to opposing values, debates and conversations which makes one feel that they are 'out of step' with other people whom one respects, and also due to the emergence of new information.

Much research has gone into understanding the formation of people's opinions and how it changes over a period of time. Some suggest that factors like socialization, has a major role to play, and others look to external agents or influences like media to explain the dynamics of people's opinions. Let us look at each factor or agent:

- **Media:** All kinds of media, like radio, newspapers, websites, social media, news outlets, etc. play a significant role in shaping people's views, in fact, media sometimes reinforces people's pre-existing views about an issue and validate it which encourages people to form a stronger opinion about the same and prompts them to take action. This is especially the case, when people choose information sources and contents that they already agree with or like, and eventually it becomes like an echo chamber where people feed themselves a particular perspective. This phenomenon is called information cocoon where people wrap themselves with information that they like, without much exposure to other new information, thereby forming strong opinions (Chen and Lan, 2021). When it comes to mass media devices, they can be effectively used to control people's opinions at a large scale and by this it has the power to homogenize society and sway public opinion (Hu & H. Zhu, 2015).

In 1960, when the first televised presidential debate aired in the history of USA, Republican Vice President Richard Nixon looked exhausted and sweaty on television whereas Democratic Senator John F. Kennedy looked as if he was preparing for this very moment. After the debate, when asked who performed better, Henry Lodge, Nixon's running mate who watched the debate on television said that J. F. Kennedy did better, however after listening to the debate on radio, Senator Lyndon Johnson, who was running with Kennedy opined that Nixon had won it. Did the televised version of the debate which

featured Kennedy's good looks and confidence have an influence on people's opinion on politics, over the pale worn out Nixon?

Academicians have not been able to come up with a conclusive answer to such questions, however, one cannot ignore the fact that media plays a very important role in shaping people's perception about government, politicians and policies.

- **Political leaders and public figures**: Political leaders are very influential in identifying popular issues in the world and attracting people's attention towards it through their statements, catchphrases, sensational debates, endorsements, or actions, thereby slowly also shaping the public opinion based on their dominance or popularity. An example is the case of the Holocaust, wherein a whole nation was convinced to join and cooperate in the genocide of a community and this was possible through the leadership of their political leader, Adolf Hitler.
- **Interest Groups**: Interest groups are associations of people that come together to affect some political change or to try to change a public policy, based on a common interest or concern. They could be religious groups, labour unions, NGO's that work for a particular cause, ideological groups, professional groups like American Psychological Association or non-economic groups, or economic groups which rally for issues like job security, better wages, etc. They may either operate by word-of-mouth, or social media as well as mass media, and they may influence the opinions of individuals who follow them.
- **Social Environment**: An individual's social environment which includes their family, peer group, neighborhood, school, workplace, religious community, etc. plays a very important role in developing their attitudes and opinions. Based on the socio-cultural background within which individuals live, their personal experiences, their class, their educational level, and the opinions and perspectives held by people in their social circle which comprises of family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, etc. individuals form their public opinion in alignment with the ones around them.

Using the above examples, we must be able to analyze the micro level influence of each agent of socialization in forming people's opinions. Once an issue is identified and engaged with in the public sphere, people start discussing and developing their opinions about it. When a large number of people hold similar attitudes and opinions about that particular issue, it becomes public opinion.

Check Your Progress: Exercise 2

Note: Use the space given below for your answer.

- 2) Enumerate the role of non-political leaders and media in shaping public opinion.

1.3 IMPACT ON POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

- **LGBTQ Protests**

The LGBTQ community in India and around the world have since many years been battling for recognition, equal rights and to stop discriminatory practices against them. LGBTQ protests are a good example that showcases how public opinion can mobilize change in public policy. Their activism in the form of marches, rallies, protests, etc. have been instrumental in educating the public, and shifting public's prejudiced mindset about the LGBTQ community.

In India, the decriminalization of homosexuality by reading down Section 377, was a big win for the community. Although it was a legal battle, it was powered by LGBTQ activism which garnered public support for this cause. Politicians and political parties who were once not in support of such a cause, have now either changed their political stance on it or have started to change in favour of LGBTQ rights. Raising awareness about the issues faced by the LGBTQ community through demonstrations and protests have brought about similar improvements in policies and laws concerning LGBTQ in various other countries of the world, one example is legalizing same-sex unions, especially in USA, Canada and some nations in Europe.

The politicians who previously opposed LGBTQ rights are now compelled to rethink their positions otherwise they may lose public support as more people come out in favour of the cause. LGBTQ protests and its impact on policies in India and abroad is an example of the influence of public opinion on politics and political dynamism. It highlights how public opinion has the power to bring about change in the society.

- **The case of Afghanistan**

Afghanistan's situation has become highly politicised with various parties holding many opinions about how the nation ought to be run

and what part the international community must play in aiding the people of Afghanistan. Many individuals have voiced their concern over the impact of the recent takeover of Afghanistan by Taliban. The international community has openly condemned the oppressive system set up by the Taliban in Afghanistan and express their concern over the future of democracy and human rights of the Afghan citizens.

Because of such globally widespread condemnation of Taliban-led rule in Afghanistan, politicians and governments across the world are under pressure to support the cause of the Afghan citizens and advance democracy there especially in light of the many restrictions placed on Afghani women by the Taliban, pertaining to women's access to healthcare, education, work and restrictions placed on their dressing (compulsory hijab). Such strong criticism expressed by individuals, human rights organizations, prominent personalities and governments across the world and global public opinion shaped by international media attention on the rallies and marches by Afghan women against Taliban led government, has put pressure on Taliban to alter its practices and respect women's agency.

The recent murder of 3 women in Afghanistan, including a journalist, for not wearing their hijab properly, has also received global criticism and has led to massive protests among Afghan women. As a mark of protest against the strict dress code for women in Afghanistan which requires them to completely cover their hair, many women cut their hair in public in solidarity with the victims who were murdered by the Taliban for improperly wearing their hijab. These demonstrations and global criticism of Taliban against the infringement of Afghan women's liberty, is a reflection of how public opinion of the Afghan citizens and the world affects politics and it shows how public opinion can be a powerful tool for change, advocating for social justice and human rights.

- **Internet rights: Silencing Dissent through Shadow-banning**

The internet has developed into a digital public sphere which is a space for communication, dissemination of information, and activism. However, recently there have been concerns over the way powerful tech companies regulate speech, content and political censorship. Questions were raised against the practice of shadow-banning which is a practice wherein social media platforms restrict the visibility of certain user's posts or content without their knowledge. This practice has brought in a lot of criticism towards social media platforms which shadow-ban, stating that this is a kind of silencing of dissenting voices and limiting freedom of expression. It is pointing to the power held by tech companies, in shaping and homogenizing public opinion in the digital space by regulating some information, restricting some and promoting some others.

One case is that of the shadow-banning of Donald Trump, the former President of the United States on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. The social media platforms have defended the shadow-

banning of Donald Trump and other users as a necessary precaution against hate-speech and misinformation, in the context of the protests that took place in the US Capitol on 6th January, 2021. Trumps tweets on Twitter were criticized for instigating violence and spreading false information about the election, etc. which led to the removal or restriction of visibility of his social media account.

However, some have criticized this move of shadow-banning as the ability or power held by social media companies (by themselves or under the influence of another party/entity) to control public discourse through political censorship, thereby controlling and shaping public opinion regarding certain political issues. Some argue that this kind of practice also goes against democratic values. The news of business magnate Elon Musk purchasing Twitter in this context was then accused of political bias, and there were discussions on its effect on internet rights and political dynamism, considering the fact that Musk is an outspoken critic of tech corporations' influence on public discourse.

As a result of such public discussions and debates, there have been proposals to improve the transparency and accountability of social media platforms pertaining to instances of content regulation in the United States. Also, Twitter has recently allowed its users the option to challenge the judgements made by Twitter's content regulating algorithm. Such responses and actions by the government and online platforms, reflects the impact of public opinion and debate on these issues.

A similar case is the recent Pegasus controversy in the Indian context, wherein as per a report by an international media company, the Indian government was allegedly accused of using a spyware for surveiling journalists and politicians from the opposition party. Although the government denied it, this raised concerns and debates on the power held by tech companies to facilitate surveillance by governments to control public discourse by keeping a check on dissenting agents.

ROLE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN POLITICAL DYNAMISM WITHIN SOCIETY

Apart from reflecting political and social processes of a given period of time, public opinion also gives accountability, acts as a source of legitimacy, ignites social movements, resists social injustice, and promotes political reform. Let us look at these roles played by public opinion in detail:

- Public opinion as a driver of change: Public opinion can influence public policy and political decision-making. Public opinion conveys the collective needs, concerns and aspirations of the people and based on that, policy makers make laws and sometimes promotes political reform. For example, widespread support for LGBTQ community contributed to the legalization of same-sex marriages in many countries of the world.
- Public opinion as a constraint of change: Sometimes, public opinion may resist some changes in the political system or some changes

brought by the government in public policy which is not favourable to a particular section of people in society. In this case, public opinion can resist such change and act as a barrier. The farmer's protest is a great example to explain how public come together, forming an opinion about a change in public policy which affects the agricultural community. Therefore, public opinion can act as a constraint on change.

- Public opinion as a reflection of political and social dynamics: Data collected from a poll or survey can reveal the different views and attitudes that various sections of the society and demographic groups hold as well as the factors that influenced those opinions. Hence, we can say that public opinion can reflect political and social dynamics in society.
- Public opinion as a tool for accountability: Every democratic government must function based on the needs and opinions of the public. If politicians or political parties act contrary to what people demand, then they will lose public support. So, we can say that public opinion is a tool that holds the government accountable.
- Public opinion as a source of legitimacy: When public policy aligns with the views, preferences and general will of the public, the policy and the government that introduces it gets more social support. Also, public opinion acts as a source of legitimacy, always checking and validating whether the government is aligned with people will.
- Public opinion as a catalyst for social movements: When a lot of people hold the same opinion, it is easier for them to join together, mobilize and rally for it, if need be. So, in instances of social violence, or other issues in society, public opinion can become a catalyst for social movements, promoting change from bottom up.

Check Your Progress: Exercise 3

Note: Use the space given below for your answer.

3) Write a critical note on any two cases to discuss the influence of public opinion on politics and society. Also describe the role public opinion plays in society.

1.4 SUMMARY

Through this module we studied the meaning of the concept- public opinion, we traced its evolution and described its characteristics. Public opinion is a crucial aspect of every democracy. It has a major role to play in the way it affects political dynamism in society. It provides a way through which people participate in the political sphere, get involved and shape public

policy. It strengthens social movements, holds governments accountable, drives and sometimes resists political change. The passing of various laws like the Right to Information Act, the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act have been significantly influenced by public opinion. Through this module we have also critically analysed some case studies to understand the role and significance of public opinion in the world and in India.

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INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

Unit Structure :

- 2.0 Objective
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Political Parties
- 2.3 Pressure Groups
- 2.4 Conclusion
- 2.5 References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The institutional impact chapter's goal is to give students a better understanding of:-

- Various institutions affect politics and society.
- Institutions and people influence policy outcomes, advance accountability, encourage public involvement and develop social capital.
- Understanding power structures by studying the institutional effect.
- Institutions political parties, pressure groups, civil society, organisations, NGOs, and international organisations.
- Effect of the institutions on policy formulation.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Institutional Impact

An institution's or organization's impact on its constituents, the community it serves, and society at large are referred to as an institutional impact. Its influence can be both beneficial and bad and can have an economic, social, environmental, and cultural impact, among other things. The development of new technology or goods that improve people's lives, the provision of education and healthcare services, and the promotion of social justice and equality are examples of institutional impact. Other examples include the creation of jobs and economic growth in a community. Several techniques, including social impact analyses, stakeholder involvement, and success factors, can be used to measure and assess institutional impact. Institutions must now more than ever be open about their impact, accept responsibility for any unfavourable outcomes, and actively work to find methods to enhance their good benefits.

IMPORTANCE OF INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

As organisations have a big impact on the communities and societies in which they function, the institutional impact is crucial. Institutions can contribute to positive social, environmental, and economic results while reducing negative impacts by being aware of and controlling their impact. The institutional effect is significant for some reasons, including:

1. Institutions are accountable for taking into account how their actions will affect stakeholders and the larger community. Institutions can be held accountable for their activities and decisions using impact measurement and evaluation.
2. Sustainability: Promoting sustainability requires an understanding of and management of institutional effects. Institutions can pinpoint the parts of their activities that have a detrimental impact on the environment or the community and take steps to lessen them.
3. Reputation: Strong institutional influence can improve an institution's standing and foster stakeholder confidence. A negative impact, on the other hand, can damage an institution's reputation and result in a decline in support and confidence.
4. Compliance: Institutions must frequently provide evidence that they are successfully controlling their impact to comply with laws and regulations.
5. Innovation: Organizations that take the initiative to manage their impact may spot new chances for development and innovation, such as creating new goods or services with favourable social or environmental effects.

Building strong, sustainable institutions that benefit both the organisation and society as a whole requires an awareness of and ability to manage institutional influence.

WHAT IS AN INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

Positive Impact

The term "positive impact" describes the favourable impacts that a course of action, choice, or organisation has on people, groups, society, or the environment. It can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including economic development, social advancement, environmental sustainability, and cultural amplification. A variety of actions can have a positive influence, including fostering employment, advancing healthcare and education, advancing social justice and equality, safeguarding the environment, and fostering the arts. A favourable influence can also have a flow-on effect, leading to additional beneficial results after the initial action or choice. For instance, a business that adopts environmentally friendly methods may not only lessen its environmental impact but also encourage others to follow suit, having a positive impact on the environment on a larger scale. The

positive impact is an important objective for people, organisations, and society as a whole since it can lead to a variety of positive results, such as social well-being and economic progress, and it can help create a more sustainable. Positive impact refers to the beneficial outcomes or effects that institutions can have on individuals, society, and the environment. Some examples of positive institutional impacts include:

1. Improved access to essential services: Institutions such as healthcare systems, schools, and social welfare programs can improve access to essential services, leading to better health outcomes, higher levels of education, and reduced poverty.
2. Protection of human rights: Institutions such as courts, human rights commissions, and advocacy groups can protect the rights of individuals and marginalized groups, promoting equality and justice.
3. Environmental conservation: Institutions such as environmental agencies and conservation groups can help protect the environment by implementing policies and practices that reduce pollution, protect natural resources, and promote sustainable development.
4. Economic growth and development: Institutions such as banks, investment funds, and business associations can support economic growth and development by providing
5. access to capital, promoting entrepreneurship, and fostering innovation.

Positive institutional impacts can help improve the well-being of individuals and society, promote equality and justice, protect the environment, and support economic growth and development.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT

Examples of positive institutional impacts:

1. Improved access to healthcare: In countries with universal healthcare systems, institutions such as hospitals, clinics, and health insurance providers help ensure that all citizens have access to essential healthcare services, regardless of their income or social status.
2. Protection of human rights: The United Nations, through its various agencies and initiatives, has helped promote and protect human rights around the world. The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are two examples of international instruments that have had a positive impact on the protection of human rights.
3. Environmental conservation: The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that works to protect endangered species and ecosystems around the world. The WWF has had a positive impact on environmental conservation by promoting

sustainable development and conservation efforts, raising public awareness, and partnering with governments and businesses.

4. Economic growth and development: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an international organization that works to promote economic growth and stability around the world. The IMF provides loans and technical assistance to countries experiencing economic crises, promotes policies that support economic growth, and conducts research on economic issues.

These are just a few examples of the positive impacts that institutions can have on individuals, society, and the environment.

Negative Impact

The term "negative impact" describes the unfavourable impacts that a choice, action, or organisation has on people, groups, society, or the environment. The negative impact can manifest in a variety of ways, including economic stagnation, social injustice, environmental deterioration, and cultural eroding. Many actions, such as abusing workers, polluting the environment, upholding discrimination, or accelerating climate change, might have negative effects.

A negative impact can also have a cascading effect, leading to additional bad results after the first action or choice. For instance, a business that participates in ecologically harmful practices may also endanger the health and way of life of people and communities that depend on those natural resources

One example of a negative impact of institutions is corruption. When institutions become corrupt, they can undermine trust in the government, harm the economy, and worsen social inequalities. Corruption can take many forms, such as embezzlement, bribery, nepotism, and cronyism, and it can occur in both public and private institutions.

Corruption can have serious consequences for individuals and society, such as reduced access to basic services like healthcare and education, higher levels of poverty and inequality, and a loss of confidence in the government and the rule of law. In extreme cases, corruption can

also contribute to political instability, conflict, and human rights abuses.

Other examples of negative institutional impacts may include policies that lead to environmental degradation, discrimination or unequal treatment of certain groups, lack of transparency and accountability, and limited public participation in decision-making processes.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Institutional Impact -
By Sana Irfan Khan

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer

Discuss Institutional Impact and its importance.

INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON POLITICS

There are numerous formal and informal institutions that have an impact on politics. Many instances include:

- Politics are significantly influenced by the official institutions of government, such as the executive, legislative, and judicial departments. They establish policies, enact legislation, and make choices that affect the political environment.
- Political parties: Political parties are groups that aim to sway public opinion and win electoral victories. They create and advance political platforms, find and aid candidates, and energise voters.
- Interest groups: Interest groups are organisations that work to change public policy in their chosen fields, such as civil rights, environmental protection, or the regulation of firearms. They could take part in political advocacy, lobbying, or other activities.
- Media: The media plays an important role in shaping public opinion and influencing political discourse. The media can influence public opinion on political topics and candidates through news reporting, commentary, and analysis.
- Think tanks are institutions that perform research and analysis on a variety of policy issues and frequently provide recommendations to decision-makers in government and other settings.
- International organisations: International organisations, like the United Nations or the World Trade Organization, have the power to shape international policy, foster international collaboration, and create global norms and standards.

Generally, a wide range of institutions influence politics, and the extent of their effect varies with the situation and the particular problems at hand.

2.2 POLITICAL PARTIES

Impact of Political Parties on Institutions

Particularly in democratic systems where parties compete for control of the government and influence policy decisions, political parties have a key role in institutional impact. Political parties can affect institutional impact in a number of ways, including:

- Establishing policy agendas: Political parties create agendas and platforms for policy that represent their goals, values, and outlook on the future. Parties can affect the institutional impact on a variety of topics, from healthcare to education to national security, by pushing these policies and arguing for their acceptance.
- Candidate selection and support: Political parties are in charge of nominating and assisting candidates for elected office. Parties can have an institutional impact through the activities of candidates by identifying and promoting candidates who share their policy objectives and future vision.
- Political parties in the legislative branch can significantly influence institutional results by passing laws, influencing policy choices, and managing government agencies and programmes.
- Political parties in democratic systems compete during elections for the support of voters. Parties can influence institutional impact by influencing public opinion and deciding the make-up of government by participating in political campaigns and lobbying for their policies and candidates.

Political parties can have a significant impact on institutional outcomes through a range of activities and strategies. However, their influence can be limited by factors such as the strength of opposing parties or interest groups, institutional constraints, and the broader political and economic context in which they operate.

Importance of Political Parties

Political parties are a crucial institution in the institutional impact on politics and society. Political parties represent different ideologies and interests and play a vital role in shaping policy outcomes, promoting democratic participation, and building social capital. Here are some key reasons why political parties are important in institutional impact:

1. Representation: Political parties represent different groups of people and their interests. They serve as a bridge between citizens and government, helping to translate citizens' preferences into policy outcomes.

2. **Policy-making:** Political parties play a crucial role in shaping policy outcomes by developing and advocating for policies that reflect their ideology and priorities.
3. **Accountability:** Political parties provide a mechanism for holding elected officials accountable for their actions. When a party is in power, it is responsible for implementing its policies, and voters can hold it accountable for its performance in office.
4. **Democratic participation:** Political parties promote democratic participation by mobilizing voters and engaging citizens in political campaigns and public debate.
5. **Stability:** Political parties provide a stable framework for democratic governance. By representing different interests and providing a means for the peaceful transfer of power, political parties help to prevent instability and promote democratic stability.

Political parties are an important institution in institutional impact because they serve as a key mechanism for representation, policy-making, accountability, democratic participation, and stability in politics and society.

2.5.3 Impact of civil society organisations on Institutions

The purpose of civil society organisations (CSOs), which operate independently of the government and the corporate sector, is to advance social welfare, community growth, and civic engagement. By pushing for change and making institutions responsible for their activities, CSOs can significantly contribute to institutional impact. CSOs can affect institutional effect in a number of ways, including:

- **Campaigning and advocacy:** CSOs can take part in campaigning and advocacy efforts to bring attention to social issues, advance legislative changes, and hold institutions accountable for their deeds. In addition to using social media and other digital platforms to convey their message, this may entail planning public protests, petition drives, and educational initiatives.
- **Community development and service delivery:** CSOs can offer assistance and support to underprivileged or marginalised communities. CSOs can enhance these communities' quality of life and support larger social and economic development by attending to their needs.
- **Research and analysis:** CSOs can carry out research and analysis on social problems and policy areas, giving information and proof to back up advocacy campaigns and policy suggestions. This may have an impact on policy choices and public opinion.
- **Cooperation and partnership:** To achieve shared objectives and increase their influence, CSOs can work with other civil society organisations, governments, and other stakeholders. CSOs can improve their influence and provide more long-lasting and efficient solutions to social problems by forming alliances and collaborations.

CSOs can play an important role in institutional impact by advocating for change, providing services and support to communities, conducting research and analysis, and collaborating with other stakeholders. However, their influence can be limited by factors such as funding constraints, institutional barriers, and political opposition.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer

Explain the impact of Political Parties on society.

2.3 PRESSURE GROUPS

Impact of Pressure Groups on Institutions

Pressure groups are organisations that work to influence public policy or decisions on particular subjects or topics of interest. By promoting reform and holding institutions responsible for their activities, they can have a significant impact on how institutions operate. These are some examples of how pressure groups might affect institutional impact:

- **Lobbying:** In order to sway elected officials or other decision-makers, pressure groups may engage in lobbying operations. Meetings or phone conversations can be used for direct communication, as well as more indirect strategies like advertising or public relations initiatives.
- **Advocacy:** To increase public support and bring attention to a particular topic, pressure groups may participate in advocacy actions. This can entail planning protests, rallies, or other public gatherings and disseminating their message via social media or other online channels.
- **Legal action** may be taken by pressure groups to oppose institutional policies or practices that they deem to be harmful or unlawful. This may entail bringing a legal action or testifying as an amicus curia in court proceedings (friends of the court).
- **Research and analysis:** In order to give information and statistics to back their policy proposals, pressure organisations may carry out research and analysis. This may have an impact on policy choices and public opinion.

Pressure groups can play an important role in institutional impact by advocating for change and holding institutions accountable for their actions. However, their influence can vary depending on a range of factors, such as the strength of their arguments, the level of public support they can mobilize, and the receptiveness of decision-makers to their message.

Influence of NGOs on Institutions

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are independent organizations that operate without government or political control, with the goal of promoting social, environmental, and economic development, and addressing human rights issues. NGOs can have a significant impact on institutional outcomes by advocating for change, providing services and support to communities, conducting research and analysis, and collaborating with other stakeholders.

Definition

An NGO, or non-governmental organization, is a non-profit organization that operates independently of government and is often dedicated to addressing social, cultural, humanitarian, or environmental issues. NGOs may work at the local, national, or international level, and their activities may include advocacy, service delivery, capacity-building, research, monitoring and evaluation, and collaboration with other stakeholders. NGOs are often funded through donations from individuals, foundations, and governments, and they may be staffed by volunteers, paid staff, or a combination of both.

Here are some ways NGOs can influence institutional impact:

1. **Advocacy and lobbying:** NGOs can engage in advocacy and lobbying activities to promote policy changes and hold institutions accountable for their actions. This can involve organizing public campaigns, rallies, and protests, as well as engaging in direct communication with policymakers.
2. **Service delivery:** NGOs can provide essential services to communities, such as healthcare, education, and disaster relief. This can improve the quality of life for individuals and contribute to broader social and economic development.
3. **Research and analysis:** NGOs can conduct research and analysis on social, environmental, and economic issues, providing data and evidence to support policy recommendations and advocacy efforts. This can help to shape public opinion and influence policy decisions.
4. **Collaboration and partnership:** NGOs can collaborate with other NGOs, governments, and other stakeholders to achieve common goals and maximize their impact. By building partnerships and coalitions, NGOs can increase their influence and create more sustainable and effective solutions to social and environmental issues.

NGOs can play an important role in institutional impact by advocating for change, providing services and support to communities,

conducting research and analysis, and collaborating with other stakeholders. However, their influence can be limited by factors such as funding constraints, institutional barriers, and political opposition.

Institution's Impact at the International Level

The United Nations (UN) has had a significant impact

On international relations by playing a key role in shaping policies and practices in a number of areas. Here are some examples:

1. **Human rights:** The UN has been instrumental in the development of international human rights law and has played a leading role in promoting and protecting human rights around the world. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, is widely regarded as a landmark document in the history of human rights.
2. **Environmental protection:** The UN has been at the forefront of global efforts to address environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and deforestation. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, adopted in 1992, has been instrumental in mobilizing global action on climate change.
3. **Global development:** The UN has played a critical role in promoting global development and reducing poverty around the world. The Millennium Development Goals, adopted by the UN in 2000, set a framework for global development efforts over the next 15 years and led to significant progress in areas such as health, education, and access to clean water.
4. **Conflict resolution:** The UN has been active in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts around the world, including through peacekeeping missions and mediation efforts. The UN has played a key role in efforts to resolve conflicts in places such as Rwanda, Bosnia, and the Middle East.

Overall, the UN has had a significant impact on international relations by providing a forum for international cooperation and diplomacy, promoting global norms and standards, and mobilizing action on key global challenges. The UN continues to play a critical role in shaping the international agenda and promoting peace, security, and sustainable development around the world. One example of an institution's impact on an international reference is the United Nations (UN). The UN is an intergovernmental organization that was established after World War II to promote peace, security, and cooperation among nations. The UN has had a significant impact on international relations, shaping policies and practices in areas such as human rights, environmental protection, and global development. One of the key ways in which the UN has had an impact on international reference is through the development and promotion of international law. The UN has created a framework of international treaties, conventions, and agreements that establish norms and standards for behaviour among states. These

include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN also plays a key role in promoting peace and security among nations. It has established peacekeeping missions in conflict zones around the world and has helped to negotiate peace settlements in some countries. Additionally, the UN has played a key role in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons through its support of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Sum up, the UN's impact on international reference has been significant in shaping policies and practices related to human rights, environmental protection, global development, and peace and security among nations. While the UN's influence can be limited by a range of factors, it remains an important institution for promoting cooperation and collaboration among nations in pursuit of a more peaceful, just, and sustainable world.

Institution's Impact on a National Level

The institution's impact on a national level is the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the United States. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the United States is an institution that has a significant impact on a national level. Here are some examples of how the EPA impacts the nation:

1. **Environmental regulation:** The EPA is responsible for enforcing a wide range of environmental regulations designed to protect the environment and public health. This includes regulations on air and water pollution, hazardous waste disposal, and the use of pesticides and other chemicals.
2. **Environmental monitoring and research:** The EPA conducts research and monitoring to assess environmental risks and inform policy decisions. This includes monitoring air and water quality, conducting toxicological research, and developing models to predict the impacts of environmental pollution.
3. **Environmental education and outreach:** The EPA works to educate the public about environmental issues and encourages individuals and businesses to take action to protect the environment. This includes providing information about how to reduce energy use, conserve water, and reduce waste.
4. **Collaboration with states and local governments:** The EPA works closely with state and local governments to implement environmental regulations and address environmental issues at the local level. This includes providing grants and technical assistance to support state and local environmental programs.

The EPA has a significant impact on a national level by working to protect the environment and public health through regulation, monitoring, research, education, and collaboration with other levels of government. The EPA plays a critical role in addressing environmental challenges facing the United States and promoting sustainable development.

One example of an institution's impact on a national level is the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the United States. The EPA is a federal agency that was established in 1970 to protect human health and the environment by enforcing regulations related to air and water pollution, hazardous waste management, and other environmental issues.

The EPA's impact on a national level can be seen in some ways. For example:

1. Regulation of polluting industries: The EPA regulates industries that produce significant amounts of pollution, such as power plants, factories, and oil refineries. These regulations help to reduce harmful emissions and protect public health.
2. Enforcement of environmental laws: The EPA enforces environmental laws such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Superfund Act. These laws provide a framework for protecting the environment and holding polluters accountable.
3. Development of environmental policies: The EPA develops and implements environmental policies, such as the Clean Power Plan and the Waters of the United States rule. These policies help to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable practices.
4. Education and outreach: The EPA provides education and outreach to the public and businesses to raise awareness about environmental issues and promote best practices.

The EPA's impact on a national level has been significant in protecting public health and the environment. While the EPA's influence can be limited by political opposition and budget constraints, it remains an important institution for promoting environmental sustainability in the United States.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer

Explain the impact of Pressure Groups on the political process.

2.4 CONCLUSION

It refers to the influence that different institutions and actors have on shaping the policies, practices, and outcomes of society. Political parties, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other actors can all play a significant role in institutional impact, whether by advocating for change, providing essential services, conducting research and analysis, or collaborating with other stakeholders. The importance of institutional impact lies in its potential to shape the way society functions and address the pressing social, economic, and environmental issues that face us today. By working to influence institutions and policies, actors can work towards creating more equitable, just, and sustainable societies. However, the influence of institutional impact can also be limited by a range of factors, including funding constraints, institutional barriers, political opposition, and broader socio-economic and political contexts. Nevertheless, it is essential that actors continue to engage in efforts to shape institutional impact and work towards a better future for all.

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SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

Unit Structure :

- 3.0 Objective
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Modernization
- 3.3 Development
- 3.4 Conclusion
- 3.5 References

3.0 OBJECTIVE:

This unit aims to make you familiar with the interrelation between the state and society. It also introduces you to complex processes such as modernization and development which may put a profound impact on social and political processes. After studying this unit, you should be able to :

- Understand the essentiality of Political socialization in the life of the individual, its types, and different agents of political socialization.
- Explain the process of Modernization and its impact on Indian Society.
- Understand the process of development and current scenarios in India.

3.1 INTRODUCTION:

Humans are social animals. We live in a society for stability and security. The development of any society is determined by the participation and contribution of its members. Through the ages, society has developed certain norms, rules, and frameworks to strengthen its system as well as the smooth running of its role in the life of individuals. This profoundly impacts social as well as political processes. Society not only promotes a good and happy life for its members but also creates conditions and opportunities for the all-around development of individual personality. Nobody can deny the fact that despite a few occasions of conflict and violence that occurred in society, members of society often show a feeling of cooperation and interdependence. This fosters the feeling of oneness and cooperation. The basic purpose of the society is to channel collective movement. Each society has its own rules, regulations, norms, and values. When a new phenomenon or an idea gets introduced into a society, it often faces resistance and initially it may seem unacceptable to the members of the society. When it comes in contact with traditional values, synthesis happens between a new idea and traditional norms or values, this gives birth to new ways of life and introduce members to new lifestyles. Society proceeds through various

stages. Social and political processes are potent and dynamic in nature. Sometimes, the introduction of new forces can create a stir in a society as it may pose a direct challenge to traditional social values and norms. Historically, all societies have moved through various stages of development.

It could be summed up as follows – Early man lived in a Hunting and Gathering Society. With effective discoveries of fire, wheel, and agriculture he settled down and started an Agrarian Society. Through the ages, he developed and moved towards an Industrial Society and a Post-Industrial Society. Humans have moved forwards with these stages out of necessity. Sometimes the change was well adopted, but it has often met with coercion and conflict. The process of Modernization and development helped in the evolutionary transition from traditional to modern society. The process of modernization occurs in a society. It puts a profound impact on families and communities as well. Due to its impact, some long-lasting changes occur in society. In this unit, we are going to focus on understanding the process of modernization and development and their impact on society.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION :

Political Socialization is a process through which members of society develop an understanding of their social and political identities, behaviour, opinions, and political institutions. It not only strengthens the foundations of political institutions but also creates confidence among the citizens. It introduces the feeling of oneness or nationalism as well as traits of patriotism. Parents, peers, pre-schools, schools, and colleges are considered agents of socialization. Political Socialization is a lifelong learning experience that plays a key role in promoting patriotism and promoting good citizenship. Different scholars, thinkers, and social scientists have given diverse definitions of Political Socialization. Put in simple words, it is a process through which an interrelation is established between society and the state. State and Society are interrelated as well as interdependent in nature. Society is nothing but a mirror of Politics. This process introduces different norms and values through which confidence is built in the mind of Individuals. it helps individuals to take part in the political process. This process ensures that an individual understands their duty towards the state and their accountability as a member of society. Political institutions play an effective role in the development of a society. Political institutions are important as they make and enforce laws, protect public health and welfare, and decide the issue of war and peace. The distribution of power in a society is the most important concern of Political institutions. Direct and indirect Political socialization is considered as two main types of political socialization. Direct political socialization can be defined as the profound influence of family, peers, teachers, and other agencies on an individual. Through this influence, an individual gets to learn about the functions and workings of the government and administration. It also gives explicit knowledge about political parties, ideology, and operations. In schools and colleges, subjects like history, civics, and political science are taught to introduce students to various concepts like democracy, fundamental rights,

fundamental duties, constitutionalism, justice, equality, etc. as well as government institutions, political processes, and the process of democratization. Indirect political socialization mainly occurs from non-political activities, communication, and social understanding. In this process, nothing is taught purposefully but it is developed through observation and understanding. Direct and indirect political socialization is essential for the development of civic and political values in an individual. There are various agents of political socialization such as family, schools and colleges, friends and peers, mass media, government institutions, NGO and voluntary organizations, political parties, etc. Primary agents such as family, peers, and schools put a direct impact on an individual. Secondary agents are indirect and less personal in nature such as government institutions, NGOs and voluntary organizations, political parties, etc.

AGENTS OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION :

The primary agents of socialization are those that directly develop specific political orientations. Family, peer groups, and educational institutions come under the category of primary agents of socialization. The secondary agents of socialization are less personal and involved in the process of socialization more indirectly. Mass media, political parties, voluntary organizations, and government come under the category of secondary socializing agents. The roles of various agents of political socialization are as follows:

1. **Family:** The first influence on an individual comes from the family. It is very natural for a child to observe and follow the behaviour of parents and other family members. From this, it gets a general understanding of different political processes and institutions. Family plays an important role in effective decision-making, and it provides an early experience of political participation.
2. **Schools and Colleges** – Educational institutions such as schools and colleges play a significant role as direct agent of political socialization. Through curriculum as well as co-curricular and extracurricular activities students get engaged on the different levels of political socialization. Participation in various cultural, and sports activities, students' associations, and celebrations of national and regional festivals ensures participation in different political processes. Subjects like political science, civics, history, sociology, languages, and social sciences introduce and encourage students to take part in the decision-making process and current socio-political scenario.
3. **Friends and peers** – Usually, children choose to spend more time with their friends than with their family members. This ensures a process of socialization towards politics. This also helps in creating political awareness amongst children. A peer group is not limited to just friends but acquaintances in the neighborhood and at the workplace are also a part of the wider peer group.

4. **Mass Media** – Mass media puts a significant impact on the life of an individual. It not only provides information but affects the daily activities of an individual. Today people spend a maximum amount of time on social media. Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram not only connect people but introduce them to a different world. Mass media keep people updated about different regional, national, and international events. Media is a direct link between the masses and the government. People get educated and become aware of different government actions and policies with the help of the media. And on the other hand, people's reaction, opinion, their feedback helps the government to work for the betterment of the masses. Media is an all-inclusive forum, but it has its limitations.
5. **Government** – Through their involvement in the political process, different influences, and interaction with their surroundings, children in adolescent age acquire political opinions. This ensures their future participation in the political sphere and develops a sense of understanding towards socio-political activities and interaction. Grassroots-level participation and political decentralization are two significant factors in the process of democratization. Governments continuously keep in touch with the general masses. Media is an active link between the government and the masses.
6. **Other political institutions** – various political parties, pressure groups, voluntary associations, and interest groups are also the agents of political socialization. They not only create awareness but also educate the masses. They serve as a channel between people and the government. They put a great impact on political opinions and influence political activities.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

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

1) What is Political socialization? Explain different agents of Political socialization.

3.2 MODERNIZATION :

The term 'Modernization' is broader and more complex. Modernization is a continuous and open-ended process. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, modernization, in sociology, is the transformation from a

traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society. According to S.H. Alatas, "Modernisation is a process by which modern scientific knowledge is introduced in the society with the ultimate purpose of achieving a better and more satisfactory life in the broadest sense of the term accepted by the society concerned."

According to Prof. Yogendra Singh Modernisation symbolizes a rational attitude towards issues and their evaluation but not from a particularistic point of view. According to Prof. S.C. Dube, Modernisation refers to a common behavioural pattern characterised by:

- (a) A rational and scientific worldview.
- (b) Growth and ever-increasing application of science and technology.
- (c) Adaptation of new institutions emerged in society to cope with the new situation dominated by science and technology.

C.E. Black in his writing, "Dynamics of Modernisation" defined modernisation as, "Modernisation is a process by which historically evolved institutions are adapted to the rapidly changing functions that reflect the unprecedented increase in man's knowledge permitting control over his environment, which accompanies the scientific revolution." Here, Black has given prime importance to the institutions and their roles in the process of modernisation.

Modernization is a process associated with the social, economic, political, and cultural changes that took place in society. It represents substantial breaks from traditional society as well as traditional norms and values. Modernization is an idea before it is a process. As it is an idea, there is no agreement among social scientists on its meaning and interpretation. The concept of modernization emerged as an explanation of how Western countries/ societies developed through capitalism. Modernization depends primarily on the introduction of technology and the knowledge required to make use of it. Besides, several social and political prerequisites have been identified to make modernization possible.

Some social and political prerequisites of Modernization are as follows -

- Increased levels of education
- Development of mass media
- Accessible transport and communication
- Democratic political institutions
- More urban and mobile population
- The nuclear family in place of Joint or extended family
- The complex division of labor
- Declining public influence of religion
- Developed markets for the exchange of goods and services in place of traditional ways of meeting such needs.

Modernization is, thus, supposed to be the result of the presence of these prerequisites in the social system.

modernization is a process of change, which takes a country from underdevelopment to development. It produces a social environment for economic development. The growths in industrialization, urbanization, national income, and per capita income are taken as criteria for the Economic development of a specific country. However, while accepting the economic criteria of development, some sociologists have added non-economic criteria to judge development. They argue that rising output alone is not sufficient to assess the level of development. A society has to move from rising output to self-sustaining growth. Therefore, non-economic criteria such as the level of education, the function of media, the growth of communication, and social norms conducive to change have to be taken into consideration. The meaning of modernization given above incorporates, primarily, structural aspects of change. In other words, under modernization structural transformation takes place in the economy, polity, and social institution. It is to be noted here that the concept of modernization has also been explained in cultural terms. In cultural terms, modernization implies a change in values and attitudes.

Modernity involves values and norms that are universal in nature. It is important to understand that the idea of modernization has also been analyzed in terms of the paired concepts of tradition and modernity. It has been argued that modernity stands as opposed to tradition. In this sense, all the underdeveloped societies are characterized as traditional and the developed societies as modern. Modernization, thus, implies a change from tradition to modernity. Modernize, every society has to follow the same direction and adopt a similar path. All the existing values and structures have to be replaced by new values and structures. Nonetheless, sociologists from developing countries are critical of this understanding of modernization. They maintain that modernization does not stand as the polar opposite of tradition. Traditional values and institutions are not necessarily discarded while taking up new values in the process of change. Society adopts new values because they are considered more efficient and rewarding. Given this, these sociologists hold that modernization would develop typical forms in different societies. Patterns of modernization, thus, may vary from society to society. The discussion shows that processes of modernization involve both structural and cultural dimensions.

In India, after the independence, the modernization process has undergone some fundamental changes. Every domain of the social system is under the active influence of modernizing process. Modernization has, now, become an integral part of the developmental strategy. The political system has assumed a new shape after the adoption of the parliamentary form of government based on adult franchises. Political parties have emerged as powerful organs of the system. Thus, a democratic political structure has effectively led to increasing political consciousness among the people. The process of politicization has further, been accelerated through the Panchayat Raj institutions. The foundations of traditional family structure have come under influence of legal reforms in marriage and inheritance. The family

introduced equalitarian norms in the family leading to the raised status of women.

Community Development Projects have carried the cultural norms and role structures of modernity to every village in India, and this, coupled with the introduction of land reforms and elective village panchayats, has initiated villagers to a bureaucratic form of participation in local-level management and administration of justice. Similarly, caste has assumed new functional roles. It has acquired an associational character. A new consciousness has emerged among Dalits. The increasing role of caste in politics is a pointer to this trend. Land reforms have brought structural transformation in agrarian social structure. However, it is pertinent to call attention to the fact that modernization in India has not been a uniformly progressive movement. Two crucial issues may be pointed out in this regard :

First, in the process of modernization, several traditional institutions and activities have been reinforced. For example, religious preachers are using modern media to spread their ideas. Now, there are television channels in India exclusively developed for religious preaching. Caste associations are using new modes of communication to consolidate their position. Second, inconsistencies are visible in patterns of modernization. Though structural change is witnessed in families, joint family loyalties and norms still prevail. Thus, modernization in India has not thoroughly dispensed with traditional institutions. Traditional institutions have displayed their potential for adaptation in course of change.

Modernisation in India:

Modernization is a multi-dimensional concept. It not only impacts economic aspects, but you can see its impact on social, political, cultural, and educational aspects. Many changes were introduced in India which showed a sharp inclination towards the process of modernization. Some changes are given below for our understanding -

- Modernization facilitates direct contact and communication between different societies and individuals. The introduction of new institutions like banking, mass media, and communication has made an individual's life easy, convenient, and fast. It encourages increasing contact and introduces contemporary trends and ideas in society.
- It has introduced a new value system that is democratic and promotes various principles such as equality, justice, individualism, secularism, etc.
- Modernization is based on the acceptance of scientific innovation, large-scale industries, and technological advancement.
- It has raised the standard of living and it has resulted in the emergence of the middle class in both urban and rural areas.

- Modernization has introduced some structural changes in social institutions like marriage, family, caste, etc. There is a shifting of attitude from sacred to secular.
- There is an emergence of new forms and trends as a result of the synthesis of old and new elements.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

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

1) What is modernization? explain with special reference to India.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT :

The concept of Development is often used interchangeably with growth, progress, and positive change. A substantial rise in the level and quality of life of the population as well as the development of infrastructural facilities and accessibility is considered an important indicator of development. Development is a visible and useful process. It includes a quality change and the creation of conditions for a continuation of that change. Different researchers have provided different approaches to study development. Amartya Sen has given the capability approach which emphasizes development as a tool for attaining the highest level of their ability. Martha Nussbaum has developed an ability approach that is directly related to gender and women empowerment. Some scholars like Jeffrey Sachs and Paul Collier were more concerned about factors obstructing the process of development in different countries. Civil wars, scarcity of natural resources, and poverty are seen as 'traps'. Identification of such conditions can help a country move towards progress. It is important to understand that development cannot be limited to the construction of infrastructural facilities and the rise in accessibility. For a very long time, humans have exploited natural resources for development. There are many other species with whom we share our home i.e., Earth. Over-exploitation of natural resources have put a negative impact on the environment. Loss of biodiversity, green cover, and wildlife are causing some major problems such as climatic change and global warming. In this sense, sustainable development is an important concept. Sustainable development simply means fulfilling the needs of the current generation without hampering the abilities and needs of the future generation. Sustainable development is seen as an alternative approach to development. India has shown rapid development in the last seven decades.

Development in India and issues related to the development

India gained independence in 1947. And shortly after that, we adopted our constitution. At the time of independence, India faced multiple challenges such as partition, unprecedented migration, Communal tensions, riots, acute food shortage, widespread poverty, Illiteracy, unemployment, and lack of infrastructural facilities. There are several other problems such as regionalism, communalism, corruption, untouchability, and gender discrimination that India has faced since Independence. However, India has shown remarkable progress in science and technology, innovation, economy, human development, etc. At the time of Independence, India's GDP was only 3% of the world GDP. India opted for a centralized and planned economy. The first five-year plan was focused on the agricultural sector whereas the second five-year plan stressed on Industrial sector. The planning commission was constituted in 1950 and was replaced by NITI Aayog in 2014.

DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA AND ISSUES RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT

1. **Agriculture** – India has made remarkable progress in the agricultural sector. During partition, the fertile agricultural land of Punjab became part of Pakistan. This was a major reason for the acute food shortage in India. To improve agrarian products and overcome food shortages, The Green Revolution was started in India in 1965. Within a decade, the Green Revolution led to a record grain output of 131 million tonnes. Currently, India is recognized as one of the top agricultural producers in the world.
2. **Industry** – Second five-year plan prominently focused on the industrial sector and rapid industrialization. With the help of British companies, Durgapur Iron and Steel Plant was set up in West Bengal. Bhilai and Rourkela Steel plants were also set up with the help of Russia and West Germany. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru called these projects temples of Modern India. Since then, India has seen rapid development in the area of Industrialization. After the LPG era, Significant growth was seen in foreign investment. Today, Indian states and cities are attracting foreign projects and investment to a great extent.
3. **Infrastructural Facilities** – India has seen rapid growth in infrastructural and transport facilities. This has contributed to more connectedness and accessibility. The government has been implementing various schemes for construction and better facilities.
4. **Education** – The percentage of literates was very low immediately after Independence. This picture rapidly changed with widespread education. Article 21 A of the Indian Constitution is directly related to the universalization of education in India. It provided that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children between the age of six to fourteen. Schemes like Midday Meal attracted

students whose parents have to either migrate seasonally or belong to lower economic backgrounds. These efforts fruitfully contributed towards all-inclusive education.

5. Science and Technology – India has made immense progress in the fields of science, medicine, technology, and innovation. Indian Space Research Organization was established in 1969. India's first satellite Aryabhata was launched in 1975. There are 20 Indian Institutes of Management in different regions in India like Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Indore, Lucknow, etc., and 23 Indian Institutes of technology such as IIT Kharagpur, IIT Roorkee, IIT Delhi, etc.

Despite all the efforts towards development, there are some challenges to the process of development in India. These challenges are as follows -

1. Corruption – Corruption poses a major challenge to the process of development in India. Corruption takes place at various levels and affects almost the entire population. In a general sense, corruption is directly related to money or misuse of money by individuals. But the scope of corruption is very wide. It also includes red-tapism, the use of muscle power, bribes in all forms, maladministration, etc.
2. Illiteracy: According to the 2011 Census, a total of 74% of the population in India comes under the category of being literate. Despite all those efforts taken by the government, the literacy rate in adults is alarmingly low. Therefore, providing education to children will not be sufficient. The focus should also be on education among the adult population. Some efforts need to be made to bridge the gap between the male and female population as well as the urban and the rural population.
3. Healthcare System: The lack of Hospitals and healthcare facilities in Rural areas are still a major problem in India. Covid 19 Pandemic has shown the fault lines in our system. Creating awareness among the general public and introducing new facilities will prove significant in the future. Infant Mortality Rate which is 34 per one thousand live birth is another concern in India.
4. Poverty: Even though the population living below the poverty line is declining yet poverty is a major concern in India. States like Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha have more populations living in poverty. Poverty in India is directly related to inter-state migration. Those states who are receiving the incoming migration are under great pressure due to a lack of resources and facilities.
5. Pollution: Pollution has posed a serious challenge in India. Degradation of land, loss of green cover, recurring natural and manmade calamities, depleting natural resources, and loss of biodiversity are the major issues in India. Releasing untreated sewerage in natural waterbodies is a major cause of water pollution. According to the World Air Quality Report published in 2021,

Bhiwandi, Ghaziabad, and New Delhi are featured as the Topmost polluted cities in the World. Cities in India are expanding horizontally and vertically. As a result, they are encroaching upon forest land. Humans – wildlife conflict is another major challenge in India.

6. **Women's Safety** – Women are working in almost all sectors alongside men. But issues like domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, harassment at the workplace etc. are major challenges.
7. **Unemployment** – Unemployment or joblessness is another major concern in India. During the Covid 19 Pandemic, many people lost their job and migrated to their hometowns. During Post pandemic period, many companies cut their workforce leaving a major chunk of the population unemployed. Even today, many people are underpaid and working to minimize the damage caused by the pandemic.
8. **Agricultural Distress**: Indian economy is majorly dependent upon the agricultural sector. But lack of irrigation facilities, natural calamities, loans, farmers' suicides, and exploitation by middlemen have posed serious challenges to the Indian Agricultural sector.

With all the challenges, India still has a long way to go. India is a rising global power that has a sure capacity not only to lead the continent but also the entire world.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

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

- 1) **Explain the challenges to the process of development in India.**

3.4 CONCLUSION

In this module, we have discussed the concept of Political socialization and its types. Political socialization is a continuous process, and it is supported by various agents of political socialization such as family, peers, schools, colleges, mass media, government, and other political institutions. We have also discussed, the concept of modernity. modernization is a process of change, which takes a country from underdevelopment to development It produces a social environment for economic development. Not to mention, modernity is not limited to economic development only. But it also touches on cultural, political, social, and other aspects of society. Development is another important concept that is a visible and useful process. It also includes an aspect of quality change and the creation of conditions for a continuation of that change.

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PROTEST MOVEMENTS AND CHANGE

Unit Structure :

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Mainstream Liberal Movements: Consumer and Anti-graft Movements

4.3 Social Movements: Old and New

4.4 Summary

4.5 References

4.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this module is to introduce you to the concept of protest movements, and its influence on political dynamism. After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- To understand protest movements, its nature, characteristics and factors responsible for it.
- To learn the challenges and limitations of protest movements in effecting change.
- To study the importance of protest movements in bringing political change and theoretical perspectives to understand them better.
- To analyze some protest movements and to understand its role in bringing political dynamism.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It was protests that ignited the Revolutions in France and England, which led to the overthrowing of the existing political system and paved way for the new one. Protests against climate change, the murder of George Floyd, and against the over-throwing of the iconic Roe v. Wade, are some examples of recent protests. Protest movements are a crucial aspect of political dynamism, leading to the evolution of systems and societies as we know it. Protest movements are typically organized efforts by people who are in consensus over their opinion, or attitude about a particular issue, and who wish to collectively mobilize, in order to challenge an existing system and bring about some kind of socio-political, economic or cultural change in the structure. A protest movement may be organized or led by a particular interest group, or particular section of the society which is marginalized or suffering in the existing system in some way or the other. If the issue of the protest movement is a much more general one, and one that affects a large section of the society, then it may involve people from all walks of life, irrespective of their socio-political or cultural backgrounds. Such protests

could be organized or led by a wide range of organizations, from grassroots level activists to well established political associations. Persons in positions of power may try to oppose and crush protest movements, which can lead to violent confrontations and suppression of dissent. Despite this, protest movements have demonstrated the power of collective action and its ability to affect change, making it a vital element in understanding political dynamism.

Protest movements have a significant impact on political dynamics as they bring about profound changes in the political structure as well as social structure. A large amount of research has previously focussed on policy outcomes of protest movements, because most protest movements aim to create some kind of change or alteration in a public policy; or it may be to resist or take down certain policy. Most protest or social movement scholars have operationalized political change as changes in public policy (Earl, 2000). Others, like Felix Kolb, for example offer broader definitions for political change. He defines it as: “outcomes that are related to the state and changes in its policies, politics, and polity” (Kolb, 2007, as cited in Bidé, 2015).

Although scholars have now expanded the concept of political change to include things beyond policy changes, the non-institutional changes that takes place among the general public is not discussed much as part of political change. Such non-institutional changes are important because they change the way citizens view certain socio-political issues after a protest movement, and it also changes the way citizens interact with political institutions. It is important to note the changes in people’s political consciousness and political attitudes after the protest movement (Bidé, 2015)

4.2 MAINSTREAM LIBERAL MOVEMENTS: CONSUMER AND ANTI-GRAFT MOVEMENTS

Protests can be triggered by a variety of problems, including social injustice, prejudice, breaches of human rights, environmental concerns, or political actions. Let us look at some of them:

1. **Social injustice and inequality:** Inequality or injustice, especially human right violations are one of the most important reasons that ignite protest movements. This may be in the form of caste oppression, marginalization of racial, religious or other minority groups, gender discrimination, economic inequality, etc.
2. **Political Oppression:** Protest movements may also take place against political persecution and related human right violations like torture or violence against peaceful protesters, government censorship, speech restrictions, unlawful killings, etc.
3. **Economic Conditions:** Another reason that leads to protest movements is related to economic issues, particularly protests against neo-liberal systems, that fight unemployment, inflation, poverty, etc.

4. **Environmental Issues:** Protest movements may also emerge against environmental concerns like pollution, deforestation, climate change, etc.
5. **Cultural factors:** Protest movements may also start due to generational gaps, cultural differences and shift in social standards, for example, protest movements arguing for the legalization of same-sex marriages in India, or protests against moral policing, etc.

EXAMPLES

- **Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA)**

The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) was a protest movement started by farmers, Adivasis and other local parties in central India's Narmada river basin, against the building of massive dams on the river, which would destroy the forests and biodiversity there, and would displace thousands of people whose lives and livelihoods were closely associated with the river basin.

Medha Patkar and Baba Amte are very prominent figures who are associated with this movement. They have fought legally, they have conducted hunger strikes, rallies, etc. to fight for the indigenous communities who were to be displaced without any consultation or information given to them. The World Bank was to finance the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam over Narmada river, but after a lot of efforts, NBA proved that the Bank's policies on environment and resettlement of indigenous communities were being violated. So world bank withdrew from the project in 1993. The Sardar Sarovar Dam was still built, its construction being completed in 2006.

The NBA is a very significant protest movement in the history of India, mainly because it brought the topic of building dams, displacement of people and its effect on environment to the front of political discourse in the Indian society. It garnered support from environmentalists, human right advocates and a large number of other social organizations. This collective campaign put pressure on the government to reconsider its plans and actions.

The formation of the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDT) in 1980, to settle disputes related to water distribution in the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan was the result of the efforts of NBA. The NWDT also addressed the problems of people who were affected because of the dams and its suggestions included provisions for the rehabilitation and relocation of people who were displaced and also measures for environmental protection. It has profoundly influenced the political consciousness of the affected people who were always marginalized and excluded from decision making processes that affected them. NBA also challenged the dominant narratives of development and economic growth which compromised the lives and livelihoods of some people and the

environment. NBA also inspired other environmental protests like the Chipko movement, Tehri Dam protest and Silent Valley movement.

Protest movements and change

- **Farmer's protests in India:**

The farmer's protests in India started as a series of ongoing protests against three agricultural laws enacted by the Indian Parliament in September 2020, which was an attempt to liberalize the agricultural industry, by enabling the farmers to sell their agricultural produce outside state-run markets. However, the farmers say that this will compromise the current Minimum Support Price system, which guaranteed the farmers that they get a minimum price for specific crops, so that they make profit. Also, large firms will take advantage of this situation and exploit the farmers by buying their produce at a low rate, leaving them in poverty. This demonstration is by farmers mostly belonging to the northern states of India like Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh.

The protests which began in November 2020, asked the government to abolish the three new laws. The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) launched the protest in New Delhi. The protesting farmers encountered police brutality and nearly 700 farmers died due to exhaustion and heat. Sikh farmers who feed the entire nation were called Khalistani (anti-nationals) (Haq, 2021). Celebrities and politicians from across the world stood in solidarity with the Indian farmers and there was a massive political influence as a result of this revolt. The opposition criticised the government for the way it has handled the situation and it backed the farmer's demands. The government made certain concessions, like an 18-month suspension of the law and creation of a committee to investigate this matter and to look into the demands of the farmers. Such proposals were rejected by the farmers and they conveyed to the government that they will not settle for anything except repealing of the laws. This protest movement has brought to the forefront the government's neglect of the agricultural sector, although farmers constitute a significant proportion of the population of India. It has also spurred discussions related to the impact of big firms in the country's economy and the need for more equitable laws.

In November 2021, the Union Government accepted key demands of protesting farmers, including the scrapping of the three agricultural laws after a year of protests. Analysts suggest that this happened only because state elections were impending and the BJP could not have risked losing, so they chose to surrender.

- **Shaheen Baug Protest:**

The sit-in protest organized by mostly Muslim women against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) which gave citizenship only to non-Muslim refugees who arrived in India prior to December 2014 from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, is called the Shaheen Baug protest. It started in December 2019, and the demonstration was

conducted in Shaheen Baug which is a Muslim dominated neighbourhood in Delhi, India. The protest saw women and children occupying and blocking a road in Okhla area, which was used by thousands of vehicles daily to travel between Delhi and Noida. The protest site appeared like a fair, people used to cook and sit there like, not only during the day but at night too. India's right-wing agents and pro-government media defamed the women and portrayed them as anti-national elements. This protest was not only against CAA, but it was also against Hindu majoritarianism and patriarchy. Similar such protests were conducted in many other parts of the country and the protestors argued that CAA was discriminatory and goes against the secular ideals that are found in the Constitution of India.

There were also discussions which were on the lines that such a law formed part of the ruling party's larger plan to marginalize Muslims and limit their rights. The State also launched the National Register of Citizens (NRC) which is closely connected to CAA, in order to verify citizenship, but the protestors opined that NRC would be used to deny rights to Muslims and marginalized groups.

The Shaheen Baug protest has raised serious questions about the survival of India's secular democracy and it has also drawn attention to the rising marginalization of Muslims through public policy in India by the ruling party. Although the final conclusion of this protest is still unclear, it has definitely heightened the political awareness of Indian citizens.

- **Anti AFSPA Protests**

AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958), is a legislation in India which grants the army, central police forces, and state police personnel in "disturbed areas" "certain special powers," including the right to shoot to kill, to raid houses, and destroy any property that is "likely" to be used by insurgents, and "to arrest without warrant" even on "reasonable suspicion" a person who has committed or even "about to commit a cognizable offence", all this, along with immunity from prosecution (Ramchandra, 2015). Anti-AFSPA protests first began in the year 2000, in the north eastern Indian state of Manipur where this law has been in effect since decades using which soldiers kill, raid and rape (Ramchandra, 2015). The protests were organized by many social organizations which included women's groups, with an aim to repeal this law from their land. Irom Sharmila is an activist who was on hunger strike since 2000 against the draconian law. On July 14, 2004 a dozen naked women protested in front of the Assam Rifles headquarters at Kangla Fort, Imphal, daring the soldiers to come out and rape them (Ramchandra, 2015).

The potential this law has for human right violations and misuse has always been in discussion by human right activists but nothing fruitful came out of it. The protesters say that this law is a violation of their human rights and civil liberties as citizens of India.

The protests also highlighted the distance that people from Manipur feel from the rest of the Indian nation due to the kind of neglect, exclusion and marginalization they have faced over the years from the government. An outcome of the protests was the creation of a committee to study AFSPA and the subsequent repeal of it in some areas of Manipur. However, the legislation is in effect in many other places of India and the demonstrators are calling for a total repeal.

Although the Anti-AFSPA protests' final outcome is unclear, it has definitely raised important questions about the marginalization of certain communities and the need for inclusive and equitable laws. It has had far reaching socio-political repercussions by starting the debate on national policy-making, its impact on Indian citizens and their civil rights.

Check Your Progress: Exercise 1

Note: Use the space given below for your answer.

- 1) Critically analyse any 2 protest movements in India and its political implications.

4.3 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: OLD AND NEW

Protest movements can take a variety of shapes, such as non-violent protests, sit-ins, strikes, boycotts, acts of civil disobedience, etc. However, it is also important to note that protest movements have evolved over time and they also differ based on the region, cultural environment, the social contexts within which the history of the protest movement is embedded. If we divide protest movements as old and contemporary ones based on their language of protest, issues addressed and, social and historical context, then we would be able to draw the following characteristics for protest movements:

• Old forms of protest movement- Characteristics:

1. **Mass Mobilization:** Mass mobilization has been a key characteristic of old protest movements, where large crowds of people physically join together to show their support for a particular social issue which the protest addresses. Mahatma Gandhi's independence struggle was characterized by such mass mobilization.

2. **Non-violent Resistance:** Many old protest movements used to have a strong emphasis on peaceful and non-violent forms of resistance to achieve their goal. For example, non-violent strategies like sit in protests, hunger strikes, boycotts, etc, were used by leaders like Martin Luther and Gandhi.
 3. **Leadership:** People with a charismatic personality, who could attract crowds for a protest, usually become leaders and the face of particular social movements. They play an important role in mobilizing crowds and leading the protest.
- **Contemporary forms of protest movements- Characteristics:**
 1. **Use of social media and digital activism:** New protest movements frequently rely on social media platforms to raise awareness about the issue at hand, mobilize crowds and organize protests. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. have been used to disseminate information and co-ordinate demonstrations.
 2. **Diversity, Inclusivity and Intersectionality:** An emphasis on intersectionality, diversity of opinions and inclusivity of all ideas is a characteristic of newer forms of protest movements. Protest movements like Me Too, Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ+ rights, etc. focus on the interconnectedness of many types of oppressions ranging from gender, caste, class, race, religion, etc.
 3. **Decentralized leadership:** Contemporary protest movements are usually planned and organized by a number of people together instead of it having one particular leader. So, the efforts of a lot of individuals who participate in the planning and management of demonstrations, make it a much more decentralized and democratic way of organizing protests.
 4. **Global nature:** Many contemporary protests are global in its outlook and reach instead being local, because although it may be rooted in a local context, it locates itself in the global arena and links itself to other similar movements across the world, So the impact it creates and the support it garners is huge, involving people from different nationalities. This is especially possible in the context of globalization of ideas and international media coverage. Protests against climate change is an example of this.

Although old and new forms of protest movements may be characterized by different traits based on the socio-cultural and political contexts within which they emerge; the goal to bring about socio-political change and the desire to build an equitable and just society is the commonality between both.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES TO UNDERSTAND PROTEST MOVEMENTS AND CHANGE

Protest movements and change

Now, we can study protest movements using the lens of certain theoretical perspectives, they are as follows:

1. **Structural Functionalism**: In this theoretical perspective, social and political institutions work together like different parts of a machine or like different organs in an organism, working together in unity, to preserve the social order and stability of society. If we view protest movements from this theoretical lens, they will appear to be a threat to social order as it upsets the status quo and stability of socio-political systems.
2. **Conflict theory**: This view stresses on the role of inequality induced by power-play in forming social relations. This leads to unequal distribution of power and resources in society, which leads to the emergence of protest movements in reaction to the inequality and discrimination.
3. **Symbolic Interactionism**: This theoretical perspective examines how people interact with each other through common symbols and shared meanings. One way to disrupt the existing dominant culture is to develop new symbols and meanings through protest movements, which will further lead to new social relations and systems.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF PROTEST MOVEMENTS

Protest movements have the potential to bring significant political change, however they may also encounter various obstacles and challenges which may limit their success. Let us look at some of these challenges:

1. **Repression and State Violence**: The state often times suppresses protest movements to maintain stability and social order. It may use violent means to do this, like arrests, murder, police brutality, etc. This can discourage participation, suppress dissent and reduce the impact of protest movements.
2. **Co-optation and Divisions**: Protest movements may encounter fragmentation and infighting due to outside influences and internal conflicts between members in the group. This may weaken the spirit and unity of the movement, thereby limiting its effectiveness due to splits.
3. **Media Bias and Distortion**: Media plays a crucial role in determining the success of every protest movement. If the media operates in a politically biased manner, it holds the power to misrepresent the protest or portray it in bad light, or it may even simply not cover the protest, thereby marginalizing it.

4. **Limited Impact and Outcomes:** Despite great efforts, protest movements may fall out before achieving its goals, and may have a limited impact. It may fail to bring about significant changes in policy and may settle with small reforms.
5. **Lack of sustainability and organization:** Usually when protest movements start, there is a sense of crisis and urgency. But as time passes the objectives, plans and frameworks may seem unclear and ambiguous, especially to new members. If this happens, then it becomes difficult to organize people up again and it will lead to the slow death of a protest movement.

Check Your Progress: Exercise 2

Note: Use the space given below for your answer.

- 2) Discuss the old and new forms of protest movements.

4.5 SUMMARY:

Protest movements are a powerful phenomenon that is aimed at bringing socio-political change at the institutional as well as non-institutional level, by collectively challenging the status quo and gaining public support. The issues addressed by protest movements at various regions, in various contexts are different and many theoretical lenses allow us to understand them better. There may be some challenges and constraints like state repression, media bias and fragmentation that may limit the effectiveness and success of some protest movements, nevertheless, they continue to be an essential tool for bringing socio-political reforms. Protest movements have the ability to influence political dynamics and bring profound changes in the society, by elevating marginalized communities, contesting established power structures and mobilizing public opinion.

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